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# The Kurdish crisis

## Timor What next?





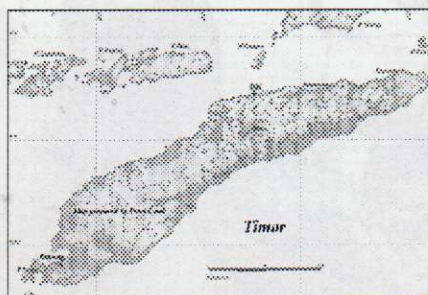


## East Timor: Forward to independence!

**The will of the East Timor people was made loud and clear in an August 30 referendum: 78.5% voted yes for independence. Despite 24 years of military occupation by Indonesia, the people have continued to stand up for their fundamental right to have their own country.**

The ruling elite and military high command in Indonesia refused to accept defeat. The next day a genocide terror campaign was launched against an unarmed population. Thousands have been slaughtered. Religious figures and other leaders of the independence movement have been targeted and assassinated. The U.N. compound and other internationals have been attacked.

The leader of the pro-independence movement who was freed from prison by Indonesia on September 7, Xanana Gusmao, learned his father was among those murdered. Some 200,000 of the



illegally occupied country's 800,000 have been forcibly removed from the territory—some to nearby West Timor, others to far away Indonesian islands. Tens of thousands more Timorese have fled the capital, Dili, to the hills.

The horrific murder campaign is organized by the Indonesian military (TNI) and their armed militias. Their objective is to teach the people a deadly lesson for refusing to stay under their feet. While the New Order regime of President Habibie and General Wiranto claim the military is trying to do their job by declaring martial law and sending in more troops, it is clear that the campaign of terror was orchestrated by the highest levels of the military and the Habibie government.

Using a cynicism well known to bloody criminals the world over, Foreign Minister Ali Alatas said of the Timorese fleeing the island: "These people want to go to safer places, and we are helping them." He reiterated that the army and government will oppose any outside military intervention.

For the ruling elite in Indonesia the stakes are quite high. Despite pressure from the United Nations and international public opinion, the rulers, who are based in the army, see a free East Timor as the first step toward their loss of power. The downfall of the 32-year dictatorship of former President

Suharto, in May 1998, opened up a period of democratic space not seen since the 1950s. The ruling elite was thrown into crisis by Suharto's downfall and the army was in political retreat. Unfortunately, the weakening of the New Order regime and the military did not lead, yet, to fundamental changes.

While the student-led movement was able to force Suharto out, the political awakening of the mass of workers and peasants and the urban poor is still relatively young. Even with the freest press in Asia, the ruling elite still controls the economy, army and other state institutions.

The recent June parliamentary elections to begin the process of electing a new president was done under modified old rules. The national assembly (MPR) meeting in October and November to select the president includes representatives appointed by the army who will play a decisive role in who the next president will be.

This reality of diminished power of the army that still dominates Indonesia is seen as temporary. For those, including Suharto and his cronies, who all still reside in the country, the goal is to wait out the pro-democracy forces until their forces are strong enough to reassert their control.

That's why East Timor is so important to the ruling elite. Habibie was under both international and domestic pressure to allow a referendum vote in



East Timor. He and his faction felt the country had to cut its losses to focus on stamping out other serious conflicts breaking out across the archipelago.

Currently there are armed rebellions taking place in Aceh and West Papua [Irian Jaya] demanding independence from Indonesia. Workers are beginning to organize, peasants and landless are pressing for land, and students and others are stepping up their campaign for an end to the military's dominant role in society.

The military strongly opposed Habibie's decision to support a referendum in East Timor. Immediately after his announcement in January, the army





units in East Timor began arming their thugs. The objective was to smash all opposition to the army's power through intimidation.

More troops in fact were sent to East Timor as well as Aceh, West Papua and other areas as opposition to the central government grew.

Why then did the army allow the vote on August 30? Clearly many in the military (if not a majority in East Timor) believed the campaign of intimidation of the armed thugs before the vote, and threats of a bloodbath if the vote for independence won, would lead to a vote for autonomy.

The military warned before the vote it would not allow the United Nations to send in armed peacekeepers, or it would be war. The military's most anti-independence officers were put in charge.

The resounding vote for independence, however, meant only one method could be used to reverse the vote: genocide on the ground.

For the military and the ruling elite in Jakarta the only issues are stability and power. The fact that a majority of leading politicians including the possible new president, Megawati Sukarnoputri, opposed East Timor's right to self-determination put the military in a strong position to resist international pressure.

Nationalist anger is also being fanned inside Indonesia to defend the "unity of the county" and oppose U.N. military intervention in East Timor.

Whether Indonesia's transition to democracy continues to advance or is

retards is completely tied to what happens in East Timor.

If the army prevents the referendum from being implemented, it sends a message to all democratic forces (workers, farmers, students) that a repeat of the 1965 bloodbath that put Suharto in power is possible.

The democratic space opened by May 1998 will quickly close. For the ruling elite, international isolation may be acceptable to keep their power. The generals particularly calculate Washington, Canberra (Australia), London and other Western powers will not move to permanently end their ties to the most strategic country in South East Asia.

What of the U.S. role and responsibility? Although President Clinton has declared that the army's action in East Timor is unacceptable, Washington has also made clear it does not plan to seriously harm its relations with the ruling elite and army high command.

The fact that the chairman of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Henry Shelton, has been and remains in regular contact with Indonesia's defense minister and army chief of staff, General Wiranto, and that Washington had access to military cables between Jakarta and Dili outlining plans for the terror campaign in East Timor, exposes the cozy relationship between the two armies. It is the Defense Department, not the State Department, overseeing relations with Indonesia.

If the U.S. government wants to stop the violence, it clearly has the influence to do so. The symbolic stopping of military training aid by Clinton indicates the dilemma Washington is in, whereby it continues to claim "humanitarian" justifications for its bombing of Yugoslavia while doing little to aid the illegally occupied people of East Timor.

The U.S. policy in Asia like Europe

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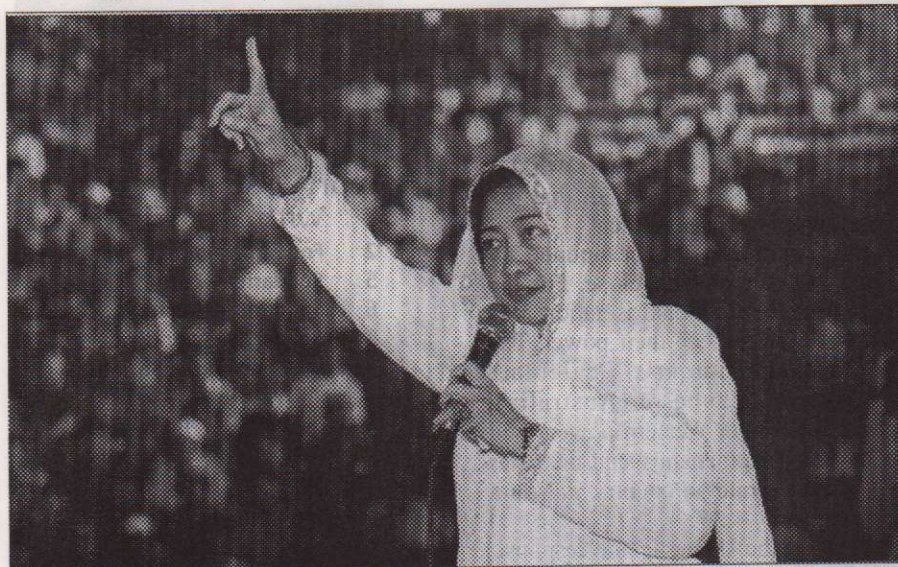
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is based on defending its interests worldwide. Human rights are not a factor. It wasn't in Yugoslavia; it isn't in Indonesia. For the United States, Indonesia is of strategic importance. It's the fourth most populous country in the world. It is mineral rich and located near China and Japan. Its army was a key player during the Cold War in opposing communism and it is still seen as a bulwark against China.

Washington agrees with Indonesia's army high command and ruling elite that unity of the archipelago is crucial. It's why it opposes a U.N. referendum for the rebelling provinces of Aceh and West Papua even though the peoples there are demanding self-determination, and have for decades.

The dilemma for the United States, Australia, Britain and other supporters of Indonesia's armed forces and ruling elite is the United Nations (another one of Washington's surrogate bodies) put

its prestige on the line with the referendum. Its authority and ability to intervene has a lot to do with the idea that its word can be taken, and that it doesn't only favor the big powers.

East Timor — unlike other regions of Indonesia, which had been former Dutch territories — was a Portuguese colony for centuries. After Indonesia invaded and annexed East Timor in 1975, the United Nations refused to recognize it. Only Australia recognized the takeover. After Kosovo, the lie would be exposed if it didn't condemn Indonesia for its genocidal campaign in East Timor and not threaten stronger action.

International pressure is key to forcing the Indonesian army and ruling elite to leave East Timor. It was international pressure along with the resistance of the East Timor people and May 1998 events in Indonesia that forced Indonesia to allow the U.N.

referendum. The United Nation's credibility is at stake, since it assured the people who voted that they would be protected.

While sending U.N. troops is not a long-term solution to East Timor's fight for freedom, it is a necessary first step to prevent a total depopulation of the territory by Indonesia. It must be done now, and not after the Indonesian assembly meets later in the year to ratify the vote. (That vote may not occur in fact if the military terror is allowed to stand.)

While suspending all economic aid — by the IMF, World Bank and commercial contracts — immediately is important, it is not enough to force Jakarta to stop the violence. The East Timorese armed resistance is too weak. The key goal must be to get the killers out of East Timor. Future relations between the U.N. force and the East Timorese people will be decided later on the ground [...] ★

This statement was issued in September by the leadership of the U.S. socialist feminist organisation Solidarity



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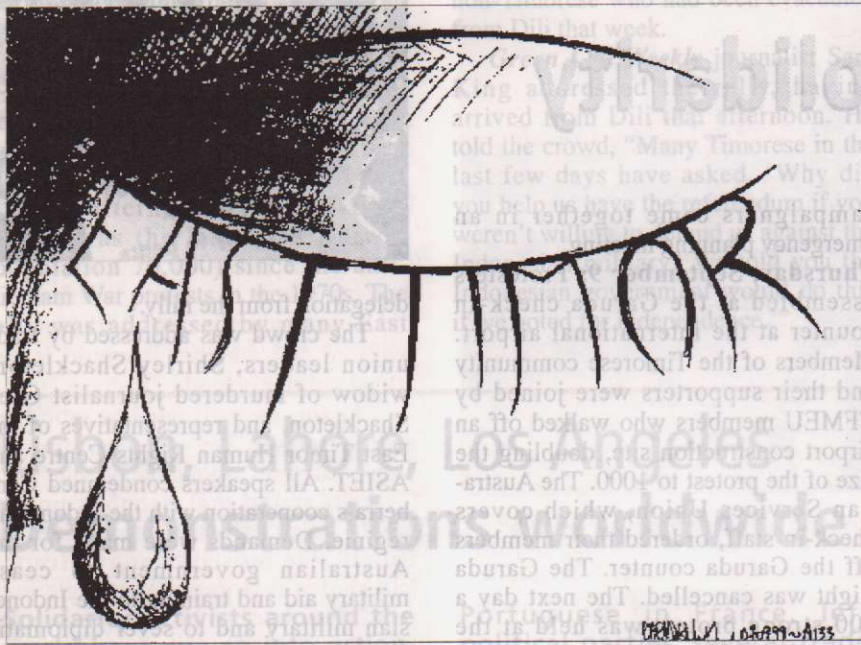
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## Portugal: "Don't make the same mistake twice!"

**Over 100,000 people have filled the streets of Lisbon, in Portugal's largest demonstrations since the 1975 revolution.**

Although part of the appeals for these demonstrations came from the Portuguese media, government and state institutions, these mobilisations were so huge and spontaneous that there was no possible centralised political direction.

The traditional political parties were completely overtaken during the process.

The main demand of the masses was the respect for the results of the referendum held in East Timor and a UN intervention in East Timor as the only immediate way of stopping the massacres.

Until September 12, when Jakarta finally accepted the UN intervention, these demonstrations were also accompanied by a very visible anti-American feeling. The contrast in American positions on East Timor and Kosovo was clear to everyone.

[SV]

### Left bloc statement

According to a leaflet issued by Portugal's radical Left Bloc, "President Habibie's acceptance of the entrance of a United Nations peace force into East Timor constitutes a significant defeat of the Indonesian dictatorship that has occupied the territory for 24 years, with the complicity of the United States of America and the whole "international community".

This defeat was possible, on one hand, thanks to the heroic resistance of the people of East Timor, and their decades-long fight for self-determination and independence.

The massive mobilisations, and the results of the referendum of August 30th, show clearly what the East Timorese people want.

The amazing popular international mobilisation of the last few days helped achieve the defeat of the Indonesian position.

In efforts that took new forms of expression, revolt took the streets forcing the most powerful governments of the world to look at East Timor, and stop the return of the silence of the cemeteries.

Through our mobilisations, we have encouraged the reinforcement of diplomatic pressure for the end of the massacres and for the respect of the will of the Timorese people. This first success proves that popular mobilisation was and still is the great force that can determine the course of history. The deployment of a UN peace force cannot, must not stop this struggle of solidarity.

The murderers are still in the territory, developing their politics of burned land, forced deportations of thousand of Timorese A and physical elimination of the leaders and fighters of the resistance, of CNRT and FALINTIL.

Those responsible for these massacres are still freely walking through the corridors of international diplomacy, gaining time in order to pursue their genocide plan. Enough wasted time! It is necessary to act now!

Humanitarian help can arrive immediately to the territory and to the refugee camps of East and Western Timor if the necessary means are deployed... The army, the police and the militias cannot continue killing. The international community cannot accept—under any conditions—the maintenance of more than 20,000 murderers of the Timorese people in its territory. One cannot make the same mistake twice.

The entrance of the UN force must be accompanied by the total and immediate retreat of the Indonesian forces that occupy East Timor! The UN forces have to assure the immediate and safe return of the thousands of refugees, of the leaders and speakers of the resistance, and of commander Xanana Gusmão, as well as the immediate disarmament of the pro-integration militias.

Those responsible for the massacres and deportations must respond to a International Court for the accusation of genocide and extermination of the people of East Timor.

Bloco de Esquerda  
Lisbon, 13 September 1999



# A wave of solidarity

Massive pro-Timorese demonstrations have been held across Australia. Trade unionists, East Timorese and solidarity activists have been making their presence felt daily.

## Sydney

**Monday, September 6:** A protest outside Garuda Airlines was called by the NSW Labor Council. Two hundred people gathered to hear trade union and solidarity activists. Michael Costa, Labor Council secretary, threatened work bans in appropriate workplaces. The offices were occupied and protesters chanted "Indonesia out, UN in!" Despite police threats, the group was determined to remain and demanded to meet with Garuda management. After demonstrators noisily blocked the entrance to the building for 10 minutes, Garuda agreed to receive a delegation.

**Tuesday, September 7:** A protest was called by the East Timorese community at the United Nations Information Office. About 300 people gathered and after about an hour marched through the city to state Parliament House and Premier Howard's office.

Construction workers walked off city building sites, and onlookers cheered and joined the rally, swelling it to 2000. At Garuda Airlines, there was a large police presence to prevent an occupation.

That evening, an unusually broad range of students, solidarity activists, trade unionists, peace and social justice

campaigners came together in an emergency planning meeting.

**Thursday, September 9:** Protesters assembled at the Garuda check-in counter at the international airport. Members of the Timorese community and their supporters were joined by CFMEU members who walked off an airport construction site, doubling the size of the protest to 1000. The Australian Services Union, which covers check-in staff, ordered their members off the Garuda counter. The Garuda flight was cancelled. The next day a 800-strong protest was held at the international airport.

1000 high school students gathered at the Town Hall after walking out of classes to show their solidarity with the East Timorese people. They were joined by tertiary students who then marched to the Garuda offices to occupy them once again!

## Melbourne

Melbourne's first major demonstration was called by Timorese young people and the National Council of Timorese Resistance (CNRT) and backed by the Victorian trade union movement. In less than 24 hours, more than 1000 people were mobilised for the September 6 rally. Meeting on the steps of Parliament House, they heard Abel Guterres from the CNRT. He urged the crowd to pressure the Australian government to take action to stop the carnage.

The rally marched to the building where the federal cabinet was meeting. Foreign minister Alexander Downer was willing to meet only with a small



delegation from the rally.

The crowd was addressed by trade union leaders, Shirley Shackleton, widow of murdered journalist Greg Shackleton, and representatives of the East Timor Human Rights Centre and ASIET. All speakers condemned Canberra's cooperation with the Indonesian regime. Demands were made for the Australian government to cease military aid and training to the Indonesian military and to sever diplomatic ties. Trade unions representatives promised industrial action against Indonesian commercial interests.

**September 8:** more than 1,500 people gathered outside the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade is located, to demand the sending of peacekeeping troops. The rally was chaired by Leigh Hubbard, secretary of the Victorian Trades Hall Council. Speakers included Catholic Bishop Hilton Deakin.

**September 10:** The culmination of the week's activities was a 30,000 strong rally and march. Churches, unions, building workers, high school and university students, solidarity activists and the Timorese community were all represented. A 300-strong contingent left Melbourne University and was joined by workers and passers-by, swelling to 1000 by the time it joined the rally.

Demonstrators marched past the heavily guarded Garuda office to Parliament House. On the steps, 700 high school students, who had walked out of school in a national high school walkout organised by Resistance, stood with placards reading "Stop the rapes, stop the killings, free East Timor now".

## Darwin

**September 10:** Over 400 students walking out of school at lunchtime. Sarah Pinto, a 15-year-old East Timorese, opened the student rally. She explained that the walkout was held to celebrate the courage of the people of East Timor who had, despite the terror of the last few months, told the world clearly that they wanted independence, but also to condemn the Indonesian military's refusal to respect the vote. The students demanded that the Australia



Area: 14,870 sq. km  
 Population: 830,000  
 Religion: 98% Christian  
 Economy: Little or no industry; coffee-growing  
 GDP: \$113 million (50% from government spending)

- 1859: Timor divided between Portuguese East and Dutch West
- 1945: Portuguese crush Timorese rebellion, restoring rule after Japanese occupation
- 1949: Indonesia gains independence from the Netherlands
- 1974: Coup in Portugal paves way for end of colonial rule
- 1975: Indonesia invades East Timor
- 1976: Indonesia annexes East Timor; UN does not recognize the move
- 1991: Dili massacre of East Timorese protesters
- 1992: Indonesians capture rebel leader Xanana Gusmao
- 1996: Nobel Peace Prize awarded to independence activist Jose Ramos Horta and Catholic Bishop Carlos Ximenes Belo
- 1998: Suharto's fall opens way for an Indonesian withdrawal



lian government and the United Nations act immediately to stop the violence. In reply to some teachers and students' query as to why the walkout was necessary, Pinto said, "All young people have the responsibility to act against injustice in the most public way they can: on the streets".

That afternoon's rally of 1500 people was the largest in Darwin (population 70,000) since the anti-Vietnam War protests in the 1970s. The rally was addressed by many East

Timorese people, young and old, and non-Timorese who had been evacuated from Dili that week.

*Green Left Weekly* journalist Sam King addressed the rally, having arrived from Dili that afternoon. He told the crowd, "Many Timorese in the last few days have asked, 'Why did you help us have the referendum if you weren't willing to defend us against the Indonesian military? We told you the Indonesian government would do this if we voted for independence.'"

The rally participants unanimously committed to rally every week and take any other action necessary to make the Australian and other governments send peacekeepers to East Timor and force the Indonesian military to leave. ★

Source: reports in *Green Left Weekly*. This issue went to press before the 15 September demonstrations across Australia. For more information contact ASIET on 9690 1032 (Sydney), 9635 8449 (western Sydney) or the CFMEU East Timor hotline on 9394 9494. E-mail <asiet@peg.apc.org>.

## Lisbon, Lahore, Los Angeles Demonstrations worldwide

**Solidarity activists around the world have swung into action, organising emergency protests to demand that the will of the East Timorese people for independence be respected.**

Europe's largest demonstrations were in the Portuguese capital, **Lisbon** (see p.4). On September 8, demonstrators joined hands to form a 10km human chain linking the embassies of the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council — France, China, Britain, Russia and the United States.

In **Paris**, France, more than 2,000 people participated in an emotional demonstration, organised at only 48 hours notice!

The action was endorsed by more than 40 organisations. The central demands were that the Indonesian-backed militias be disarmed, that the Indonesian police and armed forces be withdrawn and that an international peacekeeping force intervene to stop the killing.

Demands were also addressed to the French government and president, the European Union and the World Bank-led Consultative Group on Indonesia.

The range of organisations that came together was unusually broad. They included France's two solidarity committees with East Timor, human rights groups, pacifist associations, religious and medical groups, anti-racist and migrant movements, associations of

Portuguese in France, left political parties, several trade union federations, the Peasant Confederation and other international solidarity committees.

Several hundred people also demonstrated in **Amsterdam**, Holland.

In **Brussels**, Belgium, the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) and the Belgian trade union centre FGTB organised a demonstration outside the Indonesian embassy on September 7. Dozens of trade union activists, led by FGTB general secretary Mia Devits, responded to the call.

The ICFTU called on its affiliates in 144 countries to take part in an international trade union campaign to pressure Indonesia to put an end to the killings and to respect the results of the August 30 referendum.

All parts of **Australia** report massive demonstrations, with good representation of labour and Timorese immigrant groups, and an impressive willingness of high school students to walk out in protest at the massacres. [See main article for more details.]

In **Auckland**, New Zealand, a range of actions were organised to coincide with the meeting of APEC ministers. A vigil was maintained outside the APEC meeting venue. On September 11, a march was held to "welcome" Indonesian officials and to condemn the violence in East Timor. Supporters of East Timor independence gathered in

Albert Park as part of a larger gathering protesting the APEC meeting.

In **Lahore**, Pakistan, the Labour Party Pakistan (LPP) in Lahore organised a demonstration in front of the US consulate at eight hours' notice. It was Pakistan's first demonstration around East Timor. Demonstrators chanted slogans in favour of East Timor's independence and demanding the immediate withdrawal of the Indonesian army from East Timor.

The criminal inaction of the United Nations was denounced by LPP general secretary Farooq Tariq, who condemned the UN role in East Timor and demanded that UN special envoy for East Timor Jamsheed Marker immediately resign.

A delegation went to see US officials and handed over a petition to send to the UN that condemned the UN for leaving the Timorese masses in the hands of the killers.

Tariq called on the international labour movement to take "firm, speedy and effective measures to force Indonesia to withdraw from East Timor and disband the militias".

Over 100 demonstrated in front of the Indonesian embassy in **Katunayaka, Sri Lanka**. The participants, who included Buddhist monks, delivered a petition calling for an end to the bloodbath in East Timor, the disarming of the pro-Jakarta terror gangs, Indonesian troops/police out now, a UN peacekeeping force to be sent to East Timor and recognition of independence. [GLW/JD] ★

Source: Compiled from reports in *Green Left Weekly*.





Indonesian troops trained and armed Timor's pro-integration militia

## Socialist Party of Timor Time for mass action

**Days before the UN referendum degenerated into chaos, Max Lane spoke to leaders of the radical-left Socialist Party of Timor.**

Shalar Kosi is the secretary general of the Socialist Party of Timor (PST). He says that the crucial question for socialists in East Timor is building bases among the people. "In East Timor, we have the beginnings of bases among port workers, construction workers and drivers. Among coffee farmers, both small owners and labourers, we have some cells that are also developing cooperatives."

"One of the frameworks for this has been the formation this year of groupings in different sectors", he explained. "These include the Workers Socialist Alliance, the Peasant Socialist Alliance, the Socialist Youth Alliance, Socialist Alliance of Women and a Socialist Study Centre. They are all at the early stages of development."

A theme in Shalar Kosi's analysis is the necessity of a strategy of mass action, both for the independence struggle and for a socialist East Timor.

"We would have preferred that the movement reject the May 1999 agreement between the UN and Indonesia, and apply pressure through mass actions for a solution in which the Indonesian army wasn't in charge of security for the referendum."

The PST, which was formed as a

party in 1997, is not part of Fretilin (the main pro-independence grouping) or the broader National Council for Timorese Resistance (CNRT).

The PST criticises the CNRT for not recognising the 1975 declaration of independence that formed the Democratic Republic of East Timor. The PST also says that "people's power", rather than diplomacy, should be the central tactic for winning independence.

### Which way forward?

The PST helped form the People's Council for the Defence of the Republic (CPD) which organised demonstrations soon after the May 5 UN agreement was signed. The CPD, said Kosi, is a loose network, including many non-party people who still support the 1975 Democratic Republic.

"But now we are working together with Xanana Gusmao and the CNRT to mobilise for the referendum." The PST supports the CNRT proposal for a post-referendum coalition government which includes the pro-integration forces. [this interview took place before the escalation of violence by pro-integration militias]

According to Kosi, this coalition government should have only two tasks: to keep the administration going and to prepare general elections. "We want free multi-party elections as soon as possible after a coalition government

can be formed. Six months is preferable, but definitely no more than two years.

"We would like to see a second referendum, about re-establishing the Democratic Republic of East Timor that was proclaimed in 1975."

### Political struggle

Kosi doubted that Jakarta would abide by the results of the referendum. There was still a question whether the Indonesian army would withdraw as required and whether it would leave armed militias behind.

"Again, we will need to mobilise people's power. We will need stronger organised bases among the people."

Kosi stated that people's power would be as effective as the role of Falintil, the resistance army. History had shown that guerilla struggle and people's power can be a very powerful combination. "We also have no problem with the disarming of Falintil together with the militias. This will open up more space, make it easier for mass mobilising."

He was confident that the pro-integration militias could be defeated in this manner. "They have no basis, apart from the backing from the Indonesian army. They will wither under the force of people's power. But we must still recognise the danger that a withdrawing Indonesian army may try to start a civil war."

Kosi also emphasised that a key part of defeating the occupation was cooperation with the Indonesian democratic movement. "We worked together with the PRD [People's Democratic Party], for example, in the 1994 occupations of the Dutch and Russian embassies. The struggles in East Timor and Indonesia cannot and must not be separated."

### Building the party profile

While a united front to win the referendum, establish a transitional coalition government and force the Indonesian army to withdraw remains the central tactical priority, Kosi emphasised that laying the basis for a socialist East Timor remained the fundamental goal of the PST.

"Of course, at the moment, the people look to Xanana as the leader or symbol of the fight for independence. Or they relate to Fretilin as the organisation that fought for independence in the 1970s. Our influence at this point is limited. We have no illusions about that. But we also think that the prospects for the socialist movement in East Timor are good."



Behind this optimism is the assessment that an East Timorese capitalism has not yet taken root and that building a socialist East Timor would not require great efforts to demolish a deeply rooted capitalist system.

It is also based on the PST's assessment that while both Xanana and Fretilin have great authority and popularity, they have not developed functioning party structures among the people. "The coming period will be a period of ideological clarification among all the political forces", Kosi added.

### A small, determined voice

"The PST is still small, with about 300 cadre in East Timor and slightly less in Indonesia. The 300 in East Timor include 70 new members who have just been through classes. In Indonesia, we have branches covering East Java and Central Java as well as the worker groupings in Lampung.

"On August 1, the PST set up an open legal office in Dili. Our chairperson, Saruntu, is based in Dili. Our position is that the socialist forces should come out from the underground and declare their presence. This is the only way we can win people to our ideas and strengthen our base."

As part of this coming into the open, the PST launched a newspaper, *Tuba*. Two issues were published before the referendum. "We distributed 5000 copies in East Timor. They are sold by our members to supporters and sympathisers. The newspaper not only debates and analyses current political developments in relation to the UN referendum and the situation in East Timor but also carries educational material on the East Timorese social structure as well as the prospects for socialism in the region as a whole."

### Origins

The PST was formed in 1997, but Kosi traces its origins back much further. A few left-wing youth, having received some education from leftists in Fretilin, had established the youth organisation Ojetil in 1981.

This attempt to build a socialist-oriented youth group failed in the context of a trend towards a politics of "national unity", which included disconnecting the guerilla forces from Fretilin, a rapprochement with the conservative Christian Democrat-oriented UDT [Timorese Democratic Union], a non-party orientation by other student groups such as Renetil and Xanana's resignation from Fretilin

and the formation of the National Council of Maubere Resistance (CNRM).

According to Kosi, between 1981 and 1989 the left-wing elements in the resistance were in retreat. Some left leaders in the guerilla movement disappeared from the struggle.

Then in December 1989, three of the original members of the 1981 Ojetil formed the Clandestine Student Front for the Liberation of East Timor (Feclitil). "Ojetil is now a completely different organisation".

The new group, Feclitil, was based outside East Timor. Its first action was a joint protest with Renetil and unaffiliated East Timorese students in Jakarta against the 1991 Santa Cruz massacre. In December 1991, 10 people gathered to form the Timorese Socialist Association. In the initial period, said Kosi, the PST was the subject of considerable slander and gossip, even to the extent of rumours that the head of the PST was Abilio Araujo, a former president of Fretilin who became a pro-Jakarta figure.

"However, by 1995 we were able to establish formal contact with Xanana Gusmao and engage in some cooperation, while maintaining our right to make criticisms and to stay

outside of CNRT. Actually, we were also ready to join Fretilin if Fretilin was able to transform itself into a united front of left or progressive forces within CNRT, but it seems Fretilin wants to be a party of its own, perhaps with a social democratic platform. Maybe there will be possibilities of a coalition in the future."

Kosi says that the PST's socialism bases itself on "non-Stalinist Marxism... We also try to learn from the contributions of revolutionary socialist leaders, such as Lenin and Trotsky. But we are short of readings and materials, and we are still studying.

"We think that the socialist forces throughout the Asia-Pacific region need to collaborate and work out common approaches to issues. This region is going to be a centre of conflict between socialist and capitalist forces in the coming period, especially with the real potential for social revolution in Indonesia. An early victory for socialism in East Timor with its weakly developed indigenous capitalism and its small size and population could also be an inspiration for socialist forces throughout the region." ★

This article first appeared in Green Left Weekly, 18 August 1999

## Supporting UN troops Time to intervene!" says PST

On 9 September the PST External Delegation in Jakarta issued the following demands

1. The UN and international community should take firm, speedy and effective measures to force Indonesia, its army and police, to withdraw from East Timor and disband the militias;
2. Economic and diplomatic sanctions against Indonesia if the violence and massacres continue;
3. The UN should send an International Peacekeeping Force... killings are more rampant and there are more refugees flooding across the border and the infrastructure of East Timor is being subjected to total paralysis;
4. The Portuguese government is responsible for the danger and destruction being inflicted

on the East Timorese people because they signed the May 5 agreement which is bringing about the destruction of the East Timorese people;

5. Portugal should use all diplomatic means to convince the countries grouped in NATO to force Indonesia, its army and police, to withdraw from East Timor in order to protect the East Timorese nation which is threatened by the violence and killings of Indonesia's army and police, and militia in the region.
6. All the humanitarian NGOs under the auspices of the UN (such as the UNHCR and others) should render full assistance to the East Timorese refugees so that all their basic needs, such as food and medicines and medical teams be met, so that they can fully recover and finally return to their homes. ★



# Tomato victory

The European establishment praises Holland for its super-flexible workforce, and lack of social conflict.

But Erik Meijer of the Socialist Party will use his seat in the European Parliament to tell the real story...

## Barend de Voogd

The party's 5% score in the June election to the European Parliament surprised many members. The Socialist ("Tomato") Party won only 1.3% of votes in the 1994 European election, and 3.5% in the last national election.

The Socialist Party has always opposed the European Union's capitalist integration projects. But it has tended to join initiatives like the 1997 Amsterdam "EuroMarch against Unemployment" at the last minute—preferring self-affirmation to active joint work. The party was virtually absent from the June 1999 Cologne demonstrations against the EU summit.

"Building the party" is the central axis of the party's road to socialism. But organisational sectarianism, populist propaganda on "questions of principle" and intense local work have enabled the party to capture much of the left protest vote in municipal and national elections.

In 1974, the party had five municipal councillors, today it has 223. In 1998 the party increased its parliamentary presence from two to five Deputies. The membership has increased from 16,000 in 1994 to over 25,000 today.

"The SP is now present at all the levels of power," says Jan Marijnissen, the party's charismatic leader.

## A new spirit of openness...

Since the party is not really involved in the social movements, there is an obvious risk of a reformist slide. The party hopes to avoid this by increasing its dialogue with non-member militants, and involving "independents" in its parliamentary work.

The party's new Member of the European Parliament, Erik Meijer, only joined the SP three years ago. He previously led the Socialist Pacifist Party (PSP). In the late 1980s, the PSP and Communist Party (CPN) created the Green Left. Meijer later decided that it would be more useful to join and build the SP.

"The SP isn't really a revolutionary party," Meijer admits. But he is convinced that it "can play a similar role in Dutch politics to Italy's Refounded Communist Party,"—by regrouping all Dutch currents to the left of the greens and the social democrats.

## ...failing to convince

So far, the party has failed to attract significant numbers of disillusioned supporters of the Communist Party and other left groups. This is partly because "independents" are put off by the lack of debate inside the party, and the absence of currents or tendencies reflecting the real diversity of the Dutch left. (In fact, Meijer is the only leading SP member who does not come from the original Maoist core.)

Other potential supporters criticise the SP's absence from the social movements. Immigrants and homosexuals find the party line disappointingly mainstream.

"Most members of the SP are not politically active," says Meijer. "But we are trying to create some common



identity." For instance, every year the party organises hires an outdoor attractions centre, and offers all members a free day out. Meijer admits that this 'bread and circus' approach is not to everybody's taste. "Some members accuse us of wanting to create 'another pillar' of society".

But even the party's left critics recognise that the SP does defend even unpopular positions on what it considers to be questions of principle. For example, the SP was the only party to vote against Dutch participation in the NATO war against Yugoslavia—an aggression which had massive popular

// continued on page 12

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# Czech Republic The Communist comeback

Czech workers are turning towards the Communist Party, in frustration at the country's first Social Democratic government.

Adam Novak

Unemployment has continued to rise since Milos Zeman's Social Democrats took power in 1998. And the party has failed to take the promised action against "thieves and profiteers" who dominated the country's mass privatisation process.

As the overwhelmingly right-wing media try to discredit and divide the Social Democrats, the main benefactors seem to be the Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia (KSCM), which now has over 18% voter support, up from 11% during the 1998 elections.

"Voters expected dramatic steps from the Social Democrats," explains Jan Herzmann of the Sofres-Factum public opinion survey company. "71% of those who voted for the Social Democrats in 1998 wanted the party to investigate all cases of privatisation since 1989, and at least half wanted the new government to renationalise all 'bad' cases of privatisation."

In fact, after nine years of limited reform under "Thatcherite" Premier Vaclav Klaus, it is the Social Democrats who are now trying to privatise the (highly profitable) breweries and (less successful) airline.

About eleven percent of Czech voters are solid supporters of the Communist Party. It has renounced Stalinism but (unlike its sister parties across Eastern Europe) resisted the trend towards social democratic politics. A recent opinion poll suggests that the increasing support for the party comes from strongly anti-Stalinist voters, who are angry at the country's mainstream parties. Communist preferences have particularly risen in the northern regions most heavily hit by

economic decline since 1989.

Although the party's core support comes from older workers and the retired—the main victims of the transition to capitalism—the new supporters include many younger people. But according to Herzmann, "these younger supporters are mainly attracted to the original, Communist ideal. The party has done little to open itself to frustrated ecological activists."

The party has 22% support among those over 45, but only 7% support in the under-29 age group. Eighteen percent of manual workers now say they would vote for the party. Most of the increasing support for the Communists comes from men. Only 12% of women say they would vote for the party, compared to over 20% of men.

Voters "increasingly have the impression that the current political class do not behave any better than the pre-1989 [Stalinist] elite," says Herzmann. "The feeling that the pre-1989 system was a bad one is weakening. People are gradually idealising the past. Sometimes for understandable reasons. When someone loses his job after thirty years, and can't find work, then his main memory isn't that, in the Communist days, there was always a shortage of bananas. He is more likely to remember that, in the old days, everyone was in work, everyone earned a salary."

"There is a general radicalisation of society. Radical feelings about unequal property relations; income inequality; hostility towards multinational corporations and foreign investors. More and more people are willing to consider participation in some form of protest, or voting for a radical party."

Since 1989, the Czech media and political elite have marginalised and demonised the Communist Party. But some now think that incorporating the party into the mainstream

would be the best way to neutralise worker discontent. Herzmann is convinced that "the party's core voters could easily be reoriented towards the centre-left," if the party adopted a social-democratic programme. According to **Mlada Fronta Dnes** newspaper, a "modernised" Communist Party could hope to win 25% of the vote, reducing the Social Democrats to 10-15%.

Only 15% of those who voted Communist in 1988 would like to see a return to pre-1989 conditions. Hardline ex-party boss Miroslav Stepan is trying to organise these voters behind an unrepentant Stalinist party. As the Communists are capturing most of the strongly dissatisfied voters, support for the Stalinists, and for the far-right Republicans, has fallen sharply. ★

Statistics from Mladá Fronta Dnes, 19 August 1999

## Bohemia's Roma ghetto

- Government human rights emissary Petr Uhl has pleaded with residents of the north Bohemian town of Usti nad Labem not to "ghettoise" their Roma ("gypsy") population.

The ghetto was created in 1993, when authorities began regrouping "non-rent-paying" families, and those expelled when private landlords reclaimed their pre-1945 property under the controversial "restitution" laws. Two years later, white residents demanded action against their "noisy and smelly" Roma neighbours.

The town council promised to build a four metre high wall down the middle of the street. When the story was picked up by international media, they backed down—proposing only a two-metre high, ceramic structure, "purely as a noise barrier."

Until 1989 Uhl was a key member of the Charta 77 dissident movement, and one of the few revolutionary Marxists in the east-European pro-democracy movement. Since the fall of the Stalinist regime he has focused on new human rights questions, particularly the defence of the Roma ("gypsy") minority. When Czechoslovakia split, he demanded a Slovak passport, to illustrate the arbitrary nature of the rules that divided the population and threatened to exclude most Czech Roma from citizenship on the basis of their (often distant) Slovak origins. This article includes material from Lidové noviny, 19 August.



## The nation against the EU

The SP electoral programme is very clear about the European Union: "a non-democratic super-state... asocial... the expression of the all-powerfulness of the big multinationals... blind abandon to the Euro... worsening ecological conditions... building a super-power... a fortress Europe..." Erik Meijer's electoral campaign focused on "those who are filling their pockets in Brussels and Strasbourg," (where the EU institutions are concentrated.) The party distributed sponges, in protest at dirty money politics.

Unfortunately, the electoral programme said very little about non-economic questions, like refugee policy, sustainable development, and women's position in society.

The SP "wants to work from below, to build another type of Europe... oriented towards the well-being of people and their environment. With decisions made as close as possible to the citizens, in their towns and regions."

The party considers that "the European Council, Commission, Central Bank, and even the European Parliament should not have the final word in making pan-European agreements. Each national parliament should have the last word... no decision of the European Parliament should be valid in a country until it has been ratified by the national parliament." European integration, for the SP, can only be "on the basis of co-operation between free, sovereign nations."

But this doesn't solve the problem. For example, the SP condemns the huge autonomy given to the European Central Bank (headed by Dutch social democrat Wim Duisberg). The problem

is that this autonomy was approved by the Dutch parliament, as part of a transfer of sovereignty to the supra-national level.

The SP has also approved the common declaration of Europe's Communist Parties (who sit together in the European Parliament as the United European Left) demanding a radical reduction in working hours, without loss of salary, a common tax on speculative capital, and "more determined" pan-European measures to reduce unemployment.

But Eurolegislation along these lines could only be effective if no country of the EU could exempt itself. Should national parliaments be able to opt out of legislation on the 35-hour week, and the introduction of a "Tobin" tax on financial speculation? ★

The author is a member of SAP, the Dutch section of the Fourth International, which supported the SP election campaign.

## Green Left

• The **Green Left** won 12% of the vote (four seats) in a campaign that stressed progressive reforms of the EU: revision of the Amsterdam Treaty (on neoliberal coordination), elaboration of a European Constitution, on the base of a referendum, more powers for the European parliament, abolition of the "safe third country" rule which makes it easier to expel asylum seekers, no deepening of police cooperation, greater political control over the European Central Bank, abolition of the Euratom nuclear programme, and a tax on speculative capital.

The Green Left was one of the few Green parties to oppose the introduction of the Euro, the Maastricht convergence criteria, and the Amsterdam stability pact. But it has abandoned its extra-parliamentary origins, in favour of respect for the rules of the largely symbolic European Parliament.

The party is also enthusiastic about EU coordinated foreign and "defence" policy. They say NATO should transfer its transport and logistics role to the OCSE (a European defence council which includes Russia and the east European states.) But there is little to differentiate the GL's call for more, and better humanitarian interventions, from NATO's own self-appointed new role. In the Kosovo crisis, the GL supported NATO's illegal war against Yugoslavia, despite an electoral programme which calls for dissolving NATO! [BdV] ★

**More than 30,000 people joined the European demonstration against unemployment, racism and war in Cologne, Germany on 29 May, the venue of the European Summit of European heads of state.**

Activists from most countries in Europe protested that the countries of the European Union failed to fight unemployment although all except Spain and Ireland are governed by Social Democrats.

The demonstrators also protested against EU plans to reduce real minimum wages and cut the social security system.

Banners, posters and speeches stressed the multiple connections between war, unemployment and social deprivation.


The number of participants was similar to the network's 1997 Amsterdam demonstration.

Over the following days, more than a hundred activists of unemployed movements from Germany, France, Spain, Belgium, Great Britain, Holland, Scandinavia, Italy and Switzerland participated in the three "counter-Parliament" sessions organised by the European Marches against Unemployment.

The participants made a long list of a wide variety of proposals, ranging from the "Tobin" tax on financial speculation to the four-day-week. After discussion in each country, these proposals could be added to the platforms adopted by previous European Marches network meetings (Brussels '98, Cologne, January '99).

The "Parliament" made two proposals for collective action. First, a European day of action for a guaranteed income and against workfare, in December 1999. Secondly, a big international demonstration in France, to be held sometime towards the end of 2000.

The next European Union Summit will be held in Helsinki, probably starting on 16 December. On that day, unemployed movements and associations should take action against offices of organisations handling unemployment benefits in *all* towns and cities in Europe. For the very first time, we hope to see media images from hundreds of



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# Europe's unemployed The long march...

actions and occupations happening everywhere, simultaneously, and regardless of national frontiers!

The principal common demands include the rejection all forced labour measures ("workfare"). Unemployed movements across Europe are also calling for a "an income which allows everyone to have a decent standard of living without any discrimination of age, sex or origin or any other form of discrimination".

The Parliament of the Unemployed unsuccessfully debated the level of this decent income. Suggestions ranged from 750 to 1000 Euros/month. But southern European activists, from Spain or Greece, where the standard of living is low, thought that the higher limit was unrealistic.

Attempts were then made to find a common definition applicable to different economic systems. Suggested definitions were either based on a minimum salary (but not all EU countries have one), or the poverty level, or gross domestic product... The debate on this issue remains open.

On 25 May, a European Marches delegation was received in Brussels by the German



minister of labour and social affairs, Walter Riester in his capacity as president of the ministers for social affairs in the EU. The delegation presented demands drawn up at the Brussels and Cologne European meetings. It is worth pointing out that if we were received in 1999 but not in 1997, it was very likely due to the effect of important struggles by the unemployed that have since taken place in many European countries.

An international demonstra-

tion is planned for the year 2000 in France. The goal is to attract at least 35,000 participants—like the Amsterdam and Cologne rallies. France has some of the most imaginative social movements in Europe, and the highest level of class struggle. Organisers promise that this event will fully live up to participants' expectations. [PS/JD] ★

European Marches against Unemployment, 104 rue des Couronnes, 75020 Paris, France. Tel: +33 1 44 62 63 44, Fax: +33 1 44 62 63 45 <marches97@ras.eu.org> www.mygale.org/02/ras/marches/

## "We, the unemployed..."

We, the unemployed and those in insecure jobs in Germany and in many other European countries... call on EU heads of state to take into consideration the following social demands:

- a minimum guaranteed individual income for all, to enable people to live in dignity, without discrimination of age, sex or of origin, with without conditions, or any form of activity in exchange, or any obligation to

accept employment;

- a massive reduction of working hours throughout Europe to be financed by a tax on profits, and without flexibility or lower wages;

- the right to decent housing, to health care, to training, to free access to all forms of public transport, and access to all other forms of public services ( the means of communication, electricity, etc.) necessary for full and active participation in social life.

We call on the unemployed and those in insecure jobs to join

existing collectives and associations or to create new ones.

Here and now, we call upon all those unemployed and in insecure jobs to take part, wherever possible, in a European day of action against workfare that will coincide with the Helsinki European Summit (December '99).

In the year 2000, we want to demonstration all together again during the French presidency of the EU."

**European Parliament of Unemployed  
Cologne, 1<sup>st</sup> June 1999**

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# Negotiations in the shadow of the gallows

The Turkish state has no right to judge, imprison and execute PKK leader "Apo" Öcalan.

Jean Dupont\*

Of course, there is no doubt that Apo and the PKK are responsible for a series of crimes against the Turkish—and Kurdish—people. They have massacred peasants and teachers, and assassinated both their own "dissidents" and members of other Kurdish and Turkish left groups.

Terrorist attacks in urban areas killed Kurdish and Turkish civilians, making many progressive Turks and Kurds extremely hostile to the PKK.

All this made sense only within the PKK's warped, Stalinist ideology.

But the Turkish state has a much longer history of torture, murder and assassination. Tens of thousands of Kurdish and Turkish civilians, and political activists have been imprisoned. Thousands of Kurdish villages have been burned. Tens of thousands of Kurdish peasants have been deported. The most elementary democratic rights have been denied to the Kurds—and the Turks. No, the Turkish Republic has no moral or political right to judge the PKK.

## Decades of state violence

In any case, the Turkish state, the neighbouring states and the imperialists are ultimately responsible for the violent actions of the PKK. The

\*This is a much-shortened version of the dossier published in our French sister-magazine *Inprecor* 7/99. Many nuances have inevitably been lost in the process. We will return to this important theme in future issues. [JD]



violence and excesses of the Kurdish movement are the result of the violence and misery which dominate their experience of this society, this state. The Kurdish people has suffered decades of repression. Many Kurdish militants learned about violence at the hands of the Turkish police and army.

The web of guilt goes much further. Greece, Syria and the USA have cynically exploited the Kurdish question. Washington backs Iraqi Kurds against Saddam Hussein, but a few kilometres

further north, backs the Turkish state against the Kurds. Turkey has sometimes supported Iraqi Kurds against the Baghdad regime. Iraqi Kurds have sometimes fought alongside the Turkish army, against the PKK. And the Kurdish question has become the central pretext for European Union bullying of Turkey.

Not one of the criminal members of the Turkish special forces, the military police, the army, the death squads, and the fascist gangs (often recruited by the





secret service to do the real dirty work) have been condemned by the Turkish courts. Those who "disappeared" thousands of Kurdish and Turkish militants have gone unpunished. None of the Turkish politicians who organised, supported or tolerated these outrages has been forced to justify their actions.

Öcalan's death sentence is only the beginning of the real negotiations. "I expected this sentence," he said. "It is an attempt to satisfy public opinion. But now the real political process will start. My death sentence does not change [the PKK's] basic line. We will continue our search for peace. Our supporters and activists must respond with calm, and develop mature, careful policies..."

"Peace is a historic necessity," the PKK leader continued. "There is no simple solution to the Kurdish question."

Öcalan tried to use his trial to negotiate indirectly with the Turkish state and the country's military leaders. His supporters say he offered them a solution to the Kurdish problem rather than indefinite military confrontation.

Some progressive commentators have a more critical view: "the PKK has always tried to open negotiations with the Turkish military," says one leading member of the left regroupement party ÖDP. "He now seems to be suggesting the capitulation of his organisation. But the Kurdish question began before the PKK, and will exist afterwards."

The state is in no hurry to execute the PKK leader. All Turkish death sentences are automatically referred to the High Court, and then to parliament. There are at least 40 cases pending, and it is 15 years since a death penalty was carried out.

Parliament will probably not discuss Öcalan's case until well after Bill Clinton and European heads of state visit the country in November for the summit meeting of the OCSE (Organisation for Cooperation in Security of Europe).

Turkey's right and far right parties, which have a large majority of seats in parliament, are clearly in favour of execution. And there is intense pressure

on the (still undecided) Islamic fundamentalists (FP) and the ruling Democratic Left Party (DSP), which is opposed to the death penalty as such.

But it is far from sure that parliament will ratify Öcalan's death sentence. The PKK has offered far-reaching concessions from its original demands, hoping to generate a favourable response from "doves" in the Turkish establishment.

### Prospects for peace?

The PKK has announced a ceasefire and is withdrawing its armed troops from Turkish territory. They promise a "permanent end to the armed struggle." In return, the regime is searching for a mechanism to "suspend" the death sentence, without provoking a Turkish nationalist backlash. If the European Court of Human Rights adopts Öcalan's case, this may provide an acceptable excuse to commute his sentence to life imprisonment. The Turkish media are already preparing public opinion for such a deal.

The regime is unsure how to respond to the PKK stand-down. The government is preparing a (largely symbolic) amnesty law, and legislation on regional decentralisation.

Many west-European solidarity activists were surprised and disoriented by Apo's declaration that the PKK would be satisfied with measures short of federation or autonomy: "the Kurdish problem is essentially about cultural rights," he has repeatedly stressed. Turkish leftists were less surprised...

The hard line lobby in Turkey is certainly very strong. But there is a genuine debate in army, government and bourgeois circles about the possibilities of an agreement with the PKK.

Those opposed to any peace settlement include the mafia (who benefit from the 'no-man's-land' in the Kurdish region), arms smugglers, the pro-regime and semi-feudal Kurdish village militias, the most corrupt sectors of the army and police, and the neighbouring states (who face their own Kurdish questions).

Despite the understandable bitterness of those who have suffered during



the long conflict, ordinary Kurdish and Turkish people have no interest in anything except peace. And sections of the industrial and commercial bourgeoisie see peace as an opportunity to win new markets.

### The army divided...

The army is deeply divided. Some officers want to continue the war, which guarantees them power, influence, and funds. It also ensures that Turkey has the best trained and best equipped army in the region, and 'justifies' cross-border raids into Iraq.

But another section of the military recognise that armed confrontation within the country's borders only weakens Turkey's defensive capacity, and wastes resources which could be used to modernise the army, and increase Turkey's regional domination.

Some generals think executing Apo would serve as an example. Others think this would make him a martyr, and suggest that a defeated enemy should be incorporated, rather than crushed completely.

### ...The PKK compromises

The PKK no longer demand independence, or even autonomy. They have abandoned the armed struggle. They ask only for cultural rights, and offer their services to the Turkish state in the future.

This must be terribly difficult for many PKK militants and sympathisers to accept, after their heavy sacrifices, and years of guerrilla struggle against the Turkish state—which some of them accuse of "genocide". ★





# Fundamentalists lose votes to fascists...

**Turkish voters are deserting the traditional right-wing parties for the Islamic fundamentalists and the extreme right.**

The mainstream right parties have ruled Turkey for 50 years (except for the three *coups d'état*). But their share of the vote has declined from 56% in 1987 to 25% in the April 1999 elections. Voters have switched to the Islamic fundamentalists, (FP—15%) and the extreme right “grey wolves” (Nationalist Action Party, or MHP—18%), who doubled their 1995 vote.

If they can replace their discredited leaders and unite on a common programme, the mainstream conservatives could still regain their dominant position in parliament. But if they fail, the bourgeoisie will either have to authorise the Islamic fundamentalists (FP) or the fascists (MHP) to form a government, or encourage another military intervention into Turkish politics.

The fascists and the fundamentalists attract similar voters—urban petty-bourgeois layers in rural Anatolia, and shopkeepers, workers and the urban poor in the poorer districts of the larger cities. They profited from the splits in the mainstream parties, corruption scandals, and a general disillusionment with the neo-liberal policies of the previous governments.

## Different nationalisms

Both parties are nationalist, conservative and nostalgic about the Ottoman empire. But the FP celebrates the Ottoman caliphate as the centre of the Islamic world, whereas the MHP remembers the empire as a symbol of Turkish power.

The fundamentalists have never really identified with Turkey's republican system, dominated by all-powerful generals who insist on a non-religious state ideology. The “grey

wolves,” on the other hand, recognise the republic of Kemal Ataturk as a development which “saved the Turks from drowning” when the Ottoman empire collapsed in 1918.

Internationally, the fundamentalists orient towards the Arab countries and Muslim groups, whereas the MHP reaches out to Turkic speakers in the former Soviet Union. The fundamentalists are anti-Semitic, anti-American and third-worldist. The MHP is pro-American, and in favour of friendship with Israel.

Both parties are opposed to Kurdish nationalism, but in different ways. The FP wants to unite all Turkish citizens on the basis of a common Muslim identity. Too much Turkish nationalism could alienate Kurdish Muslims and divide the *oumma* (community of believers). The MHP opposes any “ethnic particularities” which “divide the Turkish nation.” The fundamentalists win many votes among Kurds, while the MHP recruits heavily among ethnic Turks of Caucasian, Balkan and central Asian origin, alienated youth in the larger towns, and even among the country's “golden youth”, for whom ultra-nationalism is fashionable.

## The long road to ‘modernity’

In 1994 and 1995, the fundamentalists captured much of the social frustration. But voters and the military elite reacted badly to their attempts to introduce “Muslim” measures wherever they controlled town halls. In the April 1999 elections, about 700,000 voters switched from the fundamentalists to the MHP, mainly in central and eastern Anatolia. In the major towns of Western Turkey, the Islamists lost votes towards the social-democratic DSP.

But the more “moderate” and competent fundamentalist mayors have kept their positions. In Istanbul the party won 19% of votes in the parlia-

mentary election, but 28% in elections for the municipal assembly. Former city mayor Tayyip Erdogan leads the “renewal” current in the party, in semi-opposition to 70-year old party leader Necmettin Erbakan.

## The long march of the “wolves”

In the 1960s and 1970s, the MHP was a ‘classic’ fascist party. Its “grey wolves” militia assassinated thousands of socialists and trade unionists, and organised pogroms against the Alevi (shite) minority. It successfully infiltrated the police (it still does). After the 1980 *coup d'état*, party leader “Basbus” Türkeş was imprisoned for four years. The party was forbidden, and thousands of militants were arrested and tortured. A few were even executed.

In the 1980s some MHP cadres switched to Tugut Özal's pro-neoliberal ANAP party. The “grey wolves” joined the country's blossoming mafia (over 70% of Europe's drugs pass through Turkey). Some were recruited by the Secret Service and the police, particularly for “dirty work” in the Kurdish regions.

In 1987 the party received only 2.9% of votes. Under its new leader Devlet Bahçeli, the MHP took a “centrist” strategy. They hoped to capture the sympathy of the younger generation, which was depoliticised, and disinterested in the whole “leftist-fascist” polarisation of the older generation. This new generation had been educated in the nationalist, conservative, militarist system imposed by the 1980 coup.

## Domesticated?

To reinforce his “respectable” discourse, Devlet Bahçeli told MHP militants to shave their moustaches, dress smartly, brush their teeth twice daily, smile, be polite, and stop eating garlic.

But the MHP is still not a “party like any other”. Bahçeli refuses to make any criticism of the party's excesses during the 1970s—presumably because not all his members are happy with his new, “moderate” line.





The MHP has infiltrated many areas of the state apparatus. Unlike the Islamic fundamentalists, it can aspire to a share in power.

The fundamentalists are too 'Arab' for Turkey's all-powerful generals. The MHP ideology, in contrast, is perfectly compatible with the Army's anti-clerical republicanism.

Of course, the army doesn't like the "populism" of the MHP, or its mafia connections. And it is still a little too Muslim-conservative for the generals' taste. But they could certainly tolerate the MHP as partners, particularly if the economic crisis leads to a social explosion.

The "grey wolves" could be useful

"auxiliaries" for the repressive forces. The youth wing of the MHP have a formidable street-fighting capacity. They use knives, sometimes guns, to intimidate left-wing students.

The fascist hordes are also very "effective" in intimidating Kurdish militants—when PKK leader "Apo" Ocalan was arrested, the "grey wolves"

## The Turkish left An ambiguous victory

**After 50 years of right-wing rule, and three coups d'Etat, the Turkish left is in power. But don't expect any radical changes...**

The Democratic Left Party (DSP)<sup>1</sup> won most working-class votes in the larger towns. Their candidates included many trade union leaders (including the president of DYSK).<sup>2</sup> But the party is nationalist-populist, rather than social democratic. It has less organic links to the working class than its Greek alter ego, PASOK. In fact, DSP is an exclusively electoral machine, with little real implantation or significant membership structures. It draws its support from a wide section of the population, including some more progressive Islamic associations.

Most social democratic cadres are in the rival Republican Peoples Party (CHP),<sup>3</sup> which dominated the left until 1995. But Deniz Baykal's right-wing line and manoeuvres alienated so many voters that the party fell below the 10% hurdle, and has no seats in the new parliament. Baykal has now resigned, and the party is suffering a deep identity crisis.

The overall score of the DSP and CHP (31%) is 5% higher than in 1995, but does not repre-

sent an increase in the left's long-term share of the vote. And both parties are more right-wing than ever.

The Kurdish national movement is also abandoning its left-wing origins, with voters now split between the left-nationalist HADEP<sup>4</sup> and the Islamic fundamentalists (FP). HADEP won 4.7% of the total vote, and 45% in the Kurdish capital, Diyarbakir. Despite a very unfavourable climate, the party increased its share of the vote by 0.5% (300,000 votes). The party was very disappointed by its results in Istanbul (3.4%), and other west-Turkish towns where half the Kurdish population is now concentrated.

Since parties must win 10% of the total Turkish vote to enter parliament, HADEP's 28 seats were distributed between the right-wing parties—which scored very badly in the Kurdish regions.

But HADEP won control of thirty Kurdish towns, including Diyarbakir and the seven main towns in South-east Turkey. Because HADEP boycotted the 1994 municipal elections, the Islamic fundamentalists had won control of most Kurdish towns.

These (re)conquered town halls will play a key role in Kurdish politics. According to Diyarbakir's new mayor, Feridun Çelik,

HADEP is ready to deal with the coalition government, despite the presence of the far-right Turkish MHP. "Sometimes the extremes understand each other better than the others."

### Disappointed far left

Despite a dynamic and inspiring campaign, the Freedom and Solidarity Party (ÖDP)<sup>5</sup> attracted only 250,000 votes (0.8%). Opinion polls suggested 5-8% support for the party in Istanbul, but on election day most of these people preferred a "useful" vote for the DSP or CHP, which they expected to pass the 10% barrier and enter parliament. Many felt this was the best way to oppose the Islamic fundamentalists and far-right.

The ÖDP presented candidates in all 90 provinces (except the seven major Kurdish towns, where it has no active presence). It now controls four small town halls, and has a number of municipal councillors. [ET] ★

#### Notes

1. Founded by Bülent Ecevit, charismatic leader of the CHP in the 1970s (see note three). After the 1980 coup, Ecevit left his former comrades, and created the more nationalist and conservative DSP in 1985.

2. Turkish Confederation of Progressive Trade Unions. Much weaker and more moderate than in the 1970s, when it led the labour movement. Violently repressed by the 1980 coup d'Etat.

3. Founded by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the CHP was an essential actor in the creation of the Turkish Republic in 1923. Fiercely jacobin and kemalist, the party "turned left" in the early 1970s, and joined the Socialist (IInd) International. The party won 8.7% of votes in the April 1999 election.

4. Peoples Democracy Party—close to the PKK. Founded in 1994, after HEP and DEP were dissolved by Turkey's Constitutional Court.

5. Regroupment of far-left currents, including Yeniyol, Turkish section of the 4th International. About 40,000 members.





violently attacked protesters from the Kurdish political party HADEP.

**Growing nationalism**

The vote for the MHP reflects the growth of an ethnic Turkish nationalism, in reaction to the Kurdish national movement. Indiscriminate PKK attacks have contributed to a "security" hysteria which the MHP successfully exploited.

The party's best electoral results come from the towns which provided most of the ethnic Turkish victims of

the conflict. And half of the party's voters are young men (under 25)—for whom military service in the Kurdish zones is a life-shaping experience.

Turkish nationalism has also been boosted by European (especially German) arrogance, and the rejection of Turkey's application to join the European Union.

Turkey agreed to a customs union with the EU, but Greece still blocks the financial package which was supposed to smooth the economic consequences for the weaker partner.

Turkish media suggest that the country is "surrounded"; there is a "trilateral alliance" between Greece, Iran and Armenia; Russia and Syria are "chronically hostile"; the USA wants to control the Middle East and the Caucasus; nationalism and war are spreading in the Balkans; and the Europeans are "an anti-Turk bloc" on the Kurdish and Cyprus questions.

More and more people are afraid that, after Yugoslavia, Turkey will be the next victim of a Western "solution" of ethnico-political conflicts. [JD] ★

Republic and, above all, it cannot be regarded as defending it...

“Despite all its utopian and extreme political approaches, the PKK has played an historic role by presenting the problem and the need for a solution in the most striking way and by making a solution necessary. Despite all the problems of methods, its hard-line political approach and its confusion of the ideological and the political.

It has paid the highest price not only to have the existence of Kurds accepted but also to stop it being a problem. It has lost almost 25 thousand members. More than 10 thousand of its members have been sentenced to prison for periods of up to 20 years. Millions have been forced to move. More than 3,000 villages belonging to the masses from which the PKK derives its strength have been emptied.

These facts not only indicate the source of the problem; they also indicate the fact that a solution must be found....

The accusation against me should say not that the PKK calls for a separate state, but that it very clearly calls for a democratic republic. This is not separatism but perhaps a move for the greatest union with Turkey and the Turks, a move towards strength and once again becoming a leader in the Middle East, the Caucasus and the Balkans. There is no way of achieving this other than through a free union...

# PKK statement(s)

"I expected the death sentence," PKK leader Apo Öcalan told his Turkish judges. "But the real political process starts now."



**Judge for yourself...**

*These extracts are taken from the "Full Defence Testimony" published in the English section of the central PKK website. Selection, emphasis and subtitles by Jean Dupont of International Viewpoint.*

“The Kurds are one of the founding members of the Turkish Republic. So why did the displaying of their identity became the greatest problem in the period of founding and development of this country? Kurds should be redefined as one of the fundamental dynamic elements of society, as conscious free citizens and as a social group of the Republic....

What needs to be changed is not the Kurdish phenomenon, but the laws that cannot express it adequately and in a democratic manner. The Kurds have proved the following: If you don't recognise our freedom, separatism and rebellion will always be on the agenda. Either I enter into a free union with you or I die or run away." Not to see this cannot be regarded as protecting the

Öcalan used his showtrial to focus Turkish and Kurdish attention on what he says is a historic opportunity to solve the Kurdish question. The PKK should abandon violence and separatism, Turkey should accept the Kurds as a fundamental, constituent element of the Turkish Republic.

Öcalan's proposals are not to everyone's liking. The Turkish state could be strengthened, without becoming more democratic, and without ending the "Kurdish questions"—which predates the PKK. [JD]





## Socialism is dead?

At the start of this century, socialism represented the highest stage of democratic progress and its most egalitarian and free expression. Beginning with the upheaval in Russia, socialism exerted considerable pressure on capitalism. But, at the end of the century, socialism has virtually died though shortness of breath.

This happened because, like many systems, socialism was rigid. It could not open channels within the system to the freedom and equality that are part of its essence.

And it failed to carry forward to the people the positive economic and political developments experienced even under capitalism. The presence of a type of intense sectarianism also encountered in religions was also a factor here.

This does not mean that socialism left no positive legacy. The historic role it played in bringing about the social and national institutions that characterise our age and in the emergence of classes and nations enjoying a greater degree of equality cannot be disputed.

What capitalism had achieved in only a limited way over several centuries, socialism exceeded in half a century. Its inability to provide a solution to the heavy global crises, in which capitalism played the fundamental role, is not entirely its fault. However, because it was held responsible for finding a solution, it either had to find one or go under.

There is no doubt that it will flower again. The socialist experiment, which has left a great experience behind it, will form a synthesis between its achievements and what it has to achieve. The new radical priorities are nature and the environment, women, children and population, history and culture, ethnic and religious minorities and the solution of national situations and social imbalances.

It will reach its period of maturity and renew itself by adding to the democracy that led to its downfall everything from the ways in which even capitalism can be used to the



forementioned ethnic and cultural groups, so as to reach its broadest democratic system.

Capitalism incorporated the achievements of socialism into its own democracy, even allowing the founding of Communist parties. The capitalists paid more attention to the human rights at the roots of socialism than socialism itself, and thereby outstripped socialism. But the new socialism will

incorporate all the values of capitalism and of all human history.

## ...socialism in Turkey

The transfer of socialism to Turkey was conducted in a more eclectic, slavish and schematic manner than that of capitalism. Domestic social thinking was at a low level of development and dogmatic. It was thought that, instead of identifying and analysing social





characteristics, it would be sufficient to apply socialism in a schematic manner to achieve progress. Socialists were prey to vapid generalisations and were slipshod in practice.

It might be enough to say "There is no god but Allah, and Mohammed is his prophet" to become a Moslem. But socialism in Turkey in the 1970s was even more of a mechanical exercise and even more irresponsible. Socialists did not have an approach befitting the seriousness of their ideology. The chance to establish a democratic movement that would have provided the most results historically was lost and extreme violence caused a reaction on the part of society at large. Inevitably, the classical right and conservative trends gained ground. Once again the law that states "if you can't pose the right solution, you will go under" applied...

### The slow road to peace...

The PKK was born amid the whirlpool of these turbulent years. We did not have much difficulty in grasping the Kurdish Question and partly solving it in a manner that was nearly right. Consequently, we developed rapidly.

Contrary to the claims made by some, this was not fundamentally due to violence. Violence was the result of the level of social contradictions. It was like picking a ripe fruit on the principle of "Strike and it'll drop". Here the belief of the leader and the fulfilment of the requirements based on certain fundamental truths were enough for a start. It was especially easy to outstrip similar groups, cross official and unofficial barriers and to be striking with the very first actions undertaken by the organisation. Even an amateurish approach was sufficient. In less than a decade we surpassed similar groups, outgrew the ideologies of the system and challenged the feudal barriers.

By the 1980s, the system had been transcended both feudally on the local level and officially on the general level.

It was clear that ideological and political systems and barriers could no

longer be a deterrent. This rested on the power of a socialism that was not understood in any depth and of Kurdish consciousness of history and society which were once again poorly examined and superficial. In other words, these were enough for an amateur movement.

Only the army could stop this development, and indeed that was what happened. There was, however, a partial response to this in the form of the refuge found in the Middle East and the situation was partly transcended by the time we arrived at the 1990s. Of course this did not amount to the defeat of the army. It was only a striking proof that the classical method of suppression of the army could be transcended, perhaps for the first time in history.

### The Turkish state changes...

The response to this by the army and the state was the recognition of the Kurdish problem and the acceptance of a limited solution in official quarters. This was indeed an historic development. In the context of the realities of Turkey it was the ultimate point to arrive at, no matter how much one fought beforehand. The Kurdish reality, whose main features as a founding element of the Turkish Republic had been suppressed and frightened into submission, had turned into an ugly monster.

When he formed his new government, Prime Minister Suleyman Demirel said at Diyarbakir, "We recognise the Kurdish reality". The same point was made in a more comprehensive manner by President Ozal and became the first item on the agenda for all official and unofficial parties and milieus. This shows that there was a chance of solution. The problem was a big one, but approaches to it were superficial. This was true of the PKK as well. A partial cease-fire was a bold move, but the parties did not have the necessary depth and preparation.

With the traditional rebellious stance being dominant on the part of the PKK and the traditional suppressive stance being dominant on the part of

the state, the chance of an historic solution was missed. Needless to say, opportunist politicians, provocations and the influence of outside powers played a large role...

### ...the PKK was too rigid

During this period the state was undergoing serious changes. The collapse of the Soviet Union and the aftermath of the Gulf War made it vital to find a solution for the Kurdish problem. The route lay through a belated comprehensive democratisation. But the PKK resisted, proclaiming itself as the only solution. In reality, from the collapse of the socialist system it should have deduced a democratic solution...

The PKK should have seen that the principle of "self-determination of nations" was no longer valid. Scientific-technical developments had undermined the concept of the nation state produced by developments from the seventeenth century onwards. A solution based on developing democracy within the existing borders without altering these borders in any way was more realistic.

To put it briefly, the PKK should have abandoned its programme dating from the 1970s and embarked on a new programme. It should have analysed Turkey again, taking into account the development the country had undergone both when it was being founded and in the 1990s, and it should have based its programme on these new developments. Socialist systems were collapsing all over the world, the Soviet Union was falling apart, and a blind and lame democracy was being looked to for a solution...

The PKK should have drawn important conclusions from this. But we continued to call for a separate state, something that did not transcend an ideologically utopian rhetoric. It should have opted for a democratic society within the same borders, the trend all over the world. It should have clearly seen and shown the free union of Kurds with the Republic. Especially with extreme intermingling, intense assimilation, and half the population





being in a different geographical region, the solution to be arrived at and preferred was a deeper democracy.

The PKK should have found the language for this and, instead of the violence, which worsened, should have moved towards a line of action that concentrated political-democratic activity. It should have seen that even continuous guerrilla activity against the army could play no other role than eventually arriving at the same solution and should have placed a controlled transformation into a political-legal alternative on its agenda...

After 1993, the PKK should have seen the changes in both the world at large and the state at the start of the 1990s and come up with a response. Although it sensed this and felt the need for it, lack of experience and fear played an important role in preventing it. The PKK was not defeated during this period, but nor did it develop...

### Time to change

The PKK is genuinely at a major crossroads. It could harden its traditional line, and continue its existence with the help of extensive domestic and foreign resources. Or it will abandon the armed struggle, on the basis of certain legal assurances. In other words we would make the unity of Turkey the basis of our programme and turn the PKK into an organisation that is based on transforming a better understood Kurdish society through political-legal action and organisation.

This is definitely the historical stage that has been arrived at. This transformation, far from being seen as a renegade act or elimination, should be seen as a truly revolutionary transformation...

The alternative, i.e. the failure to achieve a transformation in the approach and nature of the organisation, will lead to extreme conservatism and eventually elimination. Or, like similar organisations, the PKK will descend into a hard-line sectarianism.

What the PKK must do is, without allowing disintegration, to move slowly towards a common will from guerrilla

warfare to an assurance-backed solution based on a democratic Turkey and towards the political-legal process and its line of action...

This is a problem and a solution that goes considerably beyond the leadership. Undoubtedly, it would have been healthier under free conditions...

At this stage in its history, the PKK should behave in a mature and self-confident manner while setting a new course for itself. Self-examination and the identification of fundamental errors and mistakes is a necessity for a major organisation and movement, and failure to do this in time betokens, on the contrary, the weakness of an organisation.

The loss of creativity in the revolutionary struggle and the conservatism that comes with it must ultimately be transcended. Sectarianism is living life in a twisted way. The PKK has undoubtedly not descended into this. It can comfortably stay on its traditional path and the gains that will accrue from this cannot be despised. However, it is clear that this cannot be achieved through simple confidence and established methods, but through the finding of the solution sooner or later...

The picture of the PKK in the indictment will of course not change. But the PKK is the free life not only of this nation but also of a new humanity. The fact that it gave birth to itself by force does not mean that that is the way it is going to grow up...

The PKK must bear in mind the great changes of the last quarter of a century and especially the actual change in the democratic structure of the Republic brought about by the Kurdish Question. The PKK should recognise that the Turkish legal system is under pressure, and make in its programme and principles the changes that are expected from it and are rendered necessary by these changes...

It should develop a political programme based on the concepts of a democratic Republic and a common country. This means giving up the demands of the utopian period, which are no longer the only form freedom can take and, in any case, no longer

work. It should opt instead for the notion of free union; and it should render this programme official at a conference as soon as possible. Both sides can transcend the impasse only in this way...

It is clear that the Turkish Republic has entered into a period of great social and ideological democratisation. The PKK must recognise this, and respond by abandoning its programme, which is influenced to a large extent by the socialist systems of the 1970s and a dogmatic approach to the reality of Kurdish-Turkish relations.

The PKK should develop a programme of democratic politics in Turkey as a whole and, on a deeper and more detailed level, in Kurdish society itself.

### Terrorism?

The Chief Prosecutor's Office accuses the PKK of terrorism. However, from the start to this present day many top civilian and military officials have referred to the phenomenon as a rebellion, have spoken of it in veiled terms as a guerrilla war or a medium or "low intensity war..."

But we should abandon the language of propaganda. This conflict has involved a great deal of suffering and heavy losses on both sides. It has claimed the lives of 5,000 members of the security forces according to the official figure, of 20,000 members of the PKK, and 15,000 civilians. A combined death toll of 40,000. More than 3,000 villages have been evacuated and over three million people have been displaced. This war has involved the use of all types of aircraft, heavy artillery and tanks. 40-50,000 army personnel have been involved in confrontations lasting weeks at a time.

This cannot simply be called a struggle against terrorism. It can only be scientifically designated as war. A comprehensive war that has lasted for 15 years...

However, it is clear that a democratic upsurge is also taking place. More than twenty parties representing every shade of opinion and social group have entered the last elections and everyone could vote. This is no small





development from the point of view of democratisation.

### Kurds face a hard choice

Those Kurds who rebelled did so more out of local interests than to found a separate state. They were unable to go beyond the narrow framework of families and tribal authority pertaining to the ruling elite. From the start too, at least one group has been conciliatory.

Even if Kurdish nationalism has ultimately made a claim to separatism, in practice it has never had the intention, power or preparation to bring this about. In this sense, it has from the start condemned itself to being unable to find a solution. It seems to pursue separatism, but in the end it is the people who suffer when the state takes action. And this gives rise to a damaged, diseased social structure.

This in turn brings suspicion, fear, anxiety, ignorance and an increasing socio-economic backwardness with it. And as the state gets to see the Kurds as a people in a constant state of rebellion, going into exile becomes a feature of this society. It is as if everyone strives to get out of the region. The psychology of permanent rebellion is an expression of this social reality. A state cannot arise out of such a social structure. Neither its intellectual level, nor its geographical position, nor its economic state will permit it.

### A—A separate state

The alternative of a separate state is not a solution, either in terms of its concrete foundations or its benefits. In fact, of all alternatives, it has the least practical value. Even if it were to come into existence, it would not be recognised by any of its neighbours and would not be recognised in the international arena. Such a state would need an economy, a language, social unity and defence. It lacks the foundations to remain in existence for even one day.

Despite full outside support, even autonomy is proving impossible for the Kurds in Northern Iraq. This is also

partly due to their internal social structure. In this sense, the alternative of a separate state cannot be anything more than an ideological slogan for the Kurds. In the programme of the PKK, too, it is referred to as a matter of ideology. But practice and history have shown the reality of union. The vital question is what sort of union this should be.

### B—Autonomy or federation

Alternatives such as a federation and autonomy can be implemented to some extent. They have some historic basis in the feudal and tribal structure in Kurdish areas. What is experienced in states where there is no democracy and what was formerly experienced under feudalism is mainly an ethnic and tribal autonomy. This has no national character. It is valid only within a narrow tribal framework.

Even in our day the Behdinan-Soran distinction among Southern Kurds and autonomous structures based on this are not fully developed. Once again, the main reason is the power of feudalism.

What the Kurds experienced in the Ottoman period, too, was pockets of intense feudal autonomy. Even rebellions always came into being when these pockets were threatened. In this sense, it is difficult to view these uprisings as movements based on the free will of the population. Their social structure and outlook would not have permitted their reaching such a state. Dynastic ideologies and tribal interests take precedence over everything.

Even today, autonomy and the concept of federation would be dependent on a backward social structure. They would not really allow for the development of democratic values. They would do more to strengthen feudal and tribal remnants. The experience of the Southern Kurds largely proves this.

Furthermore, these are the forms most conducive to collaborationism and being a tool in the hands of whoever has the power to manipulate Kurds for their own interests. Because they have not evolved democratically,

they are quite open to both traditional types of rebellion and destruction. Autonomy and federation have been much discussed, and there have been numerous attempts at autonomy. Experience suggests a quite critical attitude towards this type of solution...

As well as the existence of different dialects, the intermingling of Kurds and Turks, and the presence of at least as many Kurds in the west as there are in the east indicate that autonomy is not a practical option. Federation cannot be applied to the millions of Kurds in provinces like Istanbul, Izmir and Adana.

This type of population dispersal is found in many examples around the world and indicates that democratic notions regarding language and culture offer a better solution than regional solutions. People of various different ethnic origins are to be found living in close proximity in the same cities and regions, and this is a contemporary indication that the solution lies in the turning of democracy into an institution.

In any case, it is possible to derive greater benefits from the development of local administrations than those expected from autonomy.

The demographic distribution of Kurdish and Turkish populations is suitable neither for separation nor for federation. We need solutions that will lead to the strengthening of their union by means of the removal of the obstacles in the way of equality and freedom. From centuries of natural assimilation to the mutual daily functioning of the economic structure and social fluidity, everything constantly narrows the material basis of autonomy even further.

### C The democratic solution

In Switzerland, Belgium, Canada, the Republic of South America, New Zealand and even in the USA, despite regional, cultural, religious and linguistic differences, it is well known that the common good is based on a strong democratic state structure. Indeed they have achieved development by applying the principle that





variety makes for power and wealth. The extreme point to which the blood-soaked alternative can lead has been demonstrated most recently in Kosovo...

### Remnants of feudalism

The Kurdish people feel a heavy pressure from the existing feudalistic system. To eliminate this feudalistic system, true democracy is needed. The ethnic tribal system, religious sects and wealthy village owners are obstacles to democratisation. Feudalism, which by nature is not, democratic, gets its support from the state and contributes to the Kurdish problem by tolerating a totally non-democratic environment. Feudalism denies individualism and a free society. The people from these classes claim to espouse democracy but they are actually the ones responsible for the absence of democracy.

The latest PKK rebellion crushed a large part of authority enjoyed by this class. For this reason alone, the PKK movement should be considered a democratic revolution. There has been improvement in the area of individual freedoms.

The local people under the name of HADEP (Pro-Kurdish legal party), during the latest mayoral elections expressed themselves by electing their own mayoral candidates in various towns. On behalf of democracy, the Kurds proved their existence. They proved that they could contribute to the improvement of democratisation in the country. Even this short explanation can prove that the Kurdish question can be resolved within the practicality of democracy...

We say; creating separate organisations to resolve the Kurdish problem is not needed. We say the problem is not political.

The solution to the problem is democratic unity of the state and integration of the Kurdish people. Since 1990 the State has recognised the local peoples cultural identity. A democratic solution to the Kurdish problem can gain momentum, and be seen as the only to solve the problem...

### Language and cultural rights

The biggest obstacles are the restrictions on speaking the Kurdish language and recognition of Kurdish cultural rights. The government considered the political and cultural dimensions to be intertwined and this belief was the basis of the problem.

In Turkey, by prohibiting and obstructing these rights the people are forced to rebel and distance themselves from the state. The environment does not even provide healthy conditions for assimilation. Instead of curing a disease, they want to activate the disease...

The state noticed this matter, and as of 1990 they permitted certain positive steps to be taken, such as broadcasting in Kurdish, lifting restrictions on the language, and permitting the foundation of Kurdish institutes. The function of the folklore associations is part of these positive steps. If these kinds of organisations are even slightly encouraged by the state, with their educational functions, they will contribute a great deal to the solution of the Kurdish problem...

One of the main deficiencies is the extent of illiteracy. There is no prohibition in the Constitution about reading and writing. It is only a matter of resources and education and these problems can easily be overcome. Setting up pre-schools, institutes and permitting the learning of Kurdish history and the Kurdish language at the Universities will contribute a great deal in resolving the Kurdish problem. These privileges already exist in other countries. In the age of technology it is not easy to forbid them.

The same thing is valid for radio and TV. Freedom in these areas is the most important element to a solution of the Kurdish problem.

We must educate the non-Kurdish public about the problem. Pre-schools should investigate history, language and culture through the education of the people. Permitting the publication of books and newspapers, and airing of radio and TV will help resolve the conflict.

Permitting this will not encourage

separatism; on the contrary, it will discourage separatism. The state will be stronger and individuals will develop a loyalty to it because they will feel a part of it. The world has many examples of this kind of diversity.

When Kurdish is permitted, Kurds will be more willing to learn and use the official Turkish language. Many Asian and African countries use English or French as their official language, but other languages are freely used, by the original inhabitants and immigrants. Their peoples speak two, sometimes three languages while remaining loyal to their country...

When Turkey institutes a new policy permitting Kurdish rights, she will not need to be afraid of Kurds in neighbouring countries anymore because she will have already provided its own people with their rights. Contrariwise, this step will contribute to the democratisation of the region and will gain the support of the peoples of neighbouring countries.

A democratic solution to the Kurdish issue will have a great impact on the Middle East. The negative policies to date have had a negative impact on unity and progress. Resolving the problem by these methods will bring peace, democracy, unity and progress to Turkey. It will be proof that we will not have to experience once again the past sorrows and disappearances...

### Abandon the military approach

Historical experience proves that a violent approach to a problem inflames the problem. In the beginning, violence may help to put the problem on the table. More violence, however, brings more destruction and sorrow and in the end a peaceful solution cannot be avoided. Kosovo is the latest case. Earlier Chechnya, Palestine and El Salvador were good examples.

The PKK's rebellion using its own methods, and leading the movement as a military force was legitimate. In 1990, it could have changed its approach from military to non-violent and it might have succeeded. If the government had accepted the PKK's



1993 unilateral cease-fire, it would have been a turning point. After 1993, with the Government's rejection of the cease-fire, violence increased on both sides and more destruction resulted. At times the violence moved beyond the principles of war...

In the indictment it is stated that I was responsible for the death of 33 unarmed soldiers and some civilians. They neglected to mention, however, who was responsible for the destruction of over 3 000 villages and the disappearance of thousands of people from the Kurdish regions...

The last fifteen years can be described as a mid-size war between the PKK and the state. It cannot be justified by a description of day-by-day actions. If PKK members acted outside the principles of war, they were punished. We always adhered to this policy. Similar conflicts in other parts of the world were dirtier.

In the past couple of years, even in small towns, hundreds of Kurdish people disappeared or were executed by the state. These atrocities must cease. Both sides must attempt to stop these outrageous acts which do not meet even the minimum standards of the principles of war...

The latest elections show that the Kurdish people have successfully passed the test of democratisation. There is no need for violence anymore. A new era has opened the way for democracy...

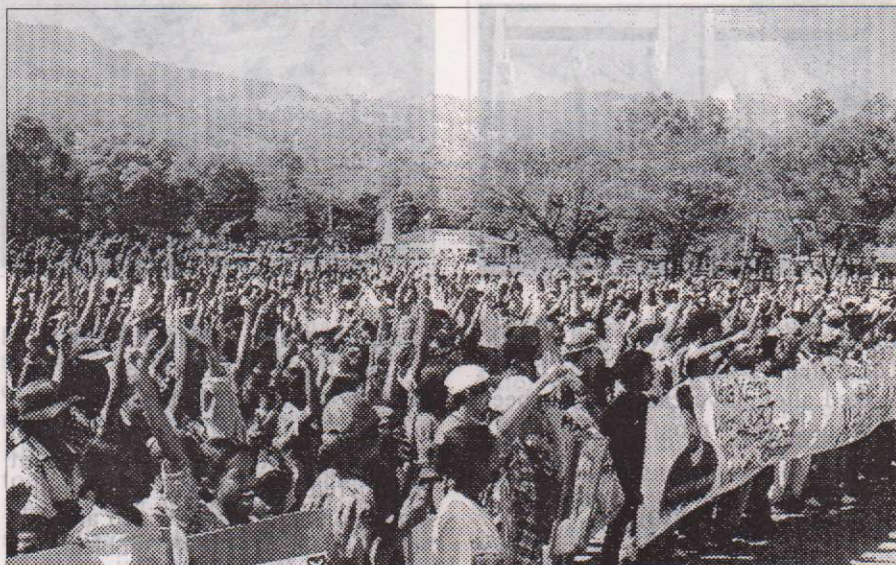
The most practical way to stop the violence is for the government to accept the recent PKK call for a cease-fire. By accepting the cease-fire, trust is created, then comes the silencing of arms.

Integration of the Kurdish people with the state will occur. Negative perceptions and distrust of the state changed to positive perceptions and trust.

The basis for rebellion and confrontation will be finished. If fundamental membership in Turkey, a collective, constitutional citizenship, is united with individual freedom, they will result in the resolution of the majority of the problems...

When a halt is put to armed conflict, all the illegal organisations so far will have to reinvent themselves in a democratic system. Under a general amnesty, when legal and political means of expression are respected, democratisation will take a stronger hold... ★

The full version of Öcalan's testimony, and reactions from other PKK leaders, are available on the Internet.



## Philippine colonialism Mobilising Mindanao

National struggles in the southern island of Mindanao have an progressive dynamic. Revolutionary Marxists must work within those national movements, paying particular attention to the progressive elements of national culture.

This document reflects the general strategy of the Revolutionary Workers Party of the Philippines (RPM-P), which is associated with the Fourth International. [JD]

**1. The development of capitalism in the Philippines is uneven.** The emergence of the Philippines as a nation state was a result of an external imposition by colonialist Spain and imperialist United States. But on the island of Mindanao, state formations already existed before the colonialist invasion. The Muslim Moro people had a Sultanate, while the anamist population had the Timuay Government.

Modern Filipino nationalism started with Andres Bonifacio's Katipunan



revolt against the Spanish. This was initially concentrated only in the northern island of Luzon, but its leadership was taken over by emerging local bourgeoisie (*ilustrados*). From here, articulation of Filipino nationalism and the building of a Republic started. After the defeat of Spain, the Republic of the Philippines was formed under the dictate of American imperialists who instituted policies and programmes based on the majority, Filipino culture and national identity.

**2. The socio-cultural and eco-political system of the minority nationalities were destroyed** and collapsed because of the forced installation of Western political system and the exploitation of their natural wealth and resources by the Philippine reactionary state and imperialist countries. The same reactionary and imperialist forces undermined and rejected the significant level of development reached by the minority nationality.

**3. The Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) has a rigid policy of "one nationality in one country".**

Filipino socialists demonstrate against the massacre in East Timor. The new left in Indonesia traces its origins to small groups influenced, sometimes trained, by the Communist Party of the Philippines. Links between activists in the two countries are steadily improving.



This framework blatantly expresses the illegitimacy of the Moro people and other minority nationalities (Lumad, Cordillera) to struggle for national identity, and fails to recognise the minority nationalities' capability of launching a national revolution.

The CPP justifies its position by reference to China's cultural revolution, which downgraded national minorities to purely cultural groups (Philippine Society and Revolution).

**4. The State and the CPP deny the exploited minority the right to build their own state and nation.** Both enforces a policy of "One State, One People". But in reality the Philippines is composed of many nationalities, with specific political, economic and cultural systems. They have their own history and level of development.

True Communist activity should not enforce its own programmes and policies over the minority nationalities without giving due consideration their ethnicity, particularities and peculiarities of their socio-cultural and political structures.

### On the national question

**5. The basis of the national question is the continuous oppression and exploitation of peoples.** This oppression is intensified within the capitalist system. Until the oppression of peoples persist to exist, there will be no answer to the national question, and the struggle of the minority nationalities to achieve genuine freedom will continue. So it is essential for Communists to abolish and dismantle all forms of oppression and exploitation, and to answer the national question of oppressed peoples.

Karl Marx viewed the development of capitalist system as the reason for the emergence of National State. He suggested that the abolition of oppression and exploitation would lead to the withering of the state and of social classes, and thus to the abolition of the national question.

**6. But in the Philippine context, particularly in Moro and (anamist indigenous) Lumad societies, the development of society and its transformation from one stage to another was incomplete.** Development in the Philippines is *mestizo*. Before the feudal system was fully introduced, it was forcibly interrupted by the capitalist system through the intrusion of American colonisers. As a result, elements of communal, slave and

feudal systems still persist among the national minorities. These societies have a multiple mode of production, though with a strong influence and domination of capitalism. And this capitalist domination will intensify in the period of neo-liberal globalisation.

**7. In the society of Moro people and other minorities, clan consciousness and clan contradictions are stronger than class.** Revolutionary Marxists in the region have developed a clan and ethnic approach in arousing, organising and mobilising their own ranks. Though it is also true that the intensification of capitalist domination in Mindanao has encouraged the development of class consciousness, especially among Moro people where significant numbers have become capitalist landlords, traders and bourgeois *comprador* elements. This development is much less common in the Lumad communities.

Class contradiction within the capitalist system actually is a major factor in the intensification of clan contradiction within the Moro and Lumad societies.

Marxists increasingly realise that clan contradiction is an extension of class contradiction between oppressors and oppressed in the Philippines. This means that a solid combination of clan and class approaches is the only way to arouse, organise, and mobilise the Moro and Lumad peoples against capitalism.

**8. The National Question is not limited to the struggle of the minority nationality against national oppression by the reactionary state and imperialism.** Within Lumad and Moro societies, there are elements of oppression and exploitation of the dominant tribe against the minority tribe, one ethnic group against another, and big clans versus small clans. This means that the national question will not end even if the Moro or Lumad win their struggle against the reactionary state and imperialists. There is still a national question they have to answer within their own society.

**9. The Moro people and other nationalities have experienced many fights and confrontations since the start of Spanish and American colonialisation in the Philippines.** This struggle continues, this time against the Multi-National Corporations (MNC's) and Transnational Corporations (TNC's). This struggle enables Moro and Lumad people to understand that

the worsening national oppression is brought about by the capitalist system. Their rich experience of struggle has made it relatively easy to spread awareness of the dialectical relationship between national oppression and the evils of capitalism.

Moro and Lumad people can easily relate the vanishing and destruction of their ancestral domain to capitalism. Revolutionary Marxists are finding it relatively easy to explain to them who and what forces are destroying their life and future and why and how it was destroyed and vanished.

In this context, the role of organised Marxist intervention is to help systematise and sharpen the minority nationalities' form of struggle and raise the level of their organisation to effectively address the national oppression perpetuated by capitalist system.

### Oppressed peoples' nationalism

**1. The struggle of national minority is not only aimed against the local and national bourgeoisie.** It is also directly aimed against foreign capitalists and imperialists. The national minority struggle indirectly and directly weakens the national and international bourgeoisie. The Moro people and other minority nationalities are not only calling for national liberation. More importantly, they are calling for international freedom and peace. This gives their struggle an international content.

This makes it all the more important for Communists to fully support and actively work with the oppressed peoples in their struggle. Marxists understand the dialectic relationship between the national struggle and the struggle of the proletariat for internationalism.

**2. Obviously, the fundamental problem confronting Filipino workers and other classes of society is very similar to the basic problem confronting the Moro and Lumad.** The democratic struggle of the minority nationality is related to and parts of the socialist struggle of the proletariat. The revolution of the minority nationality has a progressive and socialist element. Lenin himself clarified the dialectic relation between internationalism and the right to self-determination.

**3. Revolutionary Marxist organisers must recognise the culture and justice system of the minority nationality.** Democratic and socialist element



## ★ Philippines

of their culture such as working collectively, untiringly struggle against the oppressors, and swift justice should be developed and linked to the international culture and justice system of the proletariat.

**4. The issue of ancestral domain is dealt with under the leadership of their Council of Elders.** It is clear in the practice of the minority nationality that land falls within the framework of collective ownership. They have long and rich experience on communal ownership of production. Revolutionary agitators will help raise these practices to a scientific and revolutionary level.

**5. The revolutionary struggle must also deal with the wide range of forms of governance.** In Moro society, there are 13 ethno-linguistic groupings, with different levels of political governance. The three largest are the Sultanate of Maguindanaw, the Sultanate of Sulu, and the "Pat A Pangampong Ko Ranaw". They have a feudal character.

The Lumad people have 18 major ethno-linguistic groupings. Like the Moro people, they also have their own political structure. The most important is the Timuay Government, which has a communal character. Revolutionary Marxists are helping to develop this kind of governance into a progressive and revolutionary form.

But revolutionary Marxists also recognise and accept the desire of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) to build their own state in Mindanao.

In fact, they support all progressive and revolutionary governments of Moro people, other minority nationalities, and oppressed Filipinos.

Most revolutionary Marxists would prefer to see a federation or confederation of governments of the three peoples who live in Mindanao—Moro, Lumad and Filipino settler. But it is the peoples themselves who must decide.

### The main objective of the national and people's struggle

The main objective of the revolutionary struggle of Moro, Lumad, Cordillera and oppressed Filipinos is to end all national oppressions and exploitations. Oppressed peoples will achieve genuine freedom and democracy by achieving their right to self-determination. But the national question will only be resolved when state, class, and clan ceases to exist in the society of Moro, Lumad, Cordillera and Filipino.

Even if the proletariat starts the

socialist revolution and socialist construction, the Party must continue to support the struggle towards the attainment of right to self-determination of the said nations and peoples. Because even if the democratic and socialist revolution is won, the problem of national oppression and exploitation will not automatically disappear.

### Political Character of the National Struggle

The political character of the movement for national liberation is democratic and anti-imperialist struggle. But this is closely related to the proletarian struggle and is heading towards socialist struggle. National struggle and socialist struggle are interrelated. The success of the national struggle of oppressed peoples is the success of the struggle of the proletariat and vice-versa.

The proletariat cannot separate its struggle from the national struggle and the social movement.

The national struggle towards the achievement of genuine freedom is a political and ideological issue of national question. The struggle for national freedom is a struggle of influence between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. According to Marx, in the development of a nation and the world, the class factor has a big implication and influence in the development of proletarian internationalism.

So revolutionary Marxists cannot simply ignore the national struggle of oppressed peoples. It cannot leave the struggle to the bourgeoisie. The battle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie does not just take place in the socialist revolution. It also takes place in the democratic and anti-imperialist struggle of minority nationality and oppressed majority. These two struggles are equally important.

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### Immediate democratic and socialist demands

Oppressed peoples have two but interrelated democratic and socialist demands. These are the issue of **land** and the socialisation of means and ownership of production.

The issue of agrarian reform is not limited to land distribution. It must include land development. This means genuine implementation of agrarian reform towards a genuine and peoples-based industrialisation. In this framework, the development of agriculture is the development of industry and vice-versa, in a strategy that is not destructive to nature.

One of the most important democratic and socialist demands is the socialisation of ownership of production and the development of the means and forces of production. This is also an issue on how to transform individual and private farms into collective farms.

This programme must not progress through imposition but through persuasion—by convincing the peasantry that collective farms, collective ownership is more advanced than individual farming and private ownership. To convince and persuade them is through implementation not by declaration. But this demand will never be fully realised and materialised until the means of production is still at the hands and control of the ruling class.

On the other hand, acquiring and claiming back the ancestral domain of the minority nationality is directly related to the seizure of political power. Ancestral domain is the core content of their struggle towards the right to self-determination.

This expresses their life and future. This is the foundation of their political power. The minority nationality must be freed completely from the control and oppression of the bourgeoisie and foreign and local capitalists.

It is only through this freedom that the minority nationality can achieve their democratic and socialist demand.

The Right to Self-Determination is not only an issue of economy and culture. It is above all a political issue. Marxists must recognise their right to form a state, association, or federation even up to the level of secession.

Here, Lenin clarified that it is *their* right to form or not to form their own national state. This issue solely lies in their hands.

The task of revolutionary Marxists is to help them advance the struggle for self-determination towards the attainment of genuine freedom and democracy. ★



# Falun Gong Religious repression

The crackdown on the Falun Gong organisation is the largest repression of dissent since the June 1989 massacres in Tiananmen square.

Zhang Kai

According to the *People's Daily* (July 24) editorial, "this is a severe ideological and political struggle, pertinent to the fundamental beliefs of Communists, pertinent to the fundamental ideological basis of the solidarity of the people of the whole country, and pertinent to the future and destiny of our Party and the state."

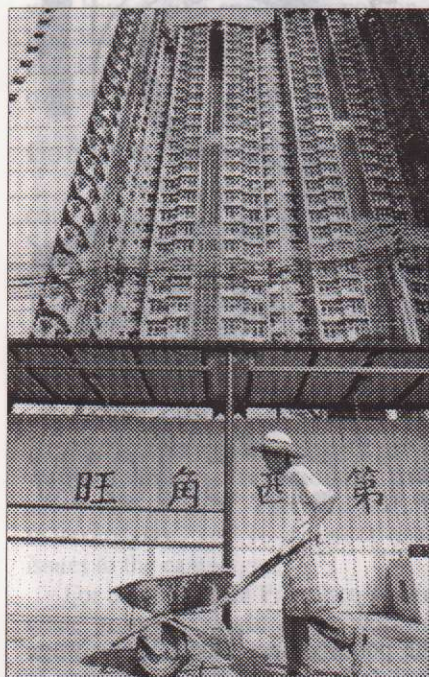
This amazing exaggeration of the influence of Falun Gong, a meditation and exercise society, reveals the gross fear of the CCP leadership towards anything that could destabilise its rule, or bring about "the end of the Party and the state".

Falun Gong activities began in 1992, and spread quickly. Estimates of the number of practitioners range from 10 to 100 million. (No-one believes Li Baoku, Deputy Minister of Civil Affairs, who claims the sect has only two million followers).

A government report on Falun Gong showed an extensive network, with 39 provincial headquarters, over 1,900 support stations in counties and cities all over the country, and over 28,000 local groups.

The government has waged a propaganda war against Falun Gong, denouncing it for its illegal and violent activities and harmful effects. The authorities allege that from April 1998 to July 1999, there were 19 cases of massive crowd-gathering to "besiege and attack" government offices and propaganda institutions. On April 25, without any warning, over 10,000 practitioners of Falun Gong "besieged" the Zhongnanhai government complex in Beijing, to demand legal recognition.

Official sources also allege that



Li Hongzhi, the founder of Falun Gong, amassed at least RMB 1.2m. (US\$ 150,000) in 1993 and 1994 through selling books and teaching Falun Gong practice.

## Penetrating the CPP itself

The Falun Gong is perceived as a threat because it is not a religion that the CCP feels it can contain and control. On the contrary, CCP members and even high-ranking officials have been recruited into the sect. Official sources confirm that in Shijiazhuang, Hebei Province, 1,200 current or retired cadres above the rank of department chief are under house arrest, and 3,000 rank-and-file Party members and cadres have been told to withdraw from the Falun Gong sect.

The popularity of Falun Gong reflects the general social polarisation, unemployment, disillusionment and accumulating grievances in Chinese society. Heavy handed repression drives frustration underground, but cannot eliminate it.

Party leaders are not sure that they will succeed in repressing Falun Dong. "All levels of Party

structures should fully recognise the complexity and arduousness of this struggle, a top-level document warns. "There should be adequate estimate of what may possibly happen after Li Hongzhi and his Falun Gong are revealed and criticised. There should be serious preparations, watching out for the developments, and in case of serious happenings, they should be promptly discovered, reported, controlled and resolved in order to secure social and political stability."

## Crackdown on dissent

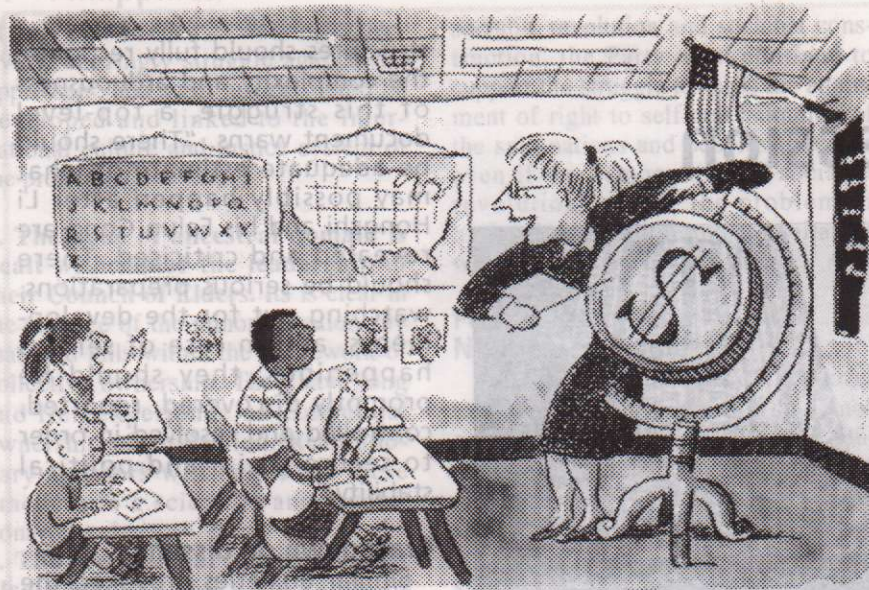
Similar anxieties provoked the CCP's crackdown on dissidents before and after the tenth anniversary of June Fourth. According to the China Human Rights and Democratic Movement Information Centre, at least 140 dissidents were arrested for their preparatory work in commemorating the June Fourth anniversary. In Hanzhou city, 100 members of the Democratic Party applied to hold a commemorative gathering in a public park, the application was rejected, and 20 people were arrested; 50 people nevertheless gathered in the pavilion of the park for the commemoration. In Sichuan Province, 45 dissidents, against the warning of the authorities, conducted a hunger strike at home and held a candlelight vigil. In Liaoning Province, 100 dissidents applied to hold a candlelight vigil on June 4th.

In Hong Kong, the tenth anniversary drew an impressive 70,000 people. Chants included "Rehabilitate the 1989 Democratic Movement!", "Pursue Responsibility for the Massacre!", "End One-Party Dictatorship!", and "Build Democratic China!"

Outside China, thousands of people joined gatherings or demonstrations in major cities in the US, Canada and England. The signature campaign initiated by Wang Dan, the 1989 student leader collected over 150,000 signatures by October 1, the fiftieth anniversary of the People's Republic of China. ★

October Review Vol.26 Issue 3, August 1999, G.P.O.Box 10144, Hong Kong <or@earthling.net>





## Raising America's low wages

What started in the early 1990s with a few scattered campaigns to win better pay for low-wage workers has become a movement.

**Leah Samuel**

"The living wage movement is part of a general increase in energy for labor and community organizers," said Robert Pollin, co-author of *The Living Wage*. "I think it's really caught on in a lot of places, because we have so few proactive efforts these days, especially around economic justice," added Fred Azcarate, national director of Jobs with Justice.

There is still no campaign for a national living wage. But local struggles are linked and supported by national organizations like Jobs with Justice and the Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now (ACORN).

This has opened the door for the passage of living wage laws in 30 cities, including Detroit, Baltimore, Chicago, Minneapolis, St. Paul, and Boston. Campaigns are currently under way in Los Angeles, San Francisco, Albuquerque, Philadelphia, and Dallas.

All the noise is slowly but surely moving the living wage issue into the national consciousness.

Proponents generally define a "living wage" as the amount necessary to keep a family of three or four above

the poverty line. Most "living wage" legislation so far cover workers for companies which hold municipal contracts or which receive some sort of public funding.

### Homeless workers

In fact, "living wage" campaigns do much more than raise the wages of some low-income workers. Requiring companies holding city or county contracts to pay higher wages could reduce the financial incentive to privatize municipal services. Companies that receive corporate tax-breaks could be forced to give something back to local communities by providing jobs that residents could live on.

Most of the first campaigns were organized by community organizations such as housing groups, anti-poverty advocates and church charities—those who saw first-hand the effects of poverty wages.

"The living-wage campaign in Baltimore got started because people with jobs were coming into the soup kitchens and homeless shelters," said Pollin. Baltimore was among the first cities to undertake a living-wage campaign.

San Francisco is one of the most recent. Ken Jacobs, campaign director of that city's Living Wage Coalition, said that rising poverty spurred the fight there. "The cost of living, especially rents, is skyrocketing," he

explained. "It's unacceptable that here we have people working for the city, but who sleep in their cars because they don't earn enough."

### What they could win

Community activists were experienced enough to know that victory was more likely if they didn't aim too high. So instead of a national campaign, ACORN and Jobs with Justice poured resources into campaigns led by their local chapters. Meanwhile, locally based organizations focused on workers in their own communities.

At the local level, organizers focused on what they thought they could win. Their proposals ranged from US\$6.50 to \$12.00 an hour, depending on the local cost of living.

Those amounts were not necessarily adequate, says Pollin. "The current minimum wage is 25% below what's needed to put a family at the poverty line—which is itself a poor measurement of poverty," he said. "But the general reality is that poor working people can't make a living, and you don't need statistics to show you that."

In addition, tying livable wages to the idea of getting something back from corporate welfare and privatization garnered more public support. The privatization issue had the added benefit of attracting support from public-sector trade unions.

### Getting labor involved

In some areas organized labor enthusiastically supported living wage campaigns; in others, the unions all but ignored them.

Sometimes union leaders felt that grassroots groups were intruding on their turf. Meanwhile, the working poor—those who would benefit from these campaigns—felt largely ignored by labor. They felt more connected to the community organizers and social-service providers in their neighborhoods.

Unions became more active after the living wage movement had built up substantial momentum nationally. They brought much greater activist and funding resources.

The work of Jobs with Justice and ACORN in many cities offers examples of unions and community groups joining forces. Jobs with Justice specifically works to link unions with community and religious groups. "We think the labor movement understands, or should understand, that even if this doesn't directly impact their members, it's still important," said Fred Azcarate, national director of Jobs with Justice.



## Winning is getting easier

Early on, the victories were few and hard-won. The opposition had well-funded campaigns sponsored by the business community. Local chambers of commerce and conservative groups portrayed themselves as defenders of low-income workers, charging that higher wages would force employers to hire fewer workers, or move elsewhere.

Of course, the corporate community has overused this type of reasoning for years. "That argument applies to all minimum wage laws—if you raise the price of low-wage labor, businesses will demand less labor," said Pollin. "The evidence does not support that."

Nevertheless, those arguments often worked, especially in cities with high unemployment. "Whether we win or lose is a question of how much ground-work we are able to do before," explain Azcarate. "Sometimes, business outspends us and out-organizes us."

In a few cases, even unions believed the hype, and turned their members against living wage proposals. In 1995, Minneapolis and St. Paul trade unions either refused endorsement or openly denounced the campaign.

The good news is that winning is getting easier. The movement has been strengthened by new research showing that a living wage does not erode jobs. Studies show that national increases in the minimum wage have always been followed by employment increases, not reductions.

And forcing government contractors to pay workers more increases the amount that local governments must pay the companies for contracted work.

According to Pollin, local living wage laws add little to business costs, and virtually nothing to government costs. "For one thing, government contractors are part of a competitive-bidding process," says Pollin. "The living wage is, on average, one percent of total spending by businesses. If a

business wants a city contract, they will absorb these costs, or the city will find someone cheaper."

The cost of the living wage is not enough to make businesses leave communities, either, Pollin says. "The types of firms that might leave are ones who have a high enough proportion of low-wage workers to make it cost-effective enough to leave. The number of firms like that is relatively few."

## Good timing in Chicago

With information available to counter the naysayers, Minneapolis and St. Paul activists launched a new campaign soon after their 1995 defeat. They garnered labor support, assembling a task force that lobbied city councils of St. Paul and Minneapolis, eventually passing living wage resolutions in both cities.

As their experience grows, living wage organizers are becoming more savvy and creative. They are learning to strategize, and to connect other issues to the campaigns.

For example, San Francisco's living wage proposal would cover workfare workers as well. Since these workers have to "earn" their benefit by working, raising their "wages" means that they would work for less time. Then workfare workers could improve their education or hunt for real jobs.

In July, organizers in Chicago presented a living wage proposal to City Council members just before the politicians were going to vote themselves a salary increase. The resulting victory then spread to outlying Cook County, whose Board of Supervisors approved a living wage policy two months later.

But as more of these laws pass, organizers are finding that their work is just beginning.

"A lot of the real fight goes on after the proposal is approved, when the lawyers get ahold of it," Pollin said. "The organizers really have to be

committed to seeing the thing through."

## Quiet campaign

In some places, the new laws have become mired in struggles over implementation and interpretation. In cases where their campaigns petered out after the election, organizers have not been able to do much about it.

The campaign in Detroit last year was quiet. There were no rallies or other forms of high-visibility community mobilization. There was just the petitioning, led by ACORN, to get the measure on the ballot. The local AFL-CIO announced its support after ballot status was assured.

Opposition by the mayor and local businesses was too little and too late. Over 80% of Detroit voters approved an ordinance requiring companies getting city money to pay at least \$7.50 an hour.

The organizers won, not by mobilizing community and labor support, but by slipping quietly under Detroit's corporate and political radar.

Afterwards, however, union and community organizers remained mostly silent as the city issued an interpretation severely limiting the number of workers covered. An AFL-CIO spokesperson said only, "We're having our lawyer look at it."

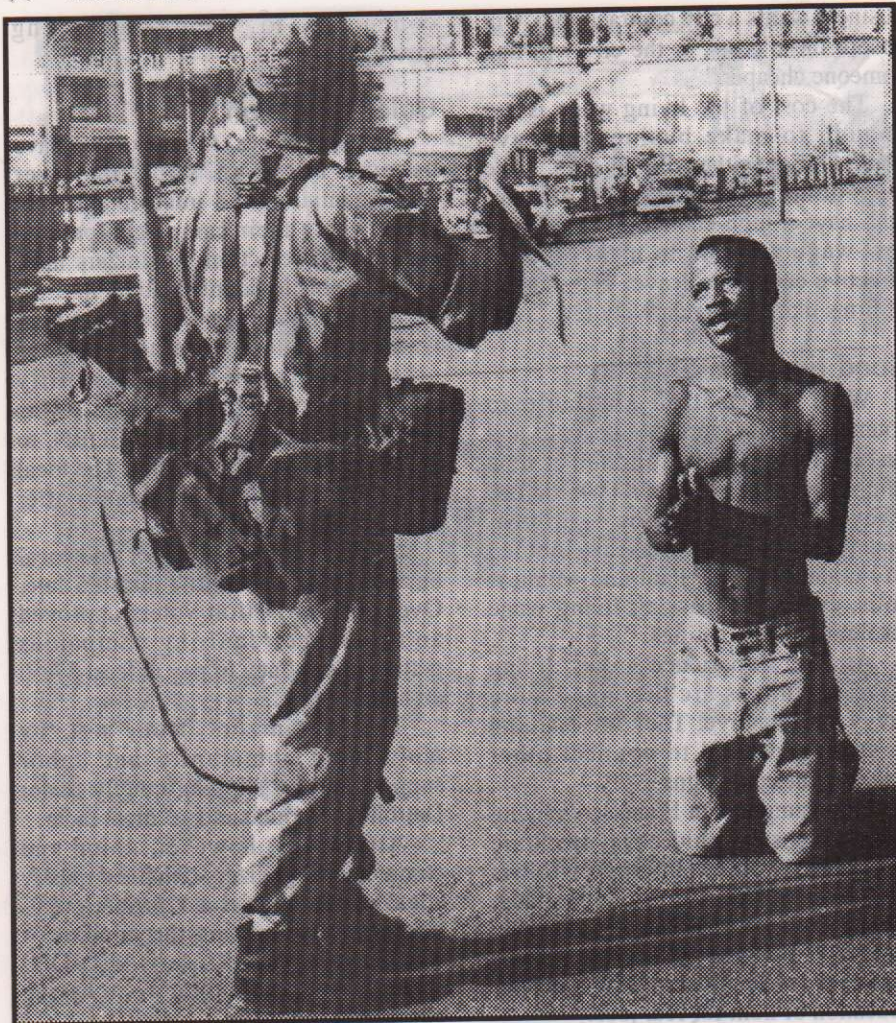
Meanwhile, the Chamber of Commerce is putting together an increasingly strong campaign to get the state legislature to quash the living wage law, claiming that voters did not understand what they were approving.

Pollin says it is time to raise the level of demands. So far, living wage laws directly benefit only the workers at a handful of small government contractors. "One reason they are winning is that they are narrow," he said, "but they should work to broaden the program and cover more workers." ★

A slightly longer version of this article first appeared in *Labor Notes* (USA) in July 1999







## Workers' party formed

In one of the largest political opposition gatherings since independence in 1980, 20,000 people rallied at Harare's Mbare Stadium on Saturday 11, to launch the Movement for Democratic Change.

**Ken Davis**

The Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) is led by Morgan Tsvangirai, a miners' leader and General-Secretary of the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions. Also in the party leadership is ZCTU and Commonwealth Trade Unions Council president, Gibson Sibanda, a train driver from Matabeleland. Both are very popular among workers, urban and rural poor people throughout Zimbabwe.

Over recent months there has been growing public pressure from workers all over the country for them to declare the party, but until early September they had maintained they would have to vacate their trade union positions before taking roles in the new party.

The popularity of the two union leaders is based on the success of national stay-aways organised by the ZCTU over the last two years to protest rising food and fuel prices. The weekend of the party launch, members of the Hotel and Catering Industry Workers Union effectively shut down all tourist restaurants and hotels with a nationwide strike for a 50% pay rise.

Based on this sustained anger and militancy workers and small farmers, it is expected that the MDC will be the most broadly based opposition challenge to Mugabe in the elections due in April 2000.

The MDC manifesto commits the party to social democracy, but does not have a clear program of land redistribution, job creation, free education or primary health care. Nor does it reject privatisation or further implementation of the IMF-imposed free market and austerity policies begun in 1991 with the Economic Structural Adjustment Program (later incarnated as ZIMPREST). While noting that over one third of Zimbabwe revenues are used to pay interest on the international debt, the manifesto does not demand its cancellation.

### Alliances

The MDC is committed to a quota of 30% of all elected positions being held by women, and unofficially has strong support from the 60,000-member Association of Women's Clubs and the national chair, Sekai Holland.

MDC has built upon a series of alliances by democratic and civil society organisations, the most recent being the Working Peoples Convention held in February. From May 1997, the Zimbabwe Council of Churches and the ZCTU had called together the National Constitutional Assembly. This was formally launched in January 1998, and now has 150 member organisations—of workers, farmers, women, Christians, ex-combatants, students, teachers, lesbians and gay men. The NCA is leading a strong nation-wide debate on what sort of constitution should replace the 1980 constitution (derived from the Lancaster House agreement with Britain), which concentrates power in the hands of the president.

President Mugabe and his governing party, the Zimbabwe African National Union - Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF), have created their own Constitutional Commission, with 400 hand-picked members who began local consultations in Aug 1999. The NCA convened a Peoples Constitutional Convention in June which rejected the government's scheme as closed and undemocratic.

### Increasingly repressive rule

It is widely expected that ZANU-PF as ruling party will retaliate against the MDC and ZCTU with repressive measures, and with covert operations by the secret police of the Central Intelligence Office. From the late 80s to 1991 Zimbabwe was officially moving towards a "Marxist-Leninist" one-party state. Through the 1990's frustration at deepening poverty, corruption, and lack of democratic rights



has left the regime with an ever weaker base of support. Mugabe won the 1996 presidential elections with 70% of voters abstaining or heeding boycott calls by opposition groups. Of the 120 elected members of the parliament, 117 are ZANU-PF, and 30 additional members are appointed by the president.

CIO operatives tried to throw Morgan Tsvangirai from the window of his tenth floor ZCTU office in 1997, and two journalists who were arrested by the military and tortured are now on trial for publishing a story about leadership struggles and rebellions in the military. Mugabe has also attacked the independence of the judiciary, and has run a campaign vilifying homosexuals, associated with the prosecution of former President Banana for sodomy. The independent Zimrights group was disrupted after infiltration by pro-government agents, and the University of Zimbabwe has been closed for more than a year, following protests about fees by student organisations.

The death of Joshua Nkomo on 1 July further dented the credibility of ZANU-PF as uniting both forces of the revolutionary war: Mugabe's Maoist-leaning Zimbabwe African National Union, and Nkomo's Zimbabwe Peoples National Union (aligned with the South African ANC and aided by Moscow). 30,000 people came to Nkomo's burial at Heroes' Acre in Harare, singing ZAPU songs in siNdebele in defiance of the Shona chauvinism of Mugabe.

### Economic and political crisis

Widespread anger at Mugabe is primarily due to increasing poverty among working people. After almost a decade of free market "reforms" there is now an inflation rate of 70%, and unemployment is over 50%. Schools and clinics, particularly in the urban and semi-urban areas, have become too costly for workers and the unemployed. The more fertile half of the country's land is still in the hands of 4,000 white commercial farmers, who grow export crops of tobacco, cotton and maize, while the Communal Lands are drier and less able to grow enough food to maintain basic nutrition levels, particularly in the south of the country.

The impact of HIV is exacerbating Zimbabwe's social and political crisis. Over a million people have died from AIDS this decade, and AIDS deaths now run at 1600 per week. In August agriculture officials estimated that loss of labour power because of HIV had caused a drop in output of maize by 61%, of cotton by 47%, and vegetables by 49%. HIV is destroying Zimbabwe's leadership capacities at all levels, with losses of skilled workers, government and party cadre, cultural figures, and the officers of civil society organisations.



### War

The Mugabe regime has become even more unpopular due to its commitment of 15,000 soldiers to defend the Kabila regime in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The war effort has been costing Zimbabwe more than \$US1 million per day. Opponents of Mugabe have warned that 60,000 Hutu refugees remain in Zimbabwe, and the military and CIO are training Interahamwe fighters, possibly for use against sectors of Zimbabwe disloyal to ZANU-PF.

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Mugabe has been increasingly voicing anti-Tutsi rhetoric, "internationalising" the Rwanda catastrophe of 1994. He portrays his enemies in the minority Ndebele southern provinces, the governments of South Africa, Rwanda and Burundi, as well as the Congo rebels, as a vast Tutsi conspiracy for domination of southern and central Africa. This ethnic chauvinism is provoking fears in Matabeleland of a repeat of the massacres in which 6000 alleged ZAPU supporters were killed by North Korean-trained Zimbabwean military units between 1983-87.

Tensions were raised even higher with the outbreak of fighting in July in the Caprivi Strip (bordering Botswana, Angola, Zambia and Zimbabwe), by forces wanting to separate from Namibia, backed by the Barotse Liberation movement in Zambia and UNITA from Angola. ★



### Transformation and regroupment

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. ✧

Price: £5/\$10. International Viewpoint, PO Box 27410, London SW9 9WQ, Britain. <InternationalViewpoint@compuserve.com>

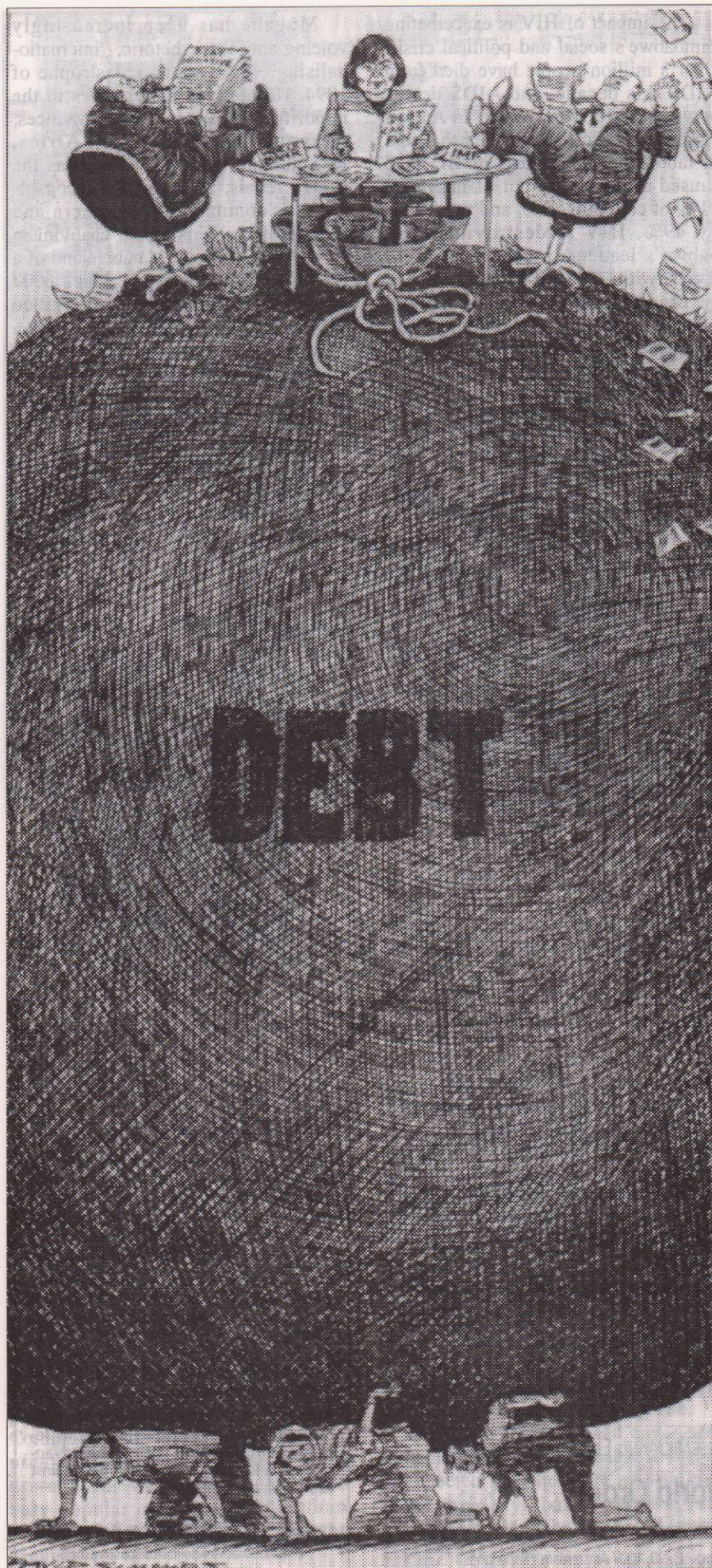
#### INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR RESEARCH AND EDUCATION

### The Gulf War and the New World Order

André Gunder Frank and Salah Jaber [72 pages A4]

◆ £3.50/\$6.00/40FF. Cheque payable to P. Rousset, IIRE, Postbus 53290, 1007 Amsterdam, Netherlands.





## Booknotes

### Rich pickings from the world's poor

Mike Phipps reviews *Your money or your life* by Eric Toussaint, published by Pluto, £17.99, and *The Globalisation of Finance: a citizen's guide*, by Kavaljit Singh, published by Zed, £19.95.

This review first appeared in the British magazine *Labour Left Briefing*.

These two books are a sorely needed antidote to the hype about the benefits of globalisation with which we are constantly bombarded. It is chilling to learn that worldwide income levels are falling, that consumer spending in Africa has dropped 20% over the last 25 years and that even before the economic crash in Indonesia, more than one in four people were officially poor (this could now double).

Toussaint's figures on global poverty are quite startling. 1.3 billion people survive on less than \$US1 a day. In the last six years there has been an eightfold increase in the poor in the former Eastern bloc. The "feminisation" of poverty is also increasing: as fewer children go to school, due to the imposition of fees in many countries, it is women who have the highest rates of illiteracy (a staggering 61% in India). As governments cut health care, it is women who suffer most, as shown for example by increasing rates of death in childbirth. Recent research indicates that dowry deaths, far from being a remnant of a "backward" society, have grown in number with the development of free market capitalism.

Why is this happening? The simple answer is structural adjustment programmes (SAPs)—IMF-dictated economic restructuring to allow poorer countries to keep up with the interest payments on their massive national debts.

These programmes deliberately target free education and health services. They demand price deregulation, driving farmers into bankruptcy and insist on trade liberalisation, further destroying local production and allowing domestic capital to move out of productive areas. They also demand wholesale privatisation of state industries and services (also benefiting western



capital) and regressive sales taxes that hit low income groups hardest.

Yet most of these IMF programmes have led to countries becoming increasingly indebted and impoverished. Small wonder then that the IMF also favours strengthening these countries' internal security apparatus to deal with social unrest!

Toussaint's case studies show that much of the money loaned to regimes in the 1980s went straight into the private accounts of dictators—Argentina is a case in point. Yet civilian administrators are now obliged to pay the loans off by further bleeding the people. More alarmingly, a ruthless SAP under the Habyarimana dictatorship in Rwanda in 1990 ruined hundreds of thousands of coffee farmers. These, along with the growing urban poor, became potential recruits for the Interahamwe militias and army. In short the regime channelled social discontent into its plan for genocide in 1994. Today, survivors of that genocide are paying for the weapons used to commit the crime. Elsewhere there are clear links between the rise of indebtedness and the growth of the arms trade.

Singh's book focuses more on the disasters caused by deregulation and globalisation. Even before the 1994-5 stock market and currency crash in Mexico, liberalisation had resulted in huge deficits, tighter credit for farmers, steep increases in wealth concentration, rising prices and an increase in infant mortality due to malnutrition. The 1997 crash in South East Asia provided a more spectacular illustration of the problem. Mainstream pundits were quick to blame the weaknesses in these countries' financial systems. But they neglected to point out that these weaknesses were a direct result of the IMF policy of deregulation in the region. Evidence now suggests that IMF conditions with rescue operations—deflation and shock therapy—have actually worsened the situation. Equally, IMF-inspired financial bailouts are resulting in public money being spent to rescue private markets—so the principle of no government intervention in the economy is quickly suspended when a bailout is required. "Profits are for private owners," the Financial Times observed, "while losses are covered by the taxpayers."

The effect is to create a "social safety net" for international speculators. For example, much of the \$17 billion rescue money earmarked for Thailand is effectively being

ransacked by international bankers, meanwhile failing companies in the region are being bought up at knock-down prices by these investors and restructured. The results are a catastrophic effect on jobs and the expulsion and scapegoating of migrant workers. The knock-on consequences are severe for people in Bangladesh, Vietnam and other poor counties in the region that depend for survival on remittances home from migrant workers in the "Asian tigers".

Both books have some solutions, however. One obvious idea is to expropriate dictators' foreign assets—Mobutu's money stashed abroad is the equivalent of Zaire's foreign debt! Another would be capital controls, for example the Tobin tax: a proposal that would slow down short-term currency flows and bring in US\$33 billion in revenue. When you consider that just US\$40 billion (one twentieth of the sum spent in 1997 on military spending worldwide) could bring universal access to clean water, education, health, sanitation and basic nutrition, then the full irrationality and inhumanity of global capitalism is clear to see.

These two books do a superb job of explaining the nature of the problem and showing how obvious the solution could be.



## A masterful history of Mexico

**James D. Cockcroft.** "Mexico's Hope: An Encounter with Politics and History." New York: Monthly Review, 1998. 435 pages.

### Reviewed by Dan La Botz

Jim Cockcroft has written a score of books which have educated a generation or two of Americans about Mexico, Latin America, and Latinos in the United States. He began brilliantly,

in 1968, with the *Intellectual Precursors of the Mexican Revolution: 1900-1913*. Since then, he has periodically punctuated his career with some major revision of our understanding of Mexican history.

Fifteen years ago Cockcroft published what was at the time the best historical analysis of Mexico available: *Mexico: Class Formation, Capital Accumulation and the State* (New York, Monthly Review, 1983). Over the years I recommended it to scores of people as the most comprehensive and compelling explanation of the economic, social and political forces that shaped Mexico.

But now I will have to recommend a new and better book. Cockcroft—having written a dozen books in the meantime—has returned to write a new, and yet more comprehensive and compelling synthesis: *Mexico's Hope: An Encounter with Politics and History*. What began as a re-writing of the earlier book became an entirely new work, one which incorporates not only recent scholarship, but also reflects the impact of new social movements, particularly those of indigenous people and women.

This is a history of Mexico informed by the struggle of the Zapatista Army of National Liberation (EZLN) and by the contemporary women's movement. It is a history of the Mexican people in all of their diversity, of the country in all of its complexity.

At the heart of *Mexico's Hope* is Cockcroft's view that capital accumulation, class struggle, revolution and reaction have driven Mexico's history as he traces it through the conquest, the colonial period, the Bourbon reforms, Independence, the Great Reform, the Porfirian dictatorship, the Revolution, and now through the era of neo-liberalism.

This is fundamentally a political-economic history, a Marxist analysis, which sees capitalism and its combined and uneven development as the driving force of Mexico's 500 years of history.

In Cockcroft's book ordinary men and women engaged in the daily struggle for survival not only shape their own lives but also shape Mexico and its history. But they do so not simply as they wish, but within the context of Mexico's particular, distorted development, the legacy of Spain's relative backwardness, a series of unfinished revolutions, and a failed great leap forward into the neo-liberal future.

Particularly original about *Mexico's Hope* is Cockcroft's integration of an



historical materialist analysis with feminist and indigenist perspectives, creating a new synthetic understanding of Mexican history. In *Mexico's Hope*, women and Indians have become integral to the texture of life, to the history of the country, to questions of power and politics as they so seldom appear in other histories. While maintaining his convincing Marxist analysis of Mexico's economic development, Cockcroft has also written a multicultural and gendered history of Mexico which responds to the contemporary problematic.

Yet, above all, this book is a good read. The political—economic, indigenist and women's—viewpoints are not just juxtaposed, they are analytically integrated in a vigorous prose. Clearly and forcefully written, accompanied by 17 tables, and with extensive notes, *Mexico's Hope* represents the most forceful analysis, and at the same time the most sophisticated and subtle general history of Mexico available.

*Mexico's Hope* will no doubt become a standard in Latin American and Mexican history courses, but labor unionists, human rights workers, social movement activists, and anyone interested in Mexico should buy and read this book. University, high school and public libraries in the USA should add this book to their collections, for it will find many readers.

This review first appeared in Mexican Labor News and Analysis, July, 1999 Vol. IV, No. 12. Mail address: c/o Dan La Botz, 3436 Morrison Place, Cincinnati, OH 45220, USA <103144.2651@compuserve.com>, www.igc.apc.org/unitedelect/.

**Thailand: Class struggle in an era of economic crisis, by Ji Giles Ungpakorn**

Documents labour resistance during the "economic miracle" years. The author is associated with the Trotskyist "International Socialist" current. We hope to print a full review in next month's *International Viewpoint*.

Available for US\$20 plus \$5 postage from Asia Monitor Resource Centre, 444 Nathan Rd 8-B, Kowloon, Hong Kong

**Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution, by Doug Lorimer**

The leading theoretician of Australia's Democratic Socialist Party argues that Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution is no guide to Marxists in peasant-dominated countries. He presents instead a "Leninist theory and policy of a two-stage, uninterrupted revolution."

Available for A\$8.95 (inc postage) from Resistance Books, PO Box 515, Broadway NSW 2007, Australia.



# Red wine, Rosa and the revolution

Newly-elected EuroMP Roseline Vachetta welcomed the 500 young revolutionaries to the 16th International Youth Camp in solidarity with the Fourth International in Brioude, France at the end of July.

Underlining the historic breakthrough represented by the election of five LO-LCR members of the European parliament, she stressed that the work of these deputies will only have an impact if it is coordinated with strong extra-parliamentary mobilisation.

During the camp, there was no shortage of suggestions. The main forums dealt with European integration, anti-racism and anti-fascism, culture, women, and internationalism

Starting from a general overview of the process of European construction, participants discussed many different aspects of the negative impact of this process on young people. High school and university students are in education systems increasingly shaped by neoliberal priorities; young people are in the labour market, as long-term unemployed, or confined to casual and part time jobs.

Stephanie Chauvin of the Political Bureau of the LCR highlighted the ways in which women are particularly affected by the casualisation of the labour market. Young women from a range of countries discussed not only their situation, but how to fight back.

Another forum highlighted the danger represented by the rise of the far-right, both its influence on the traditional right, and the alarming growth of neo-fascists gangs in Germany.

Resistance to globalisation was tackled from an unusual angle by José Ramon—known as Troglo—our invited speaker from the organisation Zutik from the Basque country, who spoke of the culture of resistance of the oppressed Basque people. He painted a vivid picture of life for a people struggling for the right to express their national identity. He stressed the role of young people in their militant affirmation of identity. He gave the arguments for a revolutionary Marxist defence of the right of oppressed people to express this resistance in the ways they feel appropriate: counter-culture, civil disobedience

In the months preceding the camp, most participants had been actively involved in expressing their opposition to the NATO war in Kosovo, the policies of ethnic cleansing by Milosevic, and the right of the Kosovar people to decide about their own future.

Catherine Samary, one of the best-known left specialists on former Yugoslavia, and a leading member of the 4<sup>th</sup> International, masterfully outlined the complexities of the Balkan situation, and the outlined the main elements of rebuilding a peace movement, and building links with progressive forces

Marc (18) from Luxembourg, at his first camp, enthusiastically welcomed not only the opportunity to discuss the morning themes in the afternoon workshops, but particularly the two evening rallies on Rosa Luxembourg and the struggles of women worldwide. A moving testimony on the struggle of Algerian mothers and wives of the



"disappeared" particularly touched him.

Violette (17) from France appreciated the political activities, but felt that the best were the informal international discussions over a glass of beer.

This was the third camp for Tobias from Switzerland. He was already familiar with many of the themes discussed. For him, "the most interesting aspect is meeting so many new people from different countries". A view echoed by Adrien (20) from France, who also appreciated the inter-delegation meetings.

Hugo from Portugal liked the way the day was organised which allowed for formal meetings, informal meetings, and free time. At this time people tended to congregate in the "international village" (stalls offering literature, T-shirts and posters), the video space, or just in the bar and disco.

This 16<sup>th</sup> camp of young people in solidarity with the Fourth International continued our long-established traditions of putting the fight against sexism and heterosexism at the centre of its concerns. The women only space allowed young women at the camp to discuss among themselves and to prepare the activities that encourage the whole camp to reflect on these themes. After a forum devoted to discussion of women's liberation, young women celebrate their enthusiasm with a

much-appreciated series of sketches illustrating women's oppression and a women-only party.

Comrades at the gay and lesbian space turned their energies towards explaining to all camp participants the importance of sexual liberation for everyone, whatever their personal orientation. As always, the party they organised was a highlight of the camp's social activities.

These young European comrades, deeply involved in struggles that concern them directly, never forget the importance of internationalism. Their invitation to the European representative of the Indonesian People's Democratic Party (PRD), Robbie Horton, their enthusiastic reception of the message from the Mexican Zapatista Front read at the opening meeting by Flavia d'Angeli, leading member of the *Giovani Comunisti* and the Italian 4th Internationalists, and their response to the moving Algerian testimony reflect their deep internationalist convictions.

Closing the camp, the comrade of the Fourth International responsible for working with the youth organisations, Penny Duggan, stressed the importance for the Fourth International of renewing itself by recruiting young comrades who could bring an understanding of today's problems and tomorrow's solutions.

The camp next year in Portugal for which the comrades promise 200 young Portuguese will be another step towards this goal. Not to be missed!

The average age of participants was 21, with women making up 38%. There were 18 delegations: France, Portugal, Italy, (60-150) Belgium, Germany, Switzerland, Denmark, Netherlands, (20-40) Poland, Sweden, Canaries, Greece, Russia, Saragossa, Luxemburg, Norway, Austria, and Britain (12-2) [PD/JD] ★

## Net Working

### Husson

Our economics writer Michel Husson now uploads most of his own articles onto his personal homepage.

<http://home.worldnet.fr/hussonet/>

### News From Within

Israelo-Palestinian magazine.

<http://aic.netgate.net/nfw/index.html>

## Obituary Traitor to imperialism

Mark Bracegirdle arrived in Ceylon in 1936, hoping to make a career in the colony's tea plantations. A former member of Australia's Young Communists, he quickly identified with the Tamil plantation workers, who had been uprooted from India, and faced long hours, bad housing and low wages.

After only seven months, the Reluges Estate Madulkelle terminated his services, and booked him a one-way steamer ticket back to Australia. But Bracegirdle stayed on in Ceylon, championing the cause of the Tamil estate workers. He joined the Lanka Sama Samaja Party (LSSP—Equal Society Party), the colony's first political party, and a thorn in the side of the planter regime.

The British settler elite was outraged at Bracegirdle's exposé of the sub-human conditions on the plantations, and they began to agitate about the "communist threat to law and order and worker discipline." *The Times of Ceylon* newspaper, and the British-dominated police forced the Governor to order Bracegirdle's deportation.

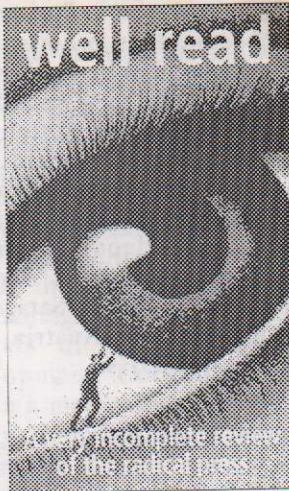
The young activists went underground, shielded by members of the LSSP. He was finally arrested in 1937, after he addressed a mass rally of 50,000 in Colombo's Galle Face Green. His lawyers argued that the Governor's exercise of absolute power interfered with the liberty of a British subject, violated the rule of law and the colony's constitution.

The Bracegirdle affair focused the attention of educated classes of all ethnic groups on the need to free the island from colonial rule. His anti-imperialist determination provoked a national debate on the freedom of the individual, the limits of executive power, the right of the judiciary to question the executive, and the political question of workers rights.

Bracegirdle left Ceylon in 1937. He was a conscientious objector during the second world war, and later joined the Aldermaston marches against Britain's nuclear weapon programme. He was an active member of Britain's Labour Party. In the 1970s, he worked as a Transport Manager for Zambia's Flying Doctor Service. [WM/JD] ★

The Bracegirdle Affair, by Wesley S. Muthiah and Sydney Wanasinghe, is available from 27 Belmont Ave, London N13 4HD, Great Britain. Tel. +44 181 882 3423





### News From Within, 8/99

Palestinian Sociologist Dr. Salim Tamari heads the Institute of Jerusalem Studies and is a member of the Refugee Working Group that deals with the question of refugees established in the wake of the Madrid conference.

In this interview, Tamari describes the new book *Jerusalem 1948* (which he edited) containing a collection of articles on Palestinian residency in West Jerusalem before the 1948.

Tamari provides insight into what the Israeli strategy has been *vis à vis* the refugees in negotiations and discusses what the PA will have to face when final status negotiations begin.

Other articles address the issue of European Union Aid to Palestinian Authority "Security" services, an analysis of Jewish History Text books, a critical assessment of Azmi Bishara's "Tajamu" party and its failures both ideologically and tactically in the last elections, and much much more.

### News From Within, July 1999

Includes articles on the actual and real possibility of the Right of Return (by Dr. Salman Abu Sitta), an assessment of Barak's coalition and what he did to get Shas in his government (Dr. Tikva Honig Parnass), a scathing analysis of the Palestinian Authority and its Facade War against NGOs all the time in the back wings making million dollar deals with the Peres Center for Peace, and the story of how the Israeli establishment closed down a progressive school for underprivileged Mizrahi youth.

# Conference listing Coming soon...

### London Anarchist Bookfair

16 October, London, Britain  
Contact: <m.peacock@unl.ac.uk>  
Tel. 0171 247 9249.

### Participative democracy 10-13 November, Porto Allegre, Brazil

International Seminar on Participative Democracy, based on Porto Allegre's pioneer "participatory budget process". In Portuguese, Spanish and English.

Contact the town hall, Praca Montevideo, 10, CEP 90010-170, Porto Allegre, Brazil. fax 051 228 8725, email <becker@gp.prefpoa.com.br>

### European Marches Network 13-14 November, Brussels, Belgium.

At least one hundred unemployed, labour and campaigning groups are expected to send delegates to evaluate the "Cologne '99" events, plan future initiatives, and decide how to improve pan-European coordination of unemployed groups.

For more information (in English or French) contact: Michel Rousseau, European Marches, 104, rue des Couronnes, 75020 Paris, France. Fax: +33 1 44 62 63 45. E-mail: marches97@ras.eu.org  
[www.ras.eu.org/marches/](http://www.ras.eu.org/marches/)  
Email lists are available, in read only or in write-discussion mode.

### World Trade Organisation ministerial conference Seattle, USA, 29 Nov.-3 Dec.1999

An Inter-Continental Caravan, mainly composed by representatives of Latin American movements, will travel though the USA ending at the WTO III conference in Seattle. Details will be finalised at the Bangalore conference.

An email list has been set up to organise against the 3rd WTO Ministerial. To subscribe send a message to <PGA\_Seattle99-subscribe@listbot.com>. For more information, contact <PGA\_Seattle99-owner@listbot.com> or go to <http://members.aol.com/mwmorrill/pgah.htm>

### European Marches Network December 1999 and afterwards...

At the initiative of the "European Parliament of the Unemployed", a European day of action against Workfare will be organised to coincide with the Helsinki European summit (dates not yet announced, but probably 6 December (St Nicolas celebrations in northern Europe!) or the 10, opening day of the EU summit.

The European Marches Network will also organise a European Meeting

against Precarity, in Brussels, in the first half of 2000, and mass mobilisations in France in the second half of the year. These will include a new session of the "European Parliament of the Unemployed".

### Marxism 2000 Sydney, Australia, 5-9 January 2000

Journalist John Pilger and Latin America specialist James Petras will be keynote speakers at the second Asia Pacific Solidarity and Education conference organised by Australia's Democratic Socialist Party. Other speakers include Dipankar Bhattacharya (CPI-ML, India), Chris Gaerlan (Alab-Katipunan, Philippines), Farooq Tariq (Labour Party of Pakistan) and Sonny Melencio (Socialist Party of Labour, Philippines).

Participants are expected from Japan, East Timor, Burma, PNG, Bougainville, Malaysia, New Zealand, Kanaky, Turkey, Sri Lanka, Scotland, Palestine, and Bangladesh.

Main themes of discussion include: Is Marx still relevant for the 21st Century? • The state of the world capitalist economy • Global political and military strategies of imperialism • Problems of revolutionary strategy in advanced capitalist countries • Problems of revolutionary strategy in developing countries • Will the socialist countries all yield to capitalist pressures? • Recent experiences in trade union and labour organising • Marxism and the national question • Women and socialism • What basis for international left collaboration and socialist renewal? • Can humanity survive the 21st century?

Additional workshops will focus on: The IMF and the World Bank — How they work • Imperialism's impact on the Asian and Pacific Economies • The contribution of Trotskyism to the workers movement • The history of the Philippines left • Issues in Women's liberation today • Internationals and internationalism

Registration costs A\$50, plus A\$22-50 per day for accomodation and meals. For more information contact P.O. Box 515, Broadway 2007, Australia Tel: +61-2 9690 1230 <dsp@peg.apc.org>