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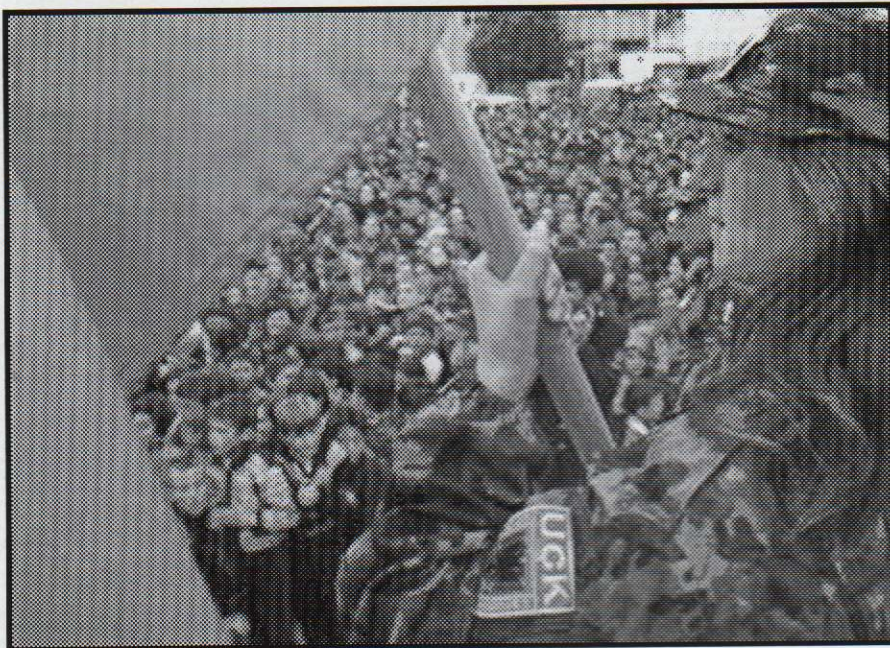
VIEWPOINT

The Brazilian left Democratic and popular government

Europe's anti-war movement • Inside the KLA • Serbs for peace



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Who are the KLA?

The Kosovo Liberation Army has grown rapidly, and attracted the support of many young emigres and refugees. But little is known about the group, and how close it remains to its left-wing origins.

According to Michael Karadjis of *Green Left Weekly*, "Part of the Kosovo Liberation Army's core derives from 'Marxist-Leninist' Kosovan resistance forces which fought Belgrade's repressive rule in the 1980s, and had links with Albania's Stalinist regime. In particular, it appears to have connections with the National Movement of Kosova, which was formed in 1982."

There are also connections to the Red Front which developed in the 1980s in Kosovo and among emigrants in Germany. Inspired by Enva Hoxha's Albania, the group called for an Albanian-speaking Kosovo Republic inside the Yugoslav federation. According to reports in the German left daily *Junge Welt*, 80 leading members were assassinated in Germany in the 1980s by Yugoslav secret service, with the help of the German authorities. This eliminated most of the left wing, Maoist, leaders of the Albanian resistance.

Those that remained were among the founders of the Kosovo Liberation Army (known by its Albanian initials, UCK) in the mid-90s. The most important founding group was the Kosovo People's Movement (LPK). They organised the

money-raising and worked out the theory and strategy of the liberation struggle. It seems that by this time the UCK was not, or no longer, a Maoist movement.

In 1997 the 300 members of UCK launched several attacks on the Serbian Police. Ibrahim Rugova, leader of the massive "Ghandian" civil disobedience movement and "President" of Kosova in an unofficial 1991 referendum, called the UCK a Serbian attempt "to provoke violence and justify even greater repression." Albania's ex-president Sali Berisha made similar allegations.

In response, one pro UCK source protested that "Rugova and his clan are the biggest land owners in Kosovo and the biggest bourgeois family. The Rugova clan is, in general terms, a classic comprador bourgeoisie."

In any case, the Kosovar population was increasingly frustrated after 10 years of civil disobedience had failed to bring concessions from Serbia. According to Karadjis, "while the system of 'parallel institutions' was providing Albanians with basic services denied them by the Serb state, the feeling was growing that this policy only perpetuated Serbia's apartheid policies, paid for by double-taxing the Albanian masses."

Radical politics

"By 1996, a section of the political leadership, headed by Adem Demaqi, who had spent 28 years in a Serbian prison, began agitating for a change of strategy. For Demaqi and his Kosovo Parliamentary Party, engagement with genuine Serbian opposition forces was more important than the hopeless goal of

attracting Western attention.

This was handicapped by the fact that the major bourgeois Serbian opposition forces had a line on Kosova either identical to, or more extreme than, Milosevic's.

However, in a 1997 "Serbian-Albanian dialogue" organised by the Serbian Helsinki Human Rights Committee, considerable support among anti-nationalist Serbs was expressed for Demaqi's idea that a Republic of Kosova, on gaining self-determination, could enter into a new and equal federation with Serbia and Montenegro. He called this concept "Balkania".

Demaqi recognised that many non-nationalist Serbs had at least a nostalgic attachment to the multi-national model of Tito's Yugoslavia. He also argued that anti-Albanian and great-Serb prejudices were central elements of the ideological base of the Milosevic regime. "The same mechanism which keeps by sheer violence both Albanians and other peoples in captivity, has been hindering democratisation in Serbia for 100 years".

By mid-1998, the KLA had appointed Demaqi's party as its political leadership, in opposition to the Rugova line. Branches of his party throughout Kosova merged with the KLA. While coming from varied backgrounds, these forces had in common the view that Kosovans needed to rely on their own forces.

Escalation

In early 1998, Serbian extremists massacred members of the Jashari clan, many of whom supported the UCK. This provoked a rapid growth in sympathy with and support for the UCK. In several weeks an organisation of 300 grew to a loose movement of 30,000. It became increasingly impossible for the LPK to control the new mass guerrilla movement.

Many Rugova supporters flooded into the UCK. According to Karadjis, "Volunteers, arms and money have also come from the 600,000 Albanians working in Germany and Switzerland."

After the breakdown of the Albanian





state in 1997, a lot of weapons came onto the market, and many were brought across the border into Kosovo.

The Canadian writer Michel Chossudovsky claims that "Arms smuggling from Albania into Kosovo and Macedonia started at the beginning of 1992, when the Democratic Party came to power, headed by President Sali Berisha.

"An expansive underground economy and cross border trade had unfolded. A triangular trade in oil, arms and narcotics had developed largely as a result of the embargo imposed by the international community on Serbia and Montenegro and the blockade enforced by Greece against Macedonia."

Some returning Kosovars were inspired by the left-wing emigre circles in Germany and Switzerland. Others were influenced by right wing emigre groups in the United States. These latter groups provided not only funds, but the necessary contacts and introductions to the US secret services and media.

How strong?

According to Samary "it is impossible to estimate the size of the UCK, or the number of emigrants who are returning to enlist. But the guerrillas are certainly popular among Kosovars abroad. Inside Kosova, in the run-up to the Rambouillet talks, the UCK was steadily gaining support, though it was obviously divided between currents closer to Rugova, and more radical groups."

Left observers disagree about the effectiveness and presence of the UCK within Kosovo. According to Samary, "the UCK has clearly been unable to protect the population or to organise effective resistance. What little news we have does not indicate clearly whether or not Kosovars have massively participated in the Armed struggle at all."

Karadjis, however, claims that "by mid-1998, the UCK had taken control of substantial sections of central Kosova.

However, without a growing supply of arms, many of these gains were rolled back by the [Serb] occupation forces by October.

There is little doubt, however, that the UCK resistance corresponded to the feelings of the mass of Kosovars at the time. Thousands of villagers joined the rebels as self-protection from the police and army. "There is no doubt that these groups have the full support of the local population", writes Albanian journalist Fehim Rexhepi.

The Kosovar political spectrum

According to Samary, "the UCK has had a difficult relationship with the various Kosovar political parties, particularly with the more moderate factions influenced by Rugova. Despite growing frustrations with Rugova's moderation and 'hegemonic' methods, few Kosovars responded to the UCK and radical groups' call for a boycott of the parallel elections last March."

Despite this growing unrest, Rugova went to Rambouillet enjoying a considerable level of prestige among the Kosova population. By including the UCK in the Kosovar delegation to Rambouillet, politicians like Rugova hoped to assert a political control over the fighters. The actual result was the opposite. The UCK's radicalism influenced the rest of the delegation.

The Kosovar delegates agreed to form a "provisional government", including Rugova's LDK, the UCK, and the United Democratic Movement (a regroupment of Rugova's opponents). UCK spokesman Adem Demaci was to be became Prime Minister.

But Demaci had refused to participate in the Rambouillet negotiations, and he now refused to participate in "a government which has neither legitimacy nor any legal base to represent the Albanians of Kosova."

The exact motives of those concerned are still unclear. As the talks collapsed,

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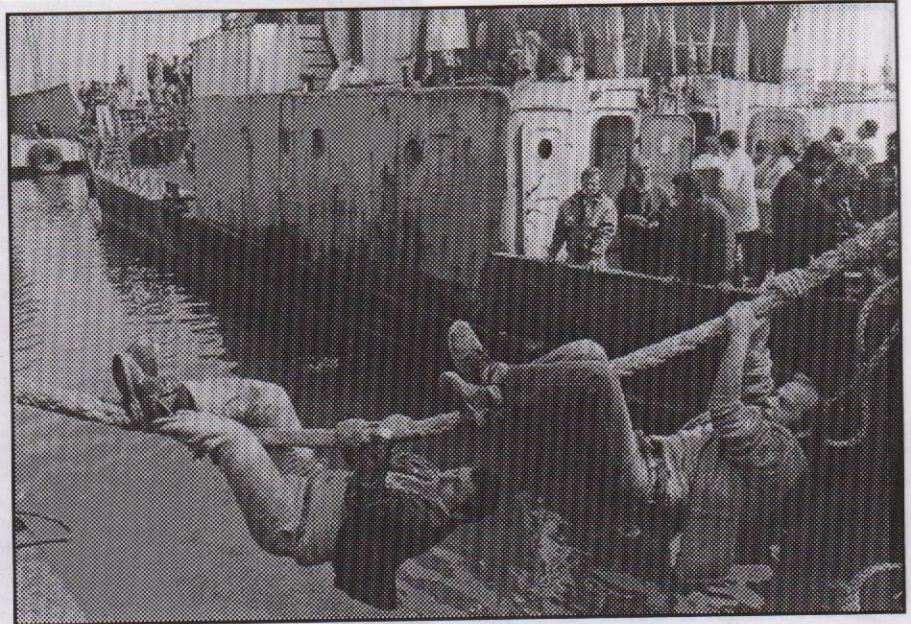
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and Serbia increased its aggression, Kosovar politics increasingly concentrated on the question of NATO intervention.

In early April, the *Voice of Kosova*, newspaper of the main UCK faction LPK, still carried its traditional sub-title "long live Marxism-Leninism". Adverts listed the books of Albanian Maoist leaders Enver Hoxha and Ramis Alia. By April 25, the *Voice of Kosova* headline was "NATO thank you". Inside, there are no left books advertised. More significantly, not one of the old editorial board is listed. Presumably all the new editors are from the right of the party. It would be interesting to know what has happened to their predecessors.

As Samary notes, "NATO support is clearly motivating young people to join the UCK. But it is difficult to say how long this will last."

"On the one hand, the reluctance of Western governments to commit land troops could encourage them (particularly the USA) to support the UCK more directly. Like in Bosnia, the US will seek to identify and build up those local groups which are ready to fight in the



The economic collapse and civil war in Albania created a power vacuum, in which the UCK could establish camps, win recruits, and acquire weapons.

West's interests—like the Croatian and Bosnian armies.

"At the same time, the UCK is in a very weak position. The US has already criticised the group's intolerant practices, which Washington thinks might further destabilise the region: things like the interdiction of political parties in UCK-controlled zones, threats and violence against moderate Albanians and those who refuse to enlist in the UCK, refusal of all dialogue with the Serbs, and the recent attempts to set up bases in Macedonia, which is contributing to tensions there.

"The final US position will depend on a number of political and geostrategic factors. But it is far from sure that US interests will coincide with those of the UCK."

There are a range of currents within the UCK. Some call for NATO help but openly protest that NATO will not give them independence.

Paradoxically, it was the more militarist faction of the UCK which signed the Ramboulet agreement (calling on the UCK to disarm and accept Western 'protection', while Demaqi's more moderate, and more sophisticated current called for continued resistance.

Demaqi falls

In yet another twist, the new UCK leadership say Adem Demaqi is a traitor, who will be executed. Demaqi's crime was to oppose the NATO bombings, which he called "attacks against Serbia and the Albanians." He said that "both people must act against imperialism."

Currently hiding in the Slovenian capital Ljubljana, Demaci calls for self-determination for Kosovo, with full rights for the Serbian minority [about 10% at the end of 1998].

It is unclear how many UCK members accept the idea of rights for the

Serb minority. Most UCK-linked websites make no mention of the Serb minority, except to say that it is in the interests of "peace in the Balkans, for both the Serbs and the Albanians", for the occupation of Kosovo to end.

Demaqi has also urged Kosovars to support the right of self-determination of the Krajina, a part of Croatia from which over 100,000 Serbs were expelled in the early 1990s. Other UCK leaders have tried to gain weapons from the Croatian dictator, Franjo Tudjman.

Near to NATO?

Many UCK guerrillas would like to become NATO ground troops. On 10 April a KLA spokesman told Britain's *Financial Times* that "the KLA is also helping NATO by supplying information, including bomb damage reports."

But NATO isn't giving them the modern weapons or the support that they need. Germany is the imperialist state most willing to run proxy wars in the Balkans, but the UCK is still on Bonn's list of proscribed "terrorist" organisations. German police have banned fund raising by radical Albanian groups and confiscated LPK funds.

To the extent that it has a plan for Kosova, NATO's vision is a protectorate. The western powers will not let Kosovo join Albania or become independent. Most Kosovars have already realised that NATO cannot and will not help the refugees and displaced persons. Sooner or later, significant sections of the UCK will surely come into conflict with their dangerous "allies" in Bonn and Washington. ★

* This article was compiled by *International Viewpoint* staff writer Mark Johnson, on the basis of reports by "Rosa Liebknecht," (a regular contributor to the German left daily *Junge Welt*), Catherine Samary of the French magazine *Critique communiste* and Michael Karadjis of the Australian *Green Left Weekly*.



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. ★

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Serbian opposition

Interview with Catherine Samary

• Is the Serbian population aware of the humiliations inflicted on the Kosovo Albanians?

Catherine Samary: Not really. There are a few exceptions, in the human rights groups, and there is a tradition of multilingual theatre which brings together artists from across former Yugoslavia. Some opposition parties like Vesna Pesic's Civic Alliance, have denounced Serb violence in Kosovo, but without recognising the Albanian national question. There is a kind of anti-nationalist "civic" consciousness among progressive Serbians. They tend to put equal blame on Serbian and Albanian nationalisms.

The horrors of the Bosnian war have pushed some Serb nationalists into the anti-war camp: intellectuals like Dobrica Cosic and vice-president Vuk Draskovic. They still consider Bosnia or Kosovo to be "Serb lands", but no longer support ethnic cleansing there.

But the twists and turns of Serbian politics have confused the battle lines. Zoran Djindjic's Democratic Party was so determined to oppose Milosevic that, when the Serbian leader broke with the "Great Serbian" plan to annex Bosnia, the 'democrats' formed a block with ultra-nationalist leader Radovan Karadzic against Milosevic.

Things have also been complicated by the Kosovo Liberation Army (UCK) attacks against Serb civilians and more moderate Kosovar Albanians. Many Serbs who had tried to build dialogue with the Kosovo Albanians have now

accepted the Serbian regime's discourse on "Albanian terrorism."

Many Serbs have also accepted the regime's claims that the main reason Albanians are fleeing Kosovo is the NATO bombardment. Of course, the fact that Milosevic hides behind the NATO attacks, rather than admitting the ethnic cleansing, suggests that there is little public support for these outrages. Young Serbs are not ready to die in a struggle to expel the Kosovo Albanians.

But nor are most Serbs ready to accept Kosovo's secession, after the "International Community" accepted the expulsion of 200,000 Serbs from Croatia and Bosnia, and refuses any kind of self-determination for the Serb-populated Krajina region of Croatia.

Of course, many Serbs have forgotten the ethnic cleansing which Krajina Serbs imposed against their Croat neighbours. But the main lesson here is that no serious alternative politics in this region can avoid explicit support for the right of self-determination for all the peoples of former Yugoslavia.

• What is the current state of the democratic opposition inside Serbia?

The "Zajedno" (Unity) coalition against Milosevic has fallen apart. *Zajedno* won an impressive victory in 1996 elections, and all through the winter there were demonstrations, particularly among young people, demanding that Milosevic respect the election result. Opposition to Milosevic was the cement in this fragile coalition. It included Vesna Pesic's non-nationalist Civic Alliance (which has its origins in Ante Markovic's

Reformist Party), and two moderate nationalist parties: the Democratic Party of M. Djindjic and the Serbian Renaissance Party of Vuk Draskovic. *Zajedno* had no real programmatic coherence, and suffered a disastrous series of power struggles and corruption scandals in the municipal governments of Belgrade and other towns.

A few small social democratic groups have formed, and split away from *Zajedno*. But they are very marginal. It is hard to be a leftist in Serbia, where Milosevic's own party is called the Socialist Party of Serbia.

Milosevic's wife Mirjana Markovic leads a smaller "Yugoslav Left Union" (JUL) which includes many Serbian anti-nationalists and supporters of the original Yugoslav federation. Milosevic sometimes uses JUL support to present himself as an anti-nationalist, and sometimes distances himself from them to demonstrate his Serbian nationalist credentials. YUL's social base is among peasants and pauperised workers, and the party exploits its links to the regime to build clientelist support structures.

The far right is very present in Serbian politics. Vojislav Seselj's Radical Party is the real party of ethnic cleansing, and the bloody construction of a Greater Serbia. Seselj has been the main supporter of Radovan Karadzic's faction among the Bosnian Serbs.

Milosevic allied himself with the far right in 1990-93, but then distanced himself from them. But Serbia's last elections denied him an absolute majority. Milosevic has now positioned his Socialists as the centre-ground, working in coalition with Seselj's extreme right and the more left-wing JUL. At the Yugoslav federal level, Milosevic has formed an alliance with his old enemy Vuk Draskovic (the other ex-*Zajedno* parties boycotted the elections)

Leaving the purely political sphere to one side, Milosevic has built a strong base of support in the police, special forces and paramilitary groups. He has rather less confidence in the Yugoslav

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★ Yugoslavia

Army, which is more diverse in its thinking. Though the army has provided arms and uniforms for the far-right militias which have carried out most of the dirty work in Croatia, Bosnia and Kosovo. The Yugoslav army has preferred to play a support role in most cases, with the militias doing the killing.

To understand the Serbian regime, you have to analyse this combination of a legal face, and a rotten, thugish interior. There is a very similar dynamic in Croatia, where the extreme-right HVO militia has been much more integrated into the regular armed forces.

There are many small liberal and social democratic parties, particularly outside Belgrade, and in Vojvodina, the most multi-cultural and multi-ethnic region of Yugoslavia. Most of these have recently formed a Coalition of Democratic Parties (SDP), which proposes regionalism and decentralisation, anti-war and anti-nationalist demands, and a "fast and fair privatisation process."

In Montenegro, local ex-Communist leaders want their little republic to keep most of its tourism earnings, and greater control of Yugoslavia's only sea port. Growing separatist sympathies (until the NATO air strikes) reflected a similar dynamic as in Croatia and Slovenia, the richest republics of former Yugoslavia.

Serbia also has a multitude of NGOs and civic associations, including the Women in Black and other peace groups, SOS Battered Women, independent trade unions, and a range of sympathetic and leftist intellectuals. These groups are small and weak. But given the weakness of similar groups in "democratic" countries like Germany and the United States, we should recognise the real difficulties that progressive Serbians face. International contacts and support for these initiatives is very important.

• What impact is the war having in the neighbouring countries?

The massive arrival of Albanian-speaking refugees in Macedonia is perceived as a danger by more conservative currents, which worry that the country's own 25% Albanian minority will grow in size, and demand autonomy or even secession. The mistreatment of some refugees reflects the growing climate of hysteria.

Macedonia was the poorest republic of the old Yugoslav federation (though richer than Kosovo), and suffers economic discrimination from its southern neighbour, Greece. Macedonian leaders have struggled to retain good relations with Serbia, and are reluctant to allow NATO troops to use their country as a base for anti-Yugoslav interventions. All signs of weakness in Macedonia are seized and exploited by nationalist currents in neighbouring Bulgaria, which have never recognised the Macedonian language as more than a dialect of their own, and would like to dominate or annex the 1.5 million Slav Macedonians into Bulgaria.

Albania itself is fast-becoming a key NATO base. Humanitarian organisations are already protesting that troops are using them as camouflage, thus reducing their capacity to aid the civilian and refugee populations. Extreme poverty and the influx of huge numbers of deportees from Kosovo has encouraged Mafia-style behaviour of all kinds.

Corruption and power struggles since the collapse of the Stalinist regime have repeatedly provoked violence and insurrection in Albania. The Kosovo Liberation Army (UCK) has profited from this confusion to build a number of bases in northern Albania (and in the Albanian-dominated north-west of Macedonia).

Bosnia-Herzegovina is again on the edge of an explosion. The United States are trying to strengthen the Croatian

army, so as to encircle Milosevic from the north and west. But even Washington knows that Croatian dictator Franjo Tudjman has only limited control over his Bosnian-Croat allies, and is willing to destabilise Bosnia if it suits Great Croat interests.

Washington has offered to welcome Croatia into NATO, if Tudjman will control the Croatian separatists of western Bosnia, and surrender the numerous war criminals at the head of the Croatian army to the International Permanent War Crimes Tribunal in The Hague.

The United States persuaded Tudjman's HDZ party to dissolve the Bosnian Croat statelet of Herceg-Bosna into the current Croato-Muslim federation. But Bosnian Croat leaders are again demanding a "Croat entity" in the Mostar region, which reinforces the dynamic towards the partition of Bosnia.

In the Serbian-held part of Bosnia, the Radical Party of Seselj is promoting a very similar dynamic. In the most recent elections across Bosnia, "international" (ie multi-ethnic and anti-nationalist) candidates were physically attacked by both Croatian and Serbian nationalists.

The only good news to come out of Bosnia recently was the reunification of the various social democratic organisations. Though their programme offers little to comfort progressive voters.

• So what are the solutions to this crisis?

It is impossible to present any kind of coherent and progressive "solution" at the moment. Every day brings fresh evidence of an uncontrolled dynamic which is degrading the conditions for progressive struggles.

So we should busy ourselves with the urgent solidarity tasks, and maintain our critical spirit in the face of all proposals for "action" which actually make the

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disaster worse. And, at the back of our minds, we should continue working on a number of long-term questions which are essential to a solution to the whole Yugoslav crisis.

The Berlin wall has been replaced by new walls of capital and wealth. The peoples of Eastern Europe deserve an alternative to NATO's *realpolitik* of balancing the various nationalist regimes in the illusive search for stability.

The European Union has used its Schengen border agreement to keep Balkan refugees and conscientious objectors out. In the long term, we need another Europe, with a different economic logic. With individual and collective democracy. Recognising the right of all the peoples of the continent to decide about their future.

But we should admit that we have had only limited success in building the progressive alternative even in the "democratic" conditions of Western Europe. We shouldn't underestimate the difficulties facing the emerging progressive currents in the Balkans.

We shouldn't reduce all the competing claims in the Balkans to the same level. There are dominant nations here, and dominated ones. But they are possibly more intermingled in this part of the world, where each minority contains pockets of other groups, which are exploited in turn.

Taking the perspective of the underdog means looking through Kosovo Albanian eyes in Serbia, through Serbian eyes in Croatia, through Bosnian Muslim eyes in Bosnia, and in all parts of former Yugoslavia to look through the eyes of those 'cosmopolitans' who claim an identity of mixture and intermingling.

We should encourage the existing, painful process of building small links between civic, anti-nationalist, trade union and feminist groups across the new borders. Because no "political solution" can be imposed from outside or from above.

And the most urgent task are clear: the Kosovars have the right to defend themselves, and we should organise material and political support for the refugees and the deserters. It is already obvious that NATO bombing is not assuring the defence of the lives and liberties of the Kosovo Albanians, and that the Serbian people, rather than the Milosevic regime, are suffering the effects of NATO aggression. The bombing must be stopped. The way to save lives and reopen a political space where Milosevic can be challenged, and the crimes of Kosovo exposed will come through a process of return of the deportees, with a multi-national presence that excludes NATO. ★

A longer version of this article will appear in the next issue of the French theoretical magazine *Critique communiste*

Inside Yugoslavia Progressive Serbs call for peace

Deeply disturbed by NATO destruction and the ordeal of Kosovo Albanians, we, the representatives of nongovernmental organisations and the Nezavisnost ('Independence') trade union strongly demand that those responsible for this tragedy should immediately create ground for the renewal of the peace process.

The most powerful military, political and economic powers of the world are killing people and destroying not only military but also civilian objects, blowing up bridges and rail tracks, factories and heating plants, warehouses and water supplies...

At the same time, in fear of the bombing campaign and military actions by the regime and the KLA, hundreds of thousands of Kosovo Albanians are, in an unprecedented exodus, forced to leave their devastated homes and look for salvation in the tragedy and uncertainty of fleeing.

It is obvious that this is a road to catastrophe, and the peaceful and fair solution to the Kosovo problem through international mediation, something we have supported for years, today seems more distant than ever.

The past activities of our organisations in the field of democratisation, development of a civil society and acceptance of Yugoslavia into all international institutions have been under constant pressure and intimidation by the Serbian regime.

We, as members of civil society associations have courageously and rationally fought against war and nationalistic propaganda and in support of human rights.

We have always raised our voices against the repression against Kosovo Albanians and demanded the respect of their liberties and guarantees for their rights. We have also requested the return of the autonomy of Kosovo.

In fact, the only connection and cooperation of Serbs and Albanians during all these years has been preserved among civil society institutions like ours.

NATO military intervention has undermined all the results we have achieved, and endangered the very survival of the civil sector in Serbia.

Faced with this tragic situation, and in the name of humanist ideals



and values, as well as in accordance with all our past activities, we are demanding:

- an immediate stop to the bombing campaign and all armed movements;
- resumption of the peace process with international mediation at the regional Balkan and European level, as well as in the framework of the United Nations;
- the European Union and Russia should share responsibility for implementing a peaceful solution of the crisis;
- an end to the ethnic cleansing process and the immediate return of all refugees;
- support for the citizens of Montenegro, to preserve peace and stability there, solve the serious consequences of the refugee catastrophe, and resume the democratic processes that were underway there;
- we demand that the Serbian and international media inform the public in a professional manner and not spur media war, incite interethnic hatred, create irrational public opinion and glorify force as the ultimate accomplishment of the human mind.

We cannot meet these demands by ourselves. Support our demands and take initiatives and actions to help their implementation! ★

This "Appeal of Serbian non-governmental organisations" began to circulate on April 6. Supporters include: Association of Citizens for Democracy, Social Justice and Support to Trade Unions • Belgrade Circle • Centre for Democracy and Free Elections • Centre for Transition to Democracy-ToD • Civic Initiatives • European Movement in Serbia • Forum for Ethnic Relations, and Foundation for Peace and Crisis Management • Group 484 • Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Serbia • Student Union of Serbia • Union for Truth about Antifascist Resistance • Nezavisnost ("Independence") United Branch Trade Unions • VIN-Weekly Video News • Women in Black • Yu Lawyers Committee for Human Rights • EKO Centar • ARGUMENT Agency



Opposition in crisis

Europe's left and green parties are divided in their response to the Kosovo crisis. **François Vercammen** reports

In September 1998 Gerhardt Schroeder promised that "German troops would only go outside our frontiers if they have a UN mandate." But the country's new Chancellor used the recent SPD congress to block a left-wing motion opposing any NATO ground war in Yugoslavia. Schroeder successfully imposed a motion approving the bombing campaign, though without counting the votes for and against.

In response, the left within the SPD went public with its opposition to the war. Federations in Bremen, Schleswig-Holstein and Munich issued proclamations, as did the "Frankfurt Circle" (led by Detler von Larcher) and eight SPD members of parliament, including Andrea Nahles, president of the Party's youth wing (Yusos). Former minister Oskar Lafontaine has also condemned the war.

In Britain, eleven Labour Members of Parliament, mostly from the socialist "Campaign Group" voted against the government on 19 April. Most are very anti-NATO, but say little about Milosevic's regime and its Kosovo policy. Tony Benn MP opposes the "war of aggression" on the basis that use of force hasn't been authorised by the United Nations. He believes that a peace conference convened by the UN is the way forward.

The other wing of the traditional socialist left, led by former London Council leader Ken Livingstone, are outspoken supporters of the NATO bombings. Livingstone compares Milosevic to Hitler. The US has no "imperial plan" in the region and therefore can be supported, he argues. "It is the duty of the nations that have the military power to protect individual communities from systematic genocide by evil regimes. Where the West has the power and uses it wisely, I will support that intervention".

The anti-war left has won widespread

support in the cultural world. Those condemning NATO include the prestigious *New Left Review*, the writer Harold Pinter, filmmaker Ken Loach, and feminist writer Germaine Greer.

The Scottish National Party and the Wales Party (Plaid Cymru) are also opposed to NATO intervention. Both parties describe themselves as social democratic, and are to the left of Blair's New Labour on many issues.

French Prime Minister Lionel Jospin has had little difficulty containing dissidents within the ruling Socialist Party. The Socialist Left current (Gauche socialiste) of Gérard Filoche, Jean-Luc Melancon and Julien Dray has spoken out against the NATO bombing and in favour of Kosovar rights. But they focus their criticism on "US tutorship", rather than on France's SP-led government.

Jean-Pierre Chevenement's Citizen's Movement (MDC), a dissident faction outside the socialist party, but strongly represented in the government, has a much clearer anti-war position. Though MDC leaders like Sami Nair's continue to stress their loyalty to the Jospin government.

There was little initial support for the NATO intervention in Italy, though a majority of voters seem to support NATO bombing. The first to speak out against the bombings were the Refounded Communists (PRC) and the Pope. Italy is a key base for the NATO intervention, and centre-left Prime Minister Massimo D'Alema has manoeuvred hard to maintain elite consensus and public support for the intervention.

Italy's government is an unusually broad coalition, within which a number of left currents have criticised D'Alema, though stop short of anything that could bring down the government. 119 of Italy's 630 MPs have demanded a NATO ceasefire, opposed a ground intervention, and condemned ethnic cleansing—though stressing their "loyal and total support for the government." This dissident platform has been signed by all the Green MPs, supporters of ex-PRC

leader Armando Cossuta, and dissidents within the DS and PPI.

With pro-NATO leaders like former Prime Minister Filipe Gonzalez and current NATO president Javier Solana, Spain's social democrats (PSOE) support the conservative government's pro-intervention discourse. Only three PSOE MPs, from the Socialist Left current abstained in the vote approving Spanish participation in the NATO campaign.

Greens

The war is the first real challenge for those Greens in government (France, Germany, Italy) and those, like the Belgian Greens, who hope to share power soon. In the face of ethnic cleansing which reminds many Europeans of the rise of fascism in the 1930s, many Greens have theorised the need for a "humanitarian war". But there is a clear distinction between those who are just confused, and those who have consciously decided to join the establishment, whatever the cost.

The lies, manoeuvres and treachery has been particularly painful for Germany's Greens, with their leader Joschka Fischer at the centre of the German imperialist government. Many members and local leaders are leaving the party. Others openly oppose their party's pro-war discourse. Seven Green deputies (including Christian Ströbele and Annelie Butenbach) voted against military intervention on 26 March. Environment Minister Gila Altman has refused to resign after she criticised German participation in the NATO aggression. In Tübingen, Green leader Claudia Haydt has resigned. Some of these anti-war Greens have since joined the ex-Communist PDS.

Over 700 members of the Greens signed Uli Cremer's open letter protesting the party's "Crossing of the Rubicon."

France's Greens are a solid component of Jospin's left coalition government. Party spokesman Daniel Cohn-Bendit and Green MP Noël Mamère are NATO's most jingoistic supporters. More than 70% of National Committee members approved a resolution calling for the transformation of Kosovo into a protectorate (a "humanitarian zone"), with a police presence to separate the two sides, aid to refugees, and a Balkan conference.

The party was totally opposed to the Gulf war, so this shift in policy is provoking widespread unease among the members. But the party leadership is unshaken in its loyalty to the Jospin government.

The minority of Greens who oppose the war are led by Martine Billard (one of the party's four spokespersons) and MP M.-H. Aubert.

Italy's Green MPs have all signed a statement demanding a ceasefire (see above) and threaten to walk out of the D'Alema government — "next time".

The war comes at an inconvenient time for Belgian greens. With regional, national and European elections in June, both the French-speaking Ecolos and the Dutch-speaking Agalev were preparing to enter national and regional government as junior coalition partners.

The pacifist origins of these parties in the early 1980s make it hard for leaders to impose a more "realist" line. Green leaders were silent in the parliamentary debate on the war. Luckily for them, the government didn't allow a vote on participation in the NATO campaign.

At the start of the NATO bombing, Belgian greens supported what they called a "humanitarian intervention." But traditional anti-war sentiments have reasserted themselves. Ecolo is now calling for "an end to the bombing, linked to the simultaneous withdrawal of Serbian forces and the militias of the Kosovo Liberation Army (UCK)." Though none of the party's MPs has signed this new statement. On 2 April, Agalev spokesman Van Dienderen called for an unconditional halt to NATO activity. Ecolo continued to call for a "conditional" halt.

The Communist Parties

For some of Europe's Communists, the Balkan war, and Milosevic's regime, is the last act of the death agony of Stalinism. Italy's former CP strongman Armando Cossutta, now a minister in the centre-left government, made a pathetic trip to France, Berlin, Moscow and Belgrade, in a futile attempt to unify CP leaders and play a mediator role between Milosevic and the west.

There are remnants of "either NATO or Milosevic" cold-war thinking in most of Europe's CPs, as well as nostalgia for "actually existing socialism."

But despite the regular contacts

between these parties, in the European parliament and in *ad hoc* conferences, there seems to be little consensus or appetite for coordinated activities.

There is a broad spectrum of opinion and engagement in the anti-war movement, with the Greek KKE the most militant and anti-NATO, and the French Communist party the most hesitant and inactive. Obviously, a NATO ground intervention could stimulate many more CP members across Europe into anti-war activity.

Greece has strong traditions of anti-British and anti-American sentiments, which fuel anti-imperialist consciousness. So does US support for Turkey, and Greece's cultural and economic ties with Serbia.

The KKE has always been pro-Milosevic, even supporting the notorious ethnic cleansers Arkan and Karadzic. But the party's large implantation, particularly in the labour movement, has enabled it to play a decisive role in real mass mobilisations against the war. Soldiers and sailors have refused to be mobilised. There have been occupations of airports, and blockades of US ships in Greek ports.

The leadership of the French CP has tried to reassure both anti-war militants and its partners in government. All criticism of NATO is balanced by statements that the party is absolutely committed to remaining in the Jospin government!

Trade union solidarity International Workers' Aid

"Recognising that even at this time of conflict and crisis, any future settlement will require economic regeneration of Kosova, Yugoslavia, and the wider region, we believe that preparations should be undertaken now to put in place a Balkan 'Marshall Plan' for the economic regeneration of former Yugoslavia, focusing primarily but not solely on the parts most severely affected by war, this initiative to be introduced swiftly after the reaching of a satisfactory

political and security settlement for Kosova....

"We are following the example set by our Italian colleagues and are asking Scottish trade unionists to give an hour's pay to help the Kosovans, and asking their bosses to match the money contributed.

"We will channel the funds raised through organisations such as Scottish European Aid and Workers Aid, with which we worked during the Bosnian war."

Scottish Trade Union Congress

Ireland Neutrality

Gerry Adams

The people of Northern Ireland live in a State dominated by a foreign power, Britain, occupied by British troops, who are also NATO troops. We have had many years of first hand experience of how NATO troops behave, of how NATO turns a blind eye to the military excesses of one of its member states, and even how NATO seeks to use our situation as a testing ground of new weapons and surveillance technology, counter-insurgency techniques and crowd control methods. South Armagh is the most militarized region in Western Europe, and for three decades a testing ground for NATO technology.

Before the Irish government takes the grave step of joining "Partnership for Peace" and abandons Irish neutrality, it should listen to those who have direct, daily experience of one of the NATO military powers.

Neutrality is not a mere anti-British reflex. It reflects the democratic and internationalist ethos of radical Irish republicanism from Wolfe Tone to James Connolly. It has a world view as well as a distinctly Irish view.

As a people who have been fighting against colonialism for centuries, we should work with other nations to develop a bridge within Europe, between those emerging nations in eastern and southern Europe which are disadvantaged through years of repression and poverty, and between Europe and the peoples of 'the South'— who are crippled by a foreign debt which keeps them permanently impoverished.

We cannot do this through the creation of a European Superstate with a military arm. Sinn Fein believes there is no role for the European Union in military and defence matters. International peacekeeping should be under the auspices of the United Nations.

It is amazing how tons of bombs dropped on civilians in Serbia are morally and politically acceptable to the British government and the jingoistic media, while the silent guns of the IRA, we are told, are a threat to peace here in Ireland. ★

Excerpt from a recent address to the Peace And Neutrality Alliance Conference on Irish Neutrality
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The communist-inspired newspaper *Il Manifesto* has played a very positive role in building the impressive Rome demonstrations. Leading columnist Rosanna Rossanda has incited Italian soldiers to disobey any orders to participate in a ground war.

Spain's United Left (IU) has opposed the war in parliament and in the streets. But one wing of the movement supports Milosevic, while the other demands respect for Kosovar democratic rights.

When the conflict started, IU leader Julio Anguita took a pro-Milosevic line, he met with the Yugoslav ambassador in the CP offices in Madrid, and disputed media reports of "alleged" massacres of Kosovar civilians. In one *El Pais* interview, Anguita called Milosevic "a man of the left."

The practical consequence of this pro-Milosevic line was an unsuccessful attempt to organise a separate IU (PC) anti-war demonstration, so as to split a broader anti-bombing, pro-Kosovo

demonstration being organised for the same dates.

IU federations in Madrid, Catalonia and Valencia are among those who make the double demand of "stop the bombing!" and "self-determination for Kosovo!"

On 26 April, the Anguita leadership abruptly modified its position to satisfy these growing protests. But PC leader Frutos and other prominent CPers refused to support the new policy.

Pressure on IU is also coming from the broad left "Manifesto for a just peace in the Balkans," which has been signed by a wide range of intellectuals and leaders of social and political movements, including the prominent IU philosopher Francesco Fernandez Buey, and left trade union leader Augustine Moreno.

Germany's PDS opposes the war and NATO, criticises Milosevic's anti-democratic regime within Serbia and in its expulsion of Kosovo Albanians. But party leader Gregor Gysi rushed to Belgrade for talks with Milosevic. He also visited Kosovo, but his handshake with the Serbian leader was very badly received by the PDS base.

The PDS has said nothing in defence of the democratic rights of the Kosovars. At the European level, the PDS is proposing a "peace plan," inviting left parties in both halves of Europe to support a United Nations intervention, and a ceasefire by both Serbian and Kosovar forces. The plan says nothing about a right of return for those Kosovars who have been expelled from their homes.

At the same time, the PDS is active in the anti-war movement. Member of Parliament Winfried Wolf persuaded the party to publish a war diary, which is now in its third edition (100,000, 300,000 and 500,000 copies.)

Scandinavia

Most members of Norway's Socialist Left party (Sosialistisk Venstreparti) seem to oppose Party Leader Kristin Halvorsen's pro-NATO statements.

The ex-Maoist Red Electoral Alliance (RV) has supported the Kosovo Liberation Army (UCK) in their "just war against national oppression, though we disagree with their attachment to NATO, and their unclear politics."

Norway's daily revolutionary newspaper *Klassekampen* (Class Struggle) initially wanted to collect money for the UCK, until that organisation's internal 'coup' against Adem Demaci and recent pro-NATO statements.

The Danish Red Green Alliance (Enhedslisten) has used its parliamentary presence to denounce NATO intervention, and support Kosovo self-determination. ★

• The website version of this article is constantly updated. Check it out!



U.S. socialists, oppose intervention, support
Kosova self-determination
Dissolve NATO!

This editorial was published in the May-June issue of **Against the Currents** magazine

The carnage in Kosovo and the United States/NATO air campaign pose one of the greatest challenges in a generation to the left's principles, political courage and moral backbone. During most of our lifetimes, it's been unprecedented to confront such a situation of apparent total conflict between competing imperatives: between the need for immediate action to stop genocide, and the need to oppose and halt imperialist interventions...

The crime against humanity perpetrated in Kosovo would have been prevented, years in advance, by the defeat of the Milosevic regime and allied gangsters during their previous war, in Bosnia. What was required then, from 1991 on, was not NATO bombings or invasions, but simply allowing the Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina to arm itself against the ethnic cleansing that aimed at destroying a small multicomunal state.

The West imposed an arms embargo in the name of "avoiding a wider war," which left the unarmed Bosnian civilian population subject to destruction by Milosevic's "Yugoslav National Army" and by Serb and Croat paramilitaries, finally forcing Bosnia into a military alliance with Croatia for physical survival... Throughout the 1990s the West facilitated Milosevic's butcheries and internal repression by treating him as the key to Balkan "stability."

The Catastrophe in the Making

The flow of refugees from Kosovo, the reports of mass depopulations and burning of villages, and the all-too-credible reports of separation of male refugees

for summary mass executions, all accelerated when the bombings began. But he Serbian regime's campaign for the destruction of the Kosovar Albanian population was already underway... The planning and implementation of this operation was enabled and precipitated not by the bombing of Yugoslavia, but by the West's policies of the previous decade of constant attempts at cynical deal-making with Milosevic...

The admirable anti-war struggles of the Yugoslav democratic opposition, at its height in the early 1990s, organized anti-war mobilizations of larger size, relative to the population of Serbia, than the biggest U.S. anti-war demonstrations of the Vietnam era. And this brave legacy of civic opposition to Milosevic is the first "collateral damage" of the bombing.

But no one could imagine that this opposition today, in its defeated and corrupted state (with some of its leadership now in the Milosevic cabinet), could mount any effective challenge to slaughter and depopulation in Kosovo.

Again, the main international factor that derailed the once-promising democratic challenge to Milosevic was not NATO bombing. It was, rather, the incessant western policy of copying up to Milosevic, legitimizing his regime, rewarding his adventures in Kosovo (abrogating its regional autonomy in 1989), the war with Croatia, then the ethnic-cleansing rape of Bosnia-Herzegovina, each one more murderous than the previous, culminating in the 1998-99 Kosovo catastrophe.

Throughout this decade, everything the West has done could only make this regime appear permanent and irremovable, even irreplaceable. That, in fact, was the real lesson of the Dayton accords, which consolidated the dis-

memberment of Bosnia (after its army had begun to win the war!), and the intent of the ramshackle agreement at Rambouillet, which specifically excluded the Kosovar Albanians' right of self-determination.

The facts of the immediate impact of NATO bombing on the fate of the Yugoslav democratic forces, and on the acceleration of killing and depopulation in Kosovo, are relevant but not ultimately decisive. After all, by all accounts the refugees fleeing Kosovo welcome the bombing and would prefer to see it intensified. As socialists and as revolutionary opponents of imperialism, we have to face the question uppermost in most ordinary people's minds: Shouldn't the world stop the genocide?

The Politics of This War

Our response must begin by noting numerous genocides and crimes against humanity in which U.S. imperialism itself was the perpetrator or sponsor: Guatemala, Indonesia and East Timor, Indochina, the starvation of the people of Iraq today.

Nor should it be forgotten that the United States-organized sadistic torture of the Iraqi population began with the stated goal of liberating Kuwait from the murderous occupation by Saddam Hussein. This case illustrates one fundamental reason for opposing the current war: Any gateway for imperialist "humanitarian intervention" opens onto the most horrific consequences, unanticipated and uncontrollable by well-meaning folks who may have initially supported the intervention.

What flows from the United States and NATO giving themselves license to be the saviors and the guarantors of stability? Our view is that even worse horrors are the likeliest result.

The current war is a confrontation between two malignant relics, former Cold War partners now become enemies: NATO, the U.S.-organized alliance organized 50 years ago to ensure Washington's hegemony in the anti-Communist Cold War crusade; and the rump Yugoslav regime of Slobodan Milosevic, a Stalinist who turned to nationalism, and allied himself to the most vicious elements within Serbia, to advance his own opportunist ambitions.

NATO is not at war with Yugoslavia for humanitarian reasons to save Kosovars. Nor is this a war over some direct economic interest. NATO is at war to save itself and its political leaders—because their threats and bluffs failed, and they must now follow through, regardless. As in Vietnam, "we have to destroy Kosovo in order to save it."

An Inevitable Wider War

We oppose NATO's war in the former Yugoslavia first, because we are opponents of NATO itself—because by its very nature it is not and cannot be any-

thing other than a machine for imperialist dominion.

NATO was created in 1949, at a time when the economic hegemony of the United States was absolutely unchallenged, when it was the political decision-maker for Europe, when its military muscle and nuclear umbrella made Washington the guarantor for the reconstruction of capitalism in Europe and the supervisor of the transformation of the old European colonial empires.

The New NATO

Much has changed in half a century. The former foe, the Soviet Union, has vanished, and United States capitalism faces serious economic rivals. Still, through its unique ability to organize a large-scale military intervention, the United States seeks in this war with rump-Yugoslavia to reaffirm its power to call the shots.

The same desire to maintain U.S. hegemony lies behind Washington's aggressive sponsorship of NATO's newest members, Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic, at a time when a nearly-shattered post-Soviet Russia cannot be considered any military threat to them.

Ostensibly, U.S. "leadership" is an indispensable ingredient for preserving "stability." Instead, the expansion of

NATO humiliates Russia and strengthens right-wing nationalism there, while the bitter example of the Balkans shows U.S. "leadership" morally and politically bankrupt, unable even to foresee let alone prevent systematically-organized ethnic cleansings, dithering and dithering and blithering and blithering while civilian populations were left defenseless and consumed.

Secondly, this war, once having begun, almost inevitably must become nothing less than an all-out occupation and re-drawing of the map of the Balkans. In this process, the rights of self-determination of all the peoples involved, Kosovars included, will be brutally subordinated to the goals of conquest.

We recognize that the Kosovars themselves overwhelmingly support NATO intervention and undoubtedly want it to be expanded. Our fundamental quarrel is not with the victims who are understandably seeking help from any possible source, but rather with those supporters of this war who fail to face up to the consequences of where it is most likely to lead.

Unlike some apologists for the Belgrade regime, we don't subscribe to the notion that this war was all plotted in advance by U.S. imperialism as part of a plot to "break up" Yugoslavia. If any-

thing, the United States was less eager than (for example) Germany to encourage Croatian and Slovenian secession from Yugoslavia—and certainly, Washington showed little objection to Milosevic's ambitions for a Greater Serbia so long as it seemed attainable without too much "wider instability."

NATO's error

Far from expecting this war, it appears that NATO and the United were surprised by the failures of their diplomatic schemes and military bluff, and have gone to war without the necessary military or political preparation.

Evidently, the State Department's Balkan experts failed to recognize what was most obvious: If the Serb regime was determined to hold onto Kosovo, against the wishes of its 90% Albanian population, it would have to kill or expel half or more of the two million Kosovars.

Only the kind of "experts" whose professional assignment was to work out a deal with Milosevic could fail to see the pre-planned escalation from repression to depopulation in Kosovo.

Saving face

Having failed to secure Milosevic's agreement at Rambouillet or to deter him with the threat of air strikes, NATO suddenly found itself with a choice between two options, both potentially catastrophic.

It could in essence abandon its stated commitment to the Kosovars—a choice that Clinton and his European social democratic partners Blair, Jospin and Schroeder refused to contemplate, since it would constitute an incredible defeat that would discredit their respective governments and leave in doubt NATO's unity and possibly its very survival.

Or, NATO could begin the air war—but once the first strikes failed to produce a Serb surrender, as again could be predicted by anyone other than a military expert self-hypnotized by Cruise missile technology, there is no option but to escalate toward an inexorable larger war—or admit defeat.

Day by day, as the scope of the horrors imposed on the Kosovars and the unmanageable extent of the refugee emergency unfolded, the war imposed its own logic on the planners, more than the other way around. To save NATO—an even greater imperative than saving the Kosovars, obviously—it is necessary now to fight the war and win it.

In the words of the 1980s Reaganaut Lawrence Eagleburger, "We can't let this pipsqueak nation, Serbia, inflict a defeat on NATO."

If the refugees are to be returned, as NATO has promised, the Yugoslav military must be absolutely defeated in Kosovo and prevented from returning.

That objective requires the destruction of Serb military power and Serbia's capacity for rebuilding that power. Hence

Lawyers for peace NATO leaders accused

Lawyers from several countries have laid a formal complaint with the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia against the individual leaders of all NATO countries and the Organisation itself.

The complaint alleges "open violation" of the United Nations Charter, the NATO treaty itself, the Geneva Conventions and the Principles of International Law Recognized by the Nuremberg Tribunal.

The complaint points to the bombing of civilian targets and alleges that NATO leaders "have admitted publicly to having agreed upon and ordered these actions, being fully aware of their nature and effects" and that "there is ample evidence in the public statements of NATO leaders that these attacks on civilian targets are part of a deliberate attempt to terrorize the population to turn it against its leadership."

The complaint also cites a statement of United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

Mary Robinson in which she says that "large numbers of civilians have incontestably been killed, civilian installations targeted on the grounds that they are or could be of military application and NATO remains sole judge of what is or is not acceptable to bomb..."

The group, lead by professors from Osgoode Hall Law School of York University in Toronto has the support of the pan-American American Association of Jurists.

Professor Michael Mandel, spokesman for the group of complainants, explains that "the bombing of civilians is not only immoral, it is criminal and punishable under the laws governing the Tribunal. You cannot kill a woman and child in Belgrade on the theoretical possibility that it might save a woman and child in Pristina. Even in a legal war you cannot kill civilians and destroy an entire country as a military strategy." ★

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not only must Serbia's existing military infrastructure be wiped out, but its industrial capacity must be bombed back to pre-World War II levels.

Ground war

This means that a large-scale ground force must be sent into Kosovo, since air power alone cannot drive out the Serb forces, and to create a NATO protectorate in most of Kosovo (a part may be left for the Serb population in Kosovo to flee to). True, Clinton promises every day not to send ground troops, with the same credibility with which he vowed never having had sexual relations with that woman—but by the time the lie is revealed it will be "too late." British Prime Minister Tony Blair is already calling for a massive ground force.

At war's end, new boundaries must be forcibly imposed on Serbia. Whether or not to join "Republika Serpska" in Bosnia to Serbia; whether or not Montenegro secedes from rump-Yugoslavia; whether to coercively "adjust" the borders of Macedonia to satisfy Albanian ambitions on the one hand or Greek claims on the other—all these are decisions that will be taken by the occupying powers.

It hardly seems likely (though in the world of diplomacy, perhaps a role can be arranged for Russia to play intermediary) that these arrangements can be made with the Milosevic regime and his gangster partners. Hence, although a military occupation of the Serbian heartland is out of the question, the government of rump-Yugoslavia must probably be somehow removed, or else its people subjected to the protracted horrors now imposed on the people of Iraq for their unforgivable crime of being ruled by Saddam Hussein.

Such objectives entail war, and a postwar level of intervention, with casualties and expenses on a scale for which the population of the United States and other NATO powers have been completely unprepared. No wonder that neither Clinton nor any of his European partners have the political courage to do what democratic principle demands—to state openly where their course leads and to ask their Congress or Parliament to debate a declaration of war.

Anyone on the left who favors NATO's actions, regardless of the most honorable and sincerest of desires to stop genocide, must face up to these consequences. The result can only be a more virulent post-Cold War NATO, intervening at will (mainly, U.S. will) wherever its power can reach, i.e. practically anywhere.

Kosovo Yes—NATO No!

Given these realities, it is impossible for socialists to want NATO's operation to succeed. Supporting this war, now, can only mean supporting imperialism. In the real world, we cannot pick- and-choose



between ostensibly benevolent military interventions, carried out in the name of humanitarian rescue, and those conducted for naked military-political aggrandizement or profit—because inevitably, inexorably, the former becomes the pretext for the latter.

That is the case even in Kosovo, a war the United States and NATO didn't "provoke" but actually tried to avoid through a criminal policy of appeasement. Once having begun, this is inevitably a war for NATO to occupy and re-configure the map of the Balkans—even though the war itself, should it end in yet another "political settlement" with Milosevic or should it produce military debacles and serious casualties for the invaders, may prove to be NATO's own road to ruin.

For us, the ruin of NATO is the only possible good that can come from this horrific human holocaust. Our small contribution to NATO's defeat must be to do all we can to politically expose and discredit it inside our own country. We have no "constructive alternative" to propose for NATO except its dissolution.

Whatever happens next, the Kosovar and Serb peoples have lost. The Kosovars, if NATO accepts defeat and deals yet again with Milosevic, will be left a landless and homeless people—the Palestinians and the Kurds of the Balkans. If NATO ultimately overwhelms Serbia and establishes a military protectorate in Kosovo, the refugees may return, but their survival would then depend upon an indefinite occupation with all the consequences that entails for future generations.

For the Serbs, ten years of Milosevic's Greater Serbia campaign have produced a national catastrophe of unimaginable proportions. Hundreds of thousands of Serbs who lived for centuries inside Croatia, whose welfare was Milosevic's pretext for invading Croatia in 1991, were brutally expelled from their homes in the Krajina region

when Croatia regained the territory. Serbs in "Republika Serpska" are ghettoized, Serbs in Kosovo will have no future in a NATO-occupied zone and Serbs in the heartland of Serbia have suffered economic ruin and the destruction of the hope for democracy.

What Can We Do?

We support the Kosovar Albanians' right of self-determination. No-one with democratic values can deny the legitimacy of their struggle, which is a fight for physical and cultural survival as well as political rights. Even further, under circumstances of threatened annihilation or mass dispersal of the population, an independent Kosovo is the only real-life solution.

But the Kosovars' absolutely legitimate struggle is only one element in what has become a much larger and reactionary imperialist war. The United States always regarded the Kosovars as bargaining pawns, never supported Kosovo independence—and even welcomed the defeat of the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) in 1998, when the Yugoslav military launched its first assaults.

Yet even aside from that, we do not support "liberating" Kosovo through NATO destruction of Serbia's cities and people.

In this tragic situation, we believe there are several "wars within the war" where socialists with consistent democratic loyalties can take sides and, in some cases, small practical steps.

Obviously, we cannot influence in any way the struggle between the Kosovo Albanians and the Yugoslav Army. But as a matter of principle we uphold the right of the Kosovars to struggle for their survival by any means available to them, whether through the pre-war movement of civic resistance or the struggle of the KLA.

The KLA itself is no left-wing force: It appears to be politically incoherent at

The Other America Left Reactions to the War

Canada

"Nine years ago, when in opposition, Lloyd Axworthy opposed military action against Iraq without the backing of the United Nations. Yet now, as Foreign Affairs minister, he is fully supporting a war without UN sanction, as are all five major political parties. Canada has committed 12 CF-18 Hornets to the bombing mission. As Belgrade burns under the impact of the bombing Canada's self-promoted image as a "peacemaker" is going up in flames too.

"The Canadian state stands revealed as part of Western imperialism pure and simple.

"Perhaps most disappointing has been the capitulation of the New Democratic Party to NATO's war effort. In 1991 NDP leaders waffled while Western military forces devastated Iraq, killing tens of thousands.

"Even some in the peace movement have responded in the same way as the NDP. These people forget that Western bombing is no more a solution now than it was in Iraq. NATO's intervention has only strengthened the hand of the ethnic nationalists on both sides of the conflict.

The only real solutions in the region will come from people there who are struggling for peace, social justice and democracy—including the democratic right of the people of Kosovo to independence." ★

New Socialist Group

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Quebec

"There have been huge demonstrations in European countries, where many people refuse to believe that war will lead to peace!

In Canada, though, little serious debate has taken place. However, the government of Canada needs to reflect on what it has been doing. Our image as "peacemakers" has been dealt a severe blow. Our blue berets have been replaced by the F-18s which participate in destructive action.

"Without doubt, US pressure is influencing decisions made in Ottawa. But the consequences

could be very grave for a country which, in the past, has been best known for its role in defending international law, and for its role as mediator. Yet it is still not too late to think of switching hats." ★

Pierre Baudet, Alternatives

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Mexico

The oligarchy of North American finance—so sensitive to the military and armaments industry—has brought to their knees not simply the people and governments of the Balkans, but the governments of western Europe too.

The government of Clinton, the government of the financial oligarchy, is sending a message to the world. There is no problem, big or small that is beyond the reach of the United States.

Clinton is sending a warning to Europe: any process of European integration must be subordinate to the US foreign policy. In this sense, the main losers in the current war will be France and Germany. Before it is even born, the new European pole which could compete with the United States has been subjugated to US interests ★

Zapatistas (FZLN), Mexico



best, and (probably for that reason) vastly overestimated its prospects for military success against Milosevic's army. But it is fighting a justified war for independence and against a threatened genocide.

We demand that all the Kosovar refugees receive immediate asylum wherever they wish to come. For those who choose refuge in the United States, that means the right to come here—with unconditional rights to permanent residency or citizenship or return to their homeland whenever they may choose—not the unspeakable plan to put them in detention in Guam or Guantanamo.

Equally important, we must do everything in our power to reach out to the doubly besieged democratic opposition activists in Serbia, who are being bombed from the air by NATO and hunted down by the regime on the ground, in some cases threatened with being drafted into the Serb army or the ethnic-cleansing paramilitaries for duty in Kosovo.

The imperialists and the Milosevic regime will seek to exploit, by blaming each other for, the suffering of the ordinary people of Serbia and the destruction of democratic forces. Thanks to the internet and to the distribution the international progressive media can provide, dissidents in Serbia have some chance to continue to speak for themselves.

Their uncensored voices must be heard, and all possible material and political solidarity must be extended as they seek to rebuild a democratic opposition that will be neither a tail to Milosevic or a pawn for imperialist occupiers.

Finally, in the military conflict that now dominates the ruins of former Yugoslavia, let's be clear: There is no side to support, neither Milosevic's genocidal post-stalinism nor NATO imperialism. Neither side is a lesser evil. Freedom for Kosovo! Abolish NATO! ★



Italy's communists

Livio Maitan has mixed feelings about the recent congress of the Party of Communist Refoundation

Since its foundation in 1991, the PRC has had a turbulent history. Only two of the seven initial leaders remain: Bianca Braccitorsi and Guido Cappelloni. Neither is still in a central leadership role. Lucio Libertini died, and the others all led splits from the party: Armando Cossutta (formerly president of the PRC), Sergio Garavini (formerly first secretary), Ersilia Salvato and Rino Serri.

The 1999 Congress was called to give Armando Cossutta's minority a chance to oppose the end of PRC support for the centre-left government. After Cossutta split from the PRC in October last year, it became unclear what the convention would be about. To heal the split with an opposition outside the organisation?

The need to address strategic themes and to debate both the concept and functioning of the party was clear. But it was equally clear that it would be impossible to accomplish that goal within the two month pre-Congress discussion period.

The majority emphasised that its aim was to more clearly identify the party's policies in the current period. The project of defining a general plan for a left opposition would be undertaken in the period between this convention and the next.

Limited aims

Given these circumstances, this convention had much less weight than the two previous gatherings: that of 1994, concerned with the problem of political alliances on the eve of the elections, and that of 1996, which took on the question of participation in the parliamentary majority coalition.

The results were easy to predict: scattered interventions by delegates, with very little real politics discussed. And vicious, prolonged struggles within the majority over the composition of the leadership bodies.

The main report by party leader Fausto Bertinotti confirmed the ongoing radicalisation of the PRC, its opposition to the centre-left government, its criticisms of the main coalition party, the Left Democrats (formerly the Socialist Left Democrats), and its anti-imperialist stance.

Bertinotti opened his remarks with a quote by Che Guevara, translated into the Kurdish language: "We must always be able to feel deeply in our own being any injustice against any other person, in any other part of the world: that is the best quality of a revolutionary."

This internationalist tone was underlined by the presence of more than a hundred foreign guests, ranging from other European Communist Parties, through Cubans, North Koreans, Latin Americans, and South Africans, anti-imperialist organisations from many developing countries, to environmental groups and far left groups like the Revolutionary Communist League (LCR) of France. The Fourth International was represented by François Vercaemmen.

Bertinotti didn't try to answer all the strategic question facing the party. He concentrated on the main political orientation, and the PRC strategy for opposing the centre left government. Given the national and international balance of forces, he argued, the task facing the PRC was to articulate an alternative social project which, while not going beyond capitalism, could be a radical rupture with the economic and intellectual aspects of neoliberalism.

He talked about neo-Keynesian economic strategies, and the need to oppose the introduction of a more authoritarian version of bourgeois democracy. This author and others disagreed with Bertinotti's exact formulations, but we absolutely agree with him that these are the issues we need to concentrate on. What we used to call our transitional objectives, in a very unfavourable context.

One obvious priority was to mobilise against the referendum with which the

government hoped to replace Italy's proportional electoral system with a "first-past-the-post" system. This would remove any chance of electoral representation for the PRC, even if it won 10-12% of the vote.

Concerning the municipal, regional and European elections in June, Bertinotti argued for the PRC to form agreements with the centre-left, but excluding any centre or centre-right parties. Programmatic convergence was possible, he argued.

Some left currents in the party argued that since the PRC had broken with the centre-left government, it should not seek local alliances. I wouldn't go that far. The real problem, in many regions, is that programmatic agreement exists on paper, but is not respected by the centre-left parties in practice. Rome mayor Francesco Rutelli is preparing a series of privatisations, which explicitly contradicts the local agreement with the PRC.

Bertinotti also suggested an agreement with the centre left in selecting Italy's new president. That seems like a good idea, since the right wing may well propose a candidate who wants to reform the constitution in a presidentialist and authoritarian direction. But we don't share Bertinotti's enthusiasm for ex-Prime Minister Carlo Azeglio Ciampi, Minister of Economics in the centre-left government.

The reshuffled minority

Half of the traditional left opposition in the national leadership (CPN) led by myself and Franco Turigliatto, supported Bertinotti's motion on PRC withdrawal from the government majority. The other half of the left opposition, led by Marco Ferrando et Franco Grisolia, supported the PRC withdrawal, but presented their own motion.

Turigliatto and I saw no reason to present a minority motion, given the refocusing of the party towards the left under Bertinotti's leadership, the fact that this congress concentrated on the immediate political line, and the debate on the strategy and nature of the party was delayed until a future date.

For us, the priority was to contribute to the renovation of PRC work, particularly the major reorientation of the party towards intervention in day-to-day struggles, the efforts to build social roots, and the construction of party organisations at the various levels.

The reaffirmation of the PRC's pluralist nature, and the majority's decision to leave the big debate on strategy for a future congress reinforced our decision to join the majority current.

True, Bertinotti's CPN text avoids the necessary negative evaluation of PRC support for the Prodi government. But we shouldn't base our attitude solely on past disagreements. The current convergence of thinking is more important.

The other part of the old minority

argued that a self-criticism on support for Prodi was absolutely essential. Bertinotti's change of direction, and the PRC passage into opposition, was, they warned, nothing more than a conjunctural, short-term swing. The Bertinotti current would swing back towards the centre left as soon as it became possible, they warned. This was why they insisted on presenting a separate motion.

There is a partial basis to their arguments. But their text is a mixture of eternal truths and general statements. It is a propagandistic text, rather than a real, concrete proposal to take the party, or at least large sections of it, forward, and orienting them towards concrete mobilisations. It is difficult to see on what basis they hope to build a revolutionary current.

The minority won 5,300 (16%) of delegate votes, compared to over 8,000 for the larger minority at the 1996 congress.

[In both cases, only a minority of these delegates considered themselves "Trotskyist."].

Since many of the new minority's votes come from new or rejoined PRC members, or from the large fringe of protest voters, it is clear that a significant part of the old minority has realigned itself with the majority Bertinotti current.



Shadows

There was a very difficult debate about the composition of the new PRC leadership bodies. The results were disappointing, and cast a shadow over the party's future development.

The PRC is still one of the most democratic workers' parties in the world.



Internal pluralism is very real. All members can express themselves freely, inside and outside party meetings, and in party and non-party publications. Local party bodies discuss conflicting congress texts, and after each conference the various currents have proportional representation in the party leadership.

But there are a few problems:

- Only 47% of members participated in the local pre-Congress discussions.
- Because congress decisions are decided by adding together all the local votes, delegates have little possibility to discuss and possibly change their opinion.
- The party leadership produced candidate lists for each provincial congress, often including people from "out of town." In Rome, which elects 26 delegates, there were ten such "suggestions." Only one regional federation insisted on choosing all its own delegates without regard to the central leadership's suggestions.
- Those who propose amendments have no right to present their arguments at local or provincial pre-Congress meetings, or at the congress itself.
- Amendments rejected by the 250-member National Political Council (CPN) were not even published in the conference discussion documents.
- Amendments could only be presen-

ted to the national conference if they had already won majority support in one sector or region.

As a result, the national congress received hundreds of diverse amendments. A political commission, in which I had the misfortune to serve, had to decide which could be accepted for debate. Almost all were rejected.

At the very end of the congress, when most delegates were already collecting their hats and coats, a few particularly determined authors of amendments insisted on a discussion of their texts. All were quickly voted and massively rejected. Including my own amendment on the nature of the opposition, which had already been accepted in Milan, Turin, and several other federations. Our current was also associated with amendments on party functioning, on the nature of the anticapitalist dynamic, and on the tactics the party should adopt.

After considerable effort, the electoral commission proposed a list of 375 names for the National Political Commission, the 250-member leadership group. The electoral commission was 'presided' for the organisational secretary (a member of the secretariat). His opening statement informed us that 62 seats were "reserved for the central apparatus." But he refused to give the names of these comrades, or the criteria by which they had been selected until the absolute last minute.

Not surprisingly, this provoked considerable unrest on the conference floor. But all the counter-proposals, proposed, notably by the women delegates and by the leaders of the youth section, were rejected with hypocritical speeches and ideological acrobatics.

The current I identify with finally won 30 seats in the CPN, which is rather less than our weight in the party would justify. At the higher levels of the leader-

Iceland Left advances

The new Left-Green party has won 9% of the votes.

Einar Olafsson

The neo-liberal government held its majority in the parliamentary elections on May 8. The (centre-right) Progressive Party declined from 23% in 1995 to 18%. But its populist-conservative coalition partner, the Independence Party, increased its share of the vote from 37% to 41%.

The social democratic coalition between the People's Alliance, the Peoples Party and the Women's

Party received 27% of the vote. The coalition is expected to announce support for an Icelandic application to join the European Union.

EU membership is supported by Foreign minister Halldor Asgrimsson (Progressive Party), but opposed by prime minister David Oddsson of the Independence Party.

The Left-Green Party scored 9% of the vote, winning six seats in the 63 member parliament. This new party was formed as a radical left alternative to the social democratic regroupment. It is the only party that opposes NATO bombing of Yugoslavia, NATO and EU membership, and advocates radical welfare and environmental policies.

Many activists in the new party are former members of the People's Alliance and the Women's Party, independent environmentalists and

socialists, and ex members of the Maoist and Trotskyist organisations active in the 70's and 80's.

While the consolidation of a social democratic bloc represents a shift to the right in the Icelandic progressive scene, the new Left-Green Party does represent a fresh new current in Icelandic politics. They lacked a party apparatus, or any real campaign funds. But their impressive electoral result reflects their energy and the space for honest, radical politics. ★

* In International Viewpoint #303, September 1998, we wrongly said that the socialist People's Alliance joined a coalition with the Independence Party in 1991. In fact, the Peoples Alliance never adopted explicit neo-liberal policies, and was always against membership of EU. It was the social democratic People's Party which formed a coalition with the Independence Party.
Contact: Vinstrihreyfingin - grant framboð, Vonarstraeti 12, IS-101 Reykjavik, Iceland, Web: <http://www.vg.is>

ship, this imbalance is even more visible. The various tendencies and the social movements are seriously under represented in the higher, smaller National Leadership (DN).

But the vote contained a warning to the leadership current, which failed to mobilise and convince all its supporters. One third of the majority tendency's 600 delegates abstained or voted against.

The party's daily newspaper *Liberazione* didn't even produce a full report and analysis of the various votes. Hardly the transparent politics we aspire to!

This congress confirmed the leftward reorientation of the party since the Cossuta split and the end of our support for the centre-left government. It creates more favourable conditions for our future struggles, and improves our ability to intervene and build roots in the social reality of the Italian working class.

But there has been no improvement in the conception and internal func-



tioning of the party. This is particularly regrettable since the coming months will bring a number of serious challenges which we would have been better able to deal with if we were more democratic and transparent.

The membership of the PRC fluctuates around 120-130,000. The losses connected to the October 1998 split have been more than compensated

for by new membership applications. It also seems that a higher proportion of members are renewing their membership on time.

But there is still a considerable turnover of membership (up to 30% in some years).

The challenge facing PRC militants is to redouble their efforts in the social and labour movements, to reinforce our presence, and in doing so compensate for and overcome the practices and habits which still prevent the party from achieving its full potential. ★

* Livio Maitan is a supporter of the Bandiera Rossa current within the PRC, and a leading member of the Fourth International. Maitan and Bandiera Rossa comrade Franco Turigliatto were elected to the CPN and the DN.

A much longer version of this report has been published in *Inprecor*, the French edition of *International Viewpoint*. A series of background articles by Livio Maitan and other PRC militants can be accessed at our website.

www.internationalen.se/sp/ivp.htm



Britain Anti-racist conference

In the largest and most representative assembly of its kind in years, 750 anti-racists gathered in London in March to launch the National Civil Rights Movement (N.C.R.M.).

The initiative emerges out of the widespread outrage over the police (mis-) handling of the Stephen Lawrence case and heightened awareness in the white community of state racism in all its institutionalised forms.

"This is the beginning of a movement not only to link one family with another but also different

groups of anti-racists and to set the anti-racist agenda for the next decade" said Suresh Grover from 'The Monitoring Group'.

In attendance were families of victims of racist killings and violence, grassroots community groups, advice workers and radical lawyers including Louise Christian, Mike Mansfield, Imran Khan and Gareth Pierce as well as individuals like Liz Davies (Labour Party NEC), Jeremy Hardy (comedian and *Guardian* columnist) and Hilary Wainwright (Editor, *Red Pepper*).

The meeting began with a minute's silence in memory of murdered Belfast lawyer Rosemary

Nelson and later heard from Diana Hamill whose brother Robert was kicked to death by loyalist thugs in Portadown in 1997.

Testimonies by family support groups from all corners of the country followed. They gripped and moved the audience with their harrowing accounts of the double-injury inflicted upon them. First in losing a loved one and then in having to campaign "not for sympathy or pity but justice".

There were also asylum-seekers facing deportation, miscarriage of justice cases and those subjected to racist policing.

A common theme was how racist violence and state racism interact and reinforce each other. Another was the isolation and desperation of the families pitted against the police and criminal justice system and without support and resources in their campaigns.

Many of the families are on the interim steering committee that will guide the organisation until its next conference in September in the north of England.

Meanwhile, says Grover, there is much work to be done in creating a national race and policing telephone help-line, holding local and national protests in support of family campaigns and building the National Civil Rights Movement as an inclusive and broad-based organisation. [BS] ★

To join the N.C.R.M. and for details on various family campaigns contact: N.C.R.M. 14 Featherstone Road Southall Middlesex UB2 5AA England Tel: 0181 574 0818/0181 843 2333 Fax: 0181 813 9734 Source: *Voice*, the newspaper of the Scottish Socialist Party, 73 Robertson Street, Glasgow G2 8QD. Tel: +44 (0)141 221 7714. E. Mail: ssv@mail.ndirect.co.uk Internet: www.scotsocialistparty.org



ORÇAMENTO PARTICIPATIVO

VOCÊ É QUEM FAZ UMA CIDADE DE VERDADE

Democratic and popular government

The vicious electoral campaign in 1998 polarised Rio Grande's population into two opposing blocks. But the right wing parties are divided and confused after losing control of "their" state. This gives a certain breathing space to the new institutions.

Mark Johnson

After the most polarised electoral campaign in Brazilian history, 51% of voters in Brazil's southernmost state elected Olivio Dutra as governor at the end of last year.

When he entered the presidential palace, he found the administration in ruins. Despite a huge privatisation programme, public debt had tripled under the previous conservative state government. And a string of dubious contracts had transferred resources and power to a clique of construction, manufacturing and agricultural companies.

The new Popular Front administration faced terrible obstacles, even before the financial crisis which halved the value of the Brazilian real and pushed many of Brazil's states to the edge of bankruptcy.

The opposition parties seized this opportunity to accuse the Workers Party (PT) of making rash promises, which it

was now unable to fulfil. "It's time to start governing!" screams the graffiti.

According to Luis Felipe Nelsis of the vice-governor's office, this criticism is unreasonable. "The right want us to do in three months what they didn't do in 45 months in power!"

"Our main electoral promises were to prioritise health, education, and to house landless peasants. We have started our programme, and are more or less on target in all areas.

Like all of Brazil's state governments, Rio Grande do Sul is short of money. According to Nelsis, the solution partially lies in better tax collection. "Tax evasion is chronic, and there are a mass of tax exceptions introduced by the previous administration. None of the major companies in RS pay any tax at all!" These exceptions are now being reviewed.

In his election campaign, Olivio Dutra promised that he would only respect contracts which were "juridically perfect and socially just." The new administration has identified a number of loopholes in the tax exemptions that Nelsis expects will lead to the abolition of "a considerable number" of exceptions.

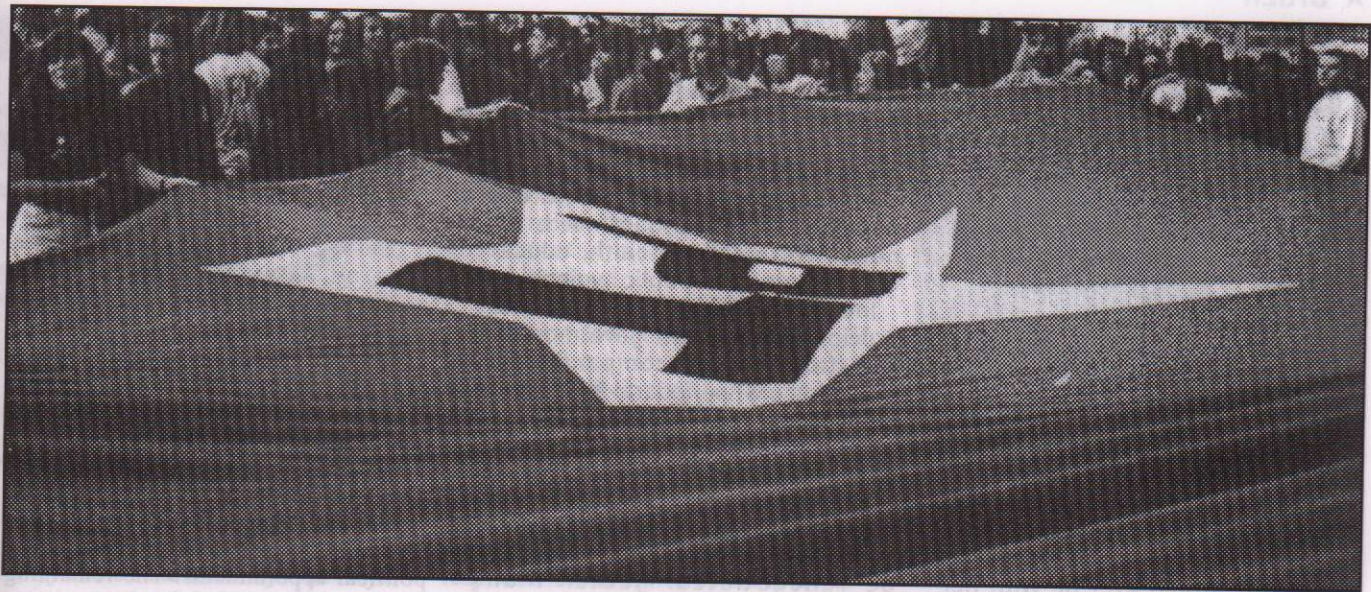
The Dutra administration is also examining each inherited tax break and investment incentive in terms of its social impact. The PT municipal government in the state capital, Porto Alegre, recently approved an application to build Latin America's largest hypermarket in the town, but only after investors rehoused homeless squatters who had occupied and built a shantytown on the site.

In March, Dutra suspended the investment incentives which his predecessor had promised General Motors and Ford, who planned to build large car assembly plants in the state.

The resources will be used for health and education, the government's main priorities. The reallocated R\$466m. (US\$300m.) represents 31,000 new houses, 36,000 classrooms, or 5,200 basic health centres. It would also pay for the rehousing of 11,650 peasant families on small plots of land, (the government plans to rehouse 10,000 this year, and 100,000 by the end of Dutra's four-year mandate.

Mainstream politicians have a strong base of support in business circles and the media. But the PT in Rio Grande do Sul only has its electoral base and the trade unions. This support could evaporate if the Dutra administration fails to overcome the obstacles ahead, or fails to maintain a high level of popular mobilisation in support of its programme.

So far, however, the government team is full of confidence. According to PT Organisational Secretary Ignacio Fritzen, the government's suspension of investment incentives for GM and Ford was "extremely positive. It was a specific promise in our electoral programme, and



it shows, beyond a doubt, what the priorities of this government are, compared to those of the previous administration. Like the election campaign, it has again polarised the state. Two models of development, of modernisation, are again confronted."

The problem with the GM and Ford deals was not just the enormous cost of state subsidies (R\$4.7bn. in infrastructure projects, and R\$5bn. in tax exemptions). The reality is that investment in auto production generates fewer jobs than in most other areas of the local economy.

According to the state finance ministry, each R\$1m. of new demand for auto products generates 139 full time jobs. By using the same sum to stimulate demand in other sectors, the state could generate 298 jobs in the agriculture and fishing sectors, 273 in the clothing sector, 253 jobs in the livestock sector, 247 in the coffee industry or 241 in the milk production sector. (BNDES/FEE, cited in *Informe Direto* March 1999)

The main issue is one of priorities. According to a government statement exposing the secret deal with Ford and GM, "over four years, the previous government invested only R\$20m. in the public health system. The amount that the state would have to pay to Ford and General Motors this year alone is 20 times higher!"

Mobilisation

"Many foreign commentators underestimate the level of popular support for this government," says Nelson. "At every step of the election campaign, and since taking power, the population has been informed and consulted. The Participatory Budget [a system of direct democracy at the municipal level] gives us a very solid base. So, while it is obviously true that our support could decline, we have some time to build new elements of popular mobilisation."

According to Ignacio Fritzen, "The PT's fundamental role is to ensure that the government's project advances. This

means mobilising considerable social forces in support of our electoral demands. It will take considerable effort and time to implement our reforms. We need to explain, educate and mobilise.

"Every government measure that opposes 'them up there' will cause conflict, media attacks, and confusion. So we need a constant dialogue with the population. The PT needs to be on every street corner, putting the argument for our alternative.

"The party must organise so as to ensure that the government governs for the people. That hasn't been the case in other states where the PT has won power. It was a major mistake there. We will do differently."

According to the Party's Communications Secretary Lúcio Costa, this means "doing the opposite of what the Chilean left did under Allende in the early 70s. Back then, the Communist Party in particular tried to limit popular mobilisation, 'to let the government get on with its job.'

"The challenge facing us is the exact opposite. We need to mobilise the population around the participative budget, and build the participative budget process across the state of Rio Grande do Sul. This means organising, in each town, a coalition of the left parties, the trade unions, the churches and the resident's associations. In the rural interior of the state, where the party is weakest, this represents a major financial, organisational and political challenge.

"It is this popular participation which gives us the capacity to intensify the conflict with the central government. Otherwise, we will be defeated."

Division of labour

Brazil's political system gives the state president considerable powers, but the right's majority in the State Assembly places considerable limits on the Popular Front's power. There are some possibilities of negotiation with dissident factions within the bourgeois block, but

the main strategy for ensuring governability will be articulating the social movements to put pressure on the state parliament.

Local PT leaders inside and outside the government stress that it is the PT and the other left parties which must mobilise the social movements to maintain support for the government. The government itself will concentrate on the implementation of its programme, and building links to other forces that oppose the federal government.

This division of labour reflects the PT's conception of the role of the party, the trade unions, and government. According to Nelson, "Just as a left party should not control the trade unions, but should encourage the self-organisation and autonomy of the social movements, a left party in power must distinguish between the role of the party and the role of the government.

"The government must divide resources between different social groups, and intermediate between them. How can a party control that process? The PT here is at the head of the government, the trade unions and the social movements. We have to maintain clarity and separation between the roles of all three."

Clean government

In a country where corruption and clientelism are central to the political process, the PT in Rio Grande do Sul is determined to run a 'clean hands' government. "The previous administration created huge numbers of jobs for its supporters, used government contracts to reward its supporters, and used the state machinery to mobilise its supporters in their unsuccessful bid to retain power. We have to govern differently," explains Nelson.

That doesn't just mean cutting the Government's refreshments bill from R\$30,000 to R\$3,000 *reals*/month by making civil servants buy their own coffee. Nor is it confined to gestures like

Document Inherited debt

Rio Grande's 1994-98 conservative government was a disaster, even according to its own neoliberal theories.

The following explanation comes from a public information leaflet produced by the Dutra administration.

The previous administration was incompetent in a way that no housewife would ever be with her own budget. Quite simply, they spent more than they received, for four long years. The operational deficit increased: from R\$200m in 1995 to R\$1.2bn in 1997.

Rather than trying to increase the state's income, they preferred privatisation of the telephone company and part of the electricity utility. This raised R\$5bn, all of which was used to cover the operational deficit. A total failure.

To make matters worse, new federal legislation abolished sales tax on products destined for exportation. The cost to Rio Grande do Sul was R\$561m in 1997 alone.

As well as lower income, the Dutra government has inherited a public deficit of R\$13.4bn—R\$1,300 for every person in the state. [the minimum monthly wage is R\$190]

The money

The core of this debt is money borrowed for public works and services. Until a few years ago, the state respected the repayment timetable. But under the previous administration, the debt ballooned, even though few new loans were received. This was because the federal government's Real Plan [to stabilise the currency by attracting foreign investors] meant a sharp increase in interest rates. The paper debt of Brazil's states doubled and tripled, making their financial situation inviable. The debt of Rio Grande rose from 4.4bn in 1994 to 13.4bn in 1998.

The costs

Most of this debt is owed to the federal government. The new state government has to use 15% of its income to pay the interest on this debt. R\$800m in 1999, and a larger amount in future years. Since 80% of the state's income is needed for personnel costs, and 15% for up-

keep of buildings and equipment, we have a 10% deficit even before we start!

The state receives about R\$400m/month. This is not enough to pay the running costs, never mind the population's most urgent needs for new investment in health, education, security, and public hygiene.

Income is so low is because the previous government gave most of the state's largest companies tax exceptions, while federal legislation reduced the state's tax base.

Renegotiation

The overall economic situation means that the debt of Brazil's states to the federation will surely be renegotiated. Rather than growing by 6% as planned, there was probably no growth at all in 1998, and we expect a 6% contraction in 1999.

The Brazilian government has often failed to meet its repayment obligations to international institutions. In 1987, Brazil declared a moratorium on foreign debt payments, and renegotiated its repayment schedule. The federal government is currently renegotiating the terms of its debt with the IMF. Brazil's states are suggesting the same thing for their own debt.

Tax concessions by the previous government reduced state income by at least R\$3bn in 1999. The deal with Ford and General Motors included an incredible R\$5bn. of tax exemptions

The new government does not deny responsibility for the debt, but states that it simply cannot be repaid. Rather than suspend payments, which would provoke federal retaliation, isolation from the other states, and make it impossible to borrow money on the open market, the Dutra administration has offered to pay the same amount as the previous administration, a close ally of federal president Fernando Henrique Cardoso.

The mechanism is simple, but ingenious. The federation owes Rio Grande more than Rio Grande owes in debt repayments. So Rio Grande is deducting its debt payments from the debt owed by the federation.

Rather than welcome this balanced approach, the federal government has reacted with threats and insults. By accusing Rio Grande of insolvency, it almost destroyed the state's agreement to borrow money from the Bank of the Americas and other international institutions. ★

Source: Special Bulletin of the RS Secretary of Economics, February 1999



surrendering the vice-governor's palace to the new department that supervises the participatory budget. But these are very visible symbols of the new style of government. The PT has appointed "trustworthy" people to only about 3,500 of the 5,000 jobs usually reserved for political appointments. The remaining positions have not been filled.

Slowly but surely

PT activists in the rest of Brazil were surprised that the Dutra administration did not immediately confront the federal government, by refusing to recognise the debt inherited from the previous state government.



Vice Governor Miguel Rossetto and Governor Olivio Dutra at an election rally

Vice-Governor Miguel Rossetto makes no apologies. "This is not a government of fireworks. We are building a new Rio Grande, in a solid manner. We are establishing a permanent process of destroying the old system, and affirming the future which we want to build. The rhythms of progress will be determined by our capacity to deal with the problems which arise, and to overcome the chaos which we have inherited."

This patience is shared by trade union leaders close to the new government. According to one teachers' leader, "We have four years to implement our programme. If the PT administration does the minimum—if it prevents redundancies and maintains current levels of health, education and social services, when all across Brazil the public sector is collapsing, and civil servants haven't been paid for months; if this government continues to try to move forward, then the people will never

surrender the government of this state to the right."

This prudent approach led to the curious situation in early 1999 when a right-wing governor, former Brazilian president Itamar Franco of Minas Gerais state, was more confrontational with the federal government than the three PT state governors. But, as Nelson explains, "Itamar Franco is a loose cannon. He is a bourgeois dissident, who has the support of his state assembly and the industrial groups in Minas Gerais. He can afford to be very radical in his demand for a better deal for his state. If he fails, the right-wing domination of Minas will only suffer a few ripples."

"Our situation is quite different. Olivio Dutra won 51% of the vote, and our Popular Front bloc doesn't have a majority in the state assembly. The major economic groups and the media are set against us."

"Our only possibility is to mobilise the population, and try to make links to other states which are also ready to oppose the federal government." In the meantime, Dutra's top lawyer Paulo Torelli has identified a loophole whereby Rio Grande simply deducts its debt repayments from the much larger sum which the federal government owes the state in transfer payments.

Rio Grande always been the most radical part of Brazil, with a strong regional identity. Not surprisingly, the federal government has tried to isolate Rio Grande do Sul and its radical government, but with little success. Rio Grande is the 5th richest state in Brazil and, despite its radical policies, the state budget is in much better shape than many conservative-led states.

In early February the Dutra administration agreed a common platform between seven state governors, including the three PT governors. Their 'Porto Alegre letter' calls on the federal government to respect its agreements with the states, and give them equal treatment in the allocation of resources. All state debt to the federation should be consolidated, and subject to 6% interest rates. The seven governors also called for the reintroduction of sales tax on export goods, and the repeal of federal legislation which enables it to seize states funds to pay debts to the federation.

Unity

Even if the economic situation deteriorates, party and trade union leaders do not expect a conflict between workers and the Dutra government. According to Costa, "During the 10 year PT administration of Porto Alegre, there have been several strikes of public sector workers. In a dramatic departure from Brazilian practice, there has been no discrimination and no firing of protesters."

"Where a sector of the population enters into conflict with the administration—as is inevitable—the PT ensures

that the administration shows absolute respect for the civic and trade union rights of the population. But the reality is that public sector wages are low, and the government has no money.

"As a revolutionary leadership, what do we do in such a situation? Since this is a government for the people, and not a government of class collaboration, we defend it."

"The left in the PT has a major role in government and in the trade unions. If there is no money for wage increases, we must seek other ways of improving workers' conditions, and winning them to the Popular Front's programme."

According to local leaders of the CUT trade union federation, "the problem isn't whether there will be wage increases, but whether there will be redundancies. The government is respecting its election pledge to avoid redundancies and maintain services. In return, the union should focus its efforts on improvements in democratic control within the education system, modernisation and democratisation of the curriculum, and so on."

The right wing parties, and their supporters in the trade unions, accuse PT militants of subordinating labour interests to the government, and putting a brake on the trade unions. But PT leaders believe that conflicts can be resolved within the popular movement.

The federal government, and the IMF, have imposed public sector cuts and privatisation programmes on all Brazil's state governments. In some other states, civil servants have not been paid for six months, and huge sections of the population are denied even primary education and basic health care.

According to one trade union leader, "in any other state of Brazil, many of us would be redundant already! But in Rio Grande do Sul this is our government. We have a good organic relationship



Raul Pont, Mayor of Porto Alegre, with PT leader 'Lula' da Silva

between the social movements, the PT and the administration. In reality, the only way for public sector workers to improve their conditions is to participate in our project."

As the PT in Rio Grande consolidates its position, visitors are flocking from Latin America and beyond to learn from this exciting experiment. But Nelson insists that the Rio Grande experience is neither a replacement for social struggle, nor a shortcut to socialism.

"This is about fair distribution of services to the public. It doesn't challenge the social relations in society, and it doesn't transfer ownership of the means of production. We remain convinced that only a rupture with the existing system will enable fundamental advances."

"Our contribution to that struggle, and the originality of what we are doing here, is to build a solid system of direct democracy which involves large sections of the population in the social and political struggles that can create the possibility for a rupture." ★

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Participation, education

Open government and radical policies have made the Workers Party municipal government in Porto Alegre a success story within Brazil.

Mayor Raul Pont made the following report to the neighbourhood meetings which are now preparing the year 2000 participatory budget.

The solid support of the population has enabled the Workers Party (PT) administration of Porto Alegre to reform taxation, and win a greater share of tax revenues collected by the state government. The result has been a 300% increase in the city budget since Olivio Dutra became the first PT mayor of Porto Alegre in 1989.

Direct income now represents over half the city budget. The tax collection rate is 88%, one of the highest rates in Brazil's major cities.

The problem is that Brazil's federal government takes 56% of the total tax 'pie,' and the state takes 27%. This leaves Porto Alegre with only 17% of the total taxation paid by residents and companies in the town.

Transfer of services

As it applies the IMF programme, the federal government is transferring some services to the states and municipalities. Though normally without transferring the necessary resources. The responsibility for health care has been transferred to the municipalities but the Federal Government has ignored its promise to increase its transfer payment accordingly. Porto Alegre's health budget has not increased, despite the growing number of patients, including a growing number from less fortunate parts of the state. To make matters worse, the federal and state authorities have transferred hundreds of health care workers out of the services which are being municipalised.

In the education field, the municipality now shoulders the entire burden of preschool services.

At the beginning of 1999 the federal government suspended its programme financing housing and public hygiene. According to Pont, "popular pressure on the federal government would make it possible to reverse this tendency."

Despite the clear demand of the participatory budget for increased social services, and anti-poverty programmes, the federal government has abandoned this sector. The few federal programmes

which survived have been cut by 33%.

The federal government has also transferred responsibility for traffic control and taxation to the municipalities, but not the lucrative sector of vehicle inspection and licensing, which it intends to privatise.

Despite these problems Porto Alegre is one of the few Brazilian cities with a balanced budget. This has enabled the municipality to borrow money on the open market to finance essential programmes. As with every other area of the municipal budget, the terms and conditions of these loans are transparent, and have been approved by the population.

District-level discussions on the 2000 budget have already started. According to Pont, "we won't be able to satisfy the population's demands unless we confront the central thesis of the federal government and its neoliberal policies: cutting social costs, reducing the number of civil servants, and cutting their wages."

In ten years of our participatory budget, we have never heard the population call for or suggest a reduction in the number of civil servants. On the contrary, at each assembly we hear calls for more professionals; more doctors, nurses, teachers and social workers. More professionals to work in and expand our health centres, and to staff the new schools which the participatory budget has decided to build.

Of course, we are committed to maintain our policy of inflation-proofing the salaries of public servants, to protect their buying power, and prevent them becoming victims of inflation.

It is still possible to increase our resources. The town hall must work together with the participatory budget system to impulse a new discussion of the municipal rates (a tax based on property values). In 1997, against the will of the participatory budget delegates, town counsellors who supported the federal government refused to approve the modernisation of this tax which the executive had presented, in response to a clear demand from the participatory budget delegates.

But all these changes will be insufficient if we do not change the federal government's economic model of recession and total submission to the IMF and the major banks. Without economic growth, there will be no new jobs, and no new resources. The model must be changed. Not just for these reasons, but also because the hidden consequence of recession is that all the disposable resources of the federal administration are not redistributed in the



form of public works and services, but used to enrich the world's richest speculators, through payment of interest on the state debt. A policy clearly to the detriment of the Brazilian people.

This is not the only possible policy. It is possible to have a federal government which has a balanced budget, like we have here in Porto Alegre. It is possible to have a federal government with a wages policy, with the ability to invest. A federal government which does not relinquish its tax income through exceptions and tax breaks of all kinds, but which assembles the necessary resources to implement the democratic decision of the community.

Building this new model means closing ranks in the struggle for national sovereignty, against subordination to the foreign debt, and in favour of policies of income generation, employment, defence of the domestic market. A truly sovereign government. Not like the current federal administration.

It is not true that taxes in Brazil are excessively high. The total tax burden is about 30%—in some European countries it exceeds 40%. And in Brazil, the tax base is extremely unjust. The richest pay nothing, or very little. Most taxes are on consumption, rather than income, wealth, capital or inheritance. To make matters worse, the federal government has encouraged the states into a tax war, each promising greater and greater tax reductions. Thus is yet another way of transferring resources from the population to the major companies.

As we begin debate on the 2000 budget, the town hall calls on all citizens to join the struggle to increase the share of public resources which are administered by the municipalities. This is the best way to guarantee that our demands for public works and services will be met, and to begin to change this unjust economic model which is leading the country into recession and unemployment. ★

* Excerpt from the municipality's letter distributed to participants in the first round of local participatory budget meetings.

Participatory budget

The party and the people

Rio Grande's participatory budget process is the pillar of popular support for the Workers Party Yet neither the party, nor the trade unions, have any organised participation in the process.

The party sees its role as aiding the geographical extension, and deepening of the process, both in terms of participation, and the range of public affairs which are submitted to public discussion and control.

This approach reflects the party's conclusions about the shortcomings of eastern Europe's "real socialism", in which the party and the state were merged, and democracy was severely restricted. The pluralist spirit, and respect for the autonomy of social movements is very strong in the Workers Party (PT), itself the result of the fusion of catholic currents, a wide range of "Trotskyist" and "Communist" currents, and groups formerly engaged in armed struggle.

"The concept of social movement autonomy is so strong," explains PT Communications Secretary Lúcio Costa, "that we don't even manage to elaborate a party opinion on the major elections in the trade unions. Many PT cadre would like to, but many militants react violently, protesting that this would be 'like in the USSR!' This tradition in the PT is basically a healthy thing, though obviously sometimes 'respect for autonomy' can hide all kinds of obscure interests."

Many militants participate as individuals, but the PT's 'organisational culture' strongly rejects any organised participation.

According to Raul Pont, mayor of the state capital, Porto Alegre, "some militants of the opposition parties do participate. Sometimes their criticism is less than participative! But sometimes it is constructive, and they formulate it in terms of 'our government should...'"

"Some ultra-left groups failed to understand the dynamic of popular democracy, and intervened in participatory budget meetings with sharp, hostile polemics against the PT administration, and long presentations of their own party's programme and proposals. On some occasions, they had to be removed

from the meeting by stewards, for their own protection."

According to Lúcio Costa, "the mass of participants react very strongly if anyone criticises 'our government' and 'our process'.

Even in forums where 90% of members are PT members and supporters, we just don't see this as a forum for propaganda.

It's a place for discussion for common questions, by the population."

In fact, few people ever suggested that the PT participate directly in the participatory budget The party has always focused on the main elements of the government programme, and strategies for implementation.

Raul Pont would like to see the trade unions more closely involved with the participatory budget. "We will try to involve them through sectoral thematic discussions, rather than the basic constituency meetings.

The first participatory budget regulations, 10 years ago, didn't even see a role for civic and local organisations. According to Raul Pont, "we were emerging from a long period of dictatorship. Neighbourhood organisations had been characterised by co-option by the regime, and networks of clientelism—a constant feature of Brazilian and Latin American politics. We wanted to put a stop to this, and ensure the most direct democracy possible."

Participatory budget regulations prevent elected politicians and top civil servants from participating in the process, except for their obligation to attend and respond to questions from the floor. According to Pont, "this is one way of limiting the reemergence of clientelism. If someone in government wants to participate in the participatory budget process, they have to resign first.

"We didn't exclude organisations, but we insisted that each participant speak in his or her own name



only. But obviously, people know that some speakers represent particular groups or organisations."

One of the many changes in the participatory budget over the last 10 years has been the growing role of neighbourhood and single-issue groups. Pont welcomes this development, through which "the civic organisations have found, in the participatory budget process, a forum and a structure for their activities which simply doesn't exist elsewhere. Trade unions have their workplace and sectoral negotiations with the employers, political parties have the electoral process, but the civic associations never had a structured 'space'. Now, in Porto Alegre and other parts of the state, they do.

"The participatory budget process has contributed to a considerable development of neighbourhood and single issue groups. They have never been as well organised."

As participation increases, there is increasing competition for positions as delegates to the higher levels of the participatory budget. Civic and neighbourhood groups are increasingly combining to present lists of candidates for election. As long as this does not threaten the process of direct democracy, most militants accept this development as a way of clarifying the debate between candidates. [MJ] ★





Debt and human rights

"The effects of debt-linked economic adjustment policies on the effective enjoyment of human rights, and especially on the application of the Declaration of the Right to Development."

• **United Nations, 55th Session, Geneva, April 1999**

Prepared by Eric Toussaint, Committee for the Cancellation of the Third World Debt (CADTM/COCAD), at the invitation of "Fondation France Libertés".

The repayment of external debts and their linked adjustment policies undermine people's economic, social and political rights. Measures going to the root of the problem are required.

1. It was in 1982 that the debt crisis of the developing countries (to which could be added the former Soviet block countries) first became apparent. Since then, the indebted countries have repaid in full several times over what they owed in the early 80s to their various creditors: private financial institutions, governments of the leading industrialized countries and multilateral financial

institutions (the World Bank and the IMF). The figures are common knowledge. To put them into perspective: between 1982, when the Third World debt crisis first appeared, and 1998, the indebted countries repaid over four times what they had owed at the beginning of the crisis.

Nevertheless, by the end of that period, their debts too had been multiplied by four. Rather than allow the debt crisis to bring about the cessation of repayments, with the resulting difficulties for creditors, the World Bank and the IMF, with the support of the leading industrialized countries, imposed structural adjustment programmes.

2. The overall results of these programmes are negative as far as human rights are concerned.

The Bretton Woods institutions have imposed reductions in health and

Campaign "In Defence of Brazil"

A coalition of left parties, trade unions, civic and church groups has launched a campaign against the neo-liberal policies of the Cardoso government and the IMF.

Mark Johnson

The campaign is a response to the severe economic current crisis. "Inflation is rocketing, the exchange rate out of control, national and international capital is fleeing from Brazil, unemployment at an all-time high, and interest rates higher than for a decade," reports Linha Direta, newspaper of the Workers Party (PT) in Rio Grande do Sul state. "During the last elections, [President] Fernando Cardoso said this

would be the future, if [PT leader] Lula da Silva was elected. Less than one month after Cardoso's reelection, this catastrophic scenario has become reality."

"This is our country"

Launching the "Defending Brazil" campaign in Porto Alegre on 25 March, PT president Lula da Silva denounced the fact that "the Brazilian economy is no longer in the hands of the Brazilian government. The new president of the Banco do Brasil is a French-born specialist in preparing companies for privatisation! In the last month we've had two changes at the head of the Central Bank. The new President, Armino Fraga, is a former employee of the global speculator George Soros!

"The economic storm that hit Indonesia, South Korea and Russia is arriving in Brazil, and the key decisions in our economy are being made by speculators, multinationals, and the International Monetary Fund. But this is our country, not theirs!"

The CUT trade union federation and student groups have adopted the slogan "Out with Cardoso, out with the IMF". This slogan has not yet been approved by the national leadership of the PT. Lula is apparently reluctant to launch such a slogan until the popular mobilisation has similar force to the movement to impeach president his predecessor, President Collor.

Not that Lula denies Cardoso's responsibility. "President Cardoso was elected on a programme of education, health, and increasing the living conditions of the majority. Not to sell public property and organise the most massive transfer of resources to foreign hands since this country was a colony producing gold for the Portuguese court!" ★

education spending on those countries which agreed to submit to the structural adjustment policies. This follows on demands by the World Bank and IMF to reduce both public expenditure and the public deficit.

Reductions in health spending, combined with the sometimes drastic fall in a population's real income, lead to an increase in child mortality rates and perinatal maternal mortality rates. This is the case for the poorest countries of Sub-Saharan Africa, Central and Andean America, the Caribbean and South Asia. But it is also true of the lowest income groups in the other developing countries and those in transition towards a market economy. Health indicators throughout the world all showed an improvement during the period from the 50s to the early 80s. But since then, with the application of structural adjustment policies, the list of countries where progress has slowed gets longer and longer. As does the list of countries where the situation has deteriorated.

Rather than enter into a grim discussion of figures, it is more important to be aware of the dominant trend in a number of countries. Records show that there is no longer any progress in populations' living conditions, while the human deficit in terms of health remains scandalously high.

For growing numbers of the world's population, the right to life, the most basic human right, is no longer gaining ground. Such is the appalling outcome of the structural adjustment policies. As for the right to education, the right to adequate nutrition, the right to work or to a subsistence income, all these are losing ground over large parts of the world.

3. The negative effects of adjustment policies have a gender dimension: women's rights are even worse affected than men's. When access to education and health is restricted, women suffer the most.

4. The acceptance of structural adjustment plans entails partially renouncing the exercise of the right to national sovereignty. Some of the policies carried out by indebted governments within the framework of structural adjustment programmes are defined outside national borders by the Bretton Woods institutions, if not by one of the governments of the leading industrialized countries, or even by the boards of directors of private financial institutions.

In so far as adjustment policies are usually unpopular, the governments which agree to enforce them end up trying to limit the democratic expression of discontent by the population concerned. Latter years have seen insidious restrictions on the exercise of democratic rights. There has also been gradual limitation of legislative and judiciary powers as compared to

executive power, which increasingly seeks to avoid democratic control. The process has begun. It is high time people became aware of it.

5. Limitations on the exercise of sovereign rights in defining national policies (and the trend towards limiting the exercise of the right to free expression) bar the way to carrying out policies in favour of human development.

At the end of the millennium, the world is both more "globalized" and more hierarchical than ever before. Structural adjustment programmes clearly constitute a way of exercising domination over the countries at the bottom of the hierarchy. Indeed, structural adjustment programmes imply, through privatisation in particular, the surrender of sovereignty over part of the production infrastructure and natural resources.

Those who benefit are generally the multinational companies of which the great majority are based in a handful of leading industrialized countries. Who can believe that these companies are more likely to support development in the least industrialized countries than the national governments themselves have done?

True, the record of many past governments has been deplorable, but who can reasonably believe that their national parliaments and civilian organizations will find it easier to control and influence

the decisions of multinational corporations and the Bretton Woods institutions than those of their own national governments?

6. Does not the guarantee of human rights in general and the right to development in particular presuppose certain emergency measures, such as the cancellation of the debt system and adjustment stipulations?

Such measures are necessary but insufficient. To prevent a recurrence of the debt mechanism after debt cancellation, further steps must be taken to set up a new economic order, more human and fairer. Are not the refusal to cancel external debts and the approval of demonstrably iniquitous adjustment policies tantamount to a refusal to come to the aid of endangered populations?

7. During this year of 1999, a vast world campaign for debt cancellation has been led by numerous civilian associations. Such a movement can only win support, and the political decisions required to meet their demands will have to be made. ★

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Paraguay Popular struggle

In March powerful mass mobilizations of youth, peasants and workers toppled the government of Cubas Grau and forced the former dictator-general Lino Oviedo to flee.

The new government of "National Unity" includes the liberal and social-democratic parliamentary opposition.

Is this a democratic rupture? The end of the conservative-led transition from dictatorship to parliamentary democracy?

Ernesto Herrera reports

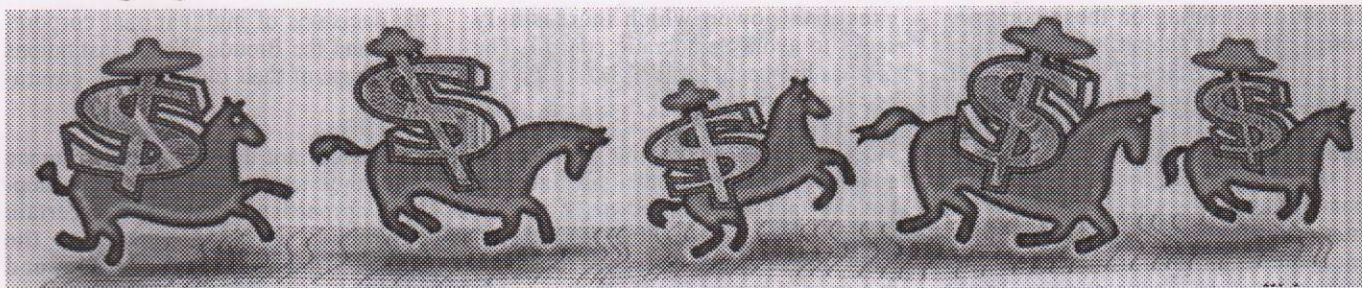
The outcome of the 'Paraguayan crisis' can't be understood without taking into account the active interventions of the United States, Brazil and Argentina, and of the prophylactic measures imposed by the long economic and social restructu-

ring of Latin America.

This crisis was solved without NATO bombardments, but with the same precision marksmanship. Surgical military technology is not used in these countries. What the 'International Community' considers 'good conduct' is imposed within the framework of diplomatic courtesy or political and economic blackmail. When this is not enough, State terrorism in all its variants comes into play.

The long economic adjustment, and the brutal effects of the incorporation of Latin America into the process of 'globalization' have produced an increase in social tensions, misery, corruption, and political instability, along with a rise in populist-authoritarian leaderships. Delinquency is now an epidemic, and 'zero tolerance of crime' the only medicine on offer.

Venezuela has elected an ex-leader of a military coup as president; President Alberto Fujimori has nothing but contempt for the Peruvian Congress and



the Judiciary; Argentine president Carlos Menen continues to demand an unconstitutional third term in office; the 'democratic consolidation' in Chile is being destabilized by the Pinochet case; Mexico's Zapatistas have organised a massive popular referendum on indigenous rights, defying the institutional order; and in Columbia, the negotiations between the government and the guerrillas are at an impasse, resulting in renewed massacres.

The American empire and its bureaucrats are starting to be concerned and to take action. Especially where the neo-liberal restructuring has resulted in broadly-based popular insurrections, as in Ecuador, where 63% of the population lives below the poverty line, and where interest payments on the external debt consumes 41% of the national budget.

The capitalist economic crisis has had a decisive impact. The fall in commodity prices and a new cycle of external indebtedness have resulted in a recession. In 1999, unemployment in Latin America will rise to an average of 12% and GNP will fall by 2.3%. The panorama is somber: fragility of democratic structures is again an issue in Latin America, as is regional political stability.

Within this framework, the historian Joseph Tulchin wrote in the Buenos Aires newspaper *Clarín* on April 4, that "nations affected by corruption, chaos, and political crime must place the protection of national interests in the wider context of its commitments to the international community." This is exactly what happened in the Paraguay crisis.

The analyst Carlos Marini has taken up the argument for direct foreign intervention in Paraguay: "The democratic institutions are so fragile that their survival depends completely on external pressures." (*El Observador Económico*, Montevideo, April 4).

The key to the acceleration of this interference is to be found in the resistance of the masses, and in the massacre unleashed by the fascists (with the complicity of the police) in Oviedo on March 26. The preliminary estimate of casualties from the battle is tragic: 7 dead, 200 wounded, and 10 disappeared (the bodies thrown into the Parana river).

Until then, the governments of Mercosur and the United States restricted themselves to diplomacy, which took into account the distinct fractions and mafias of the ruling Colorado party, which had arrived at a final showdown.

The rise of a radical and democratic popular movement modified the whole panorama. From then on, the "Democracy Clause 1" came into effect. The full weight of the United States and its faithful allies in Mercosur, the European Union, and the Vatican representative was used to demand the resignation of Cubas Grau and to guarantee the exile of Oviedo (an old friend of the CIA and former German leader Helmut Kohl.)

For the North Americans, the fundamental issues were to put limits on Oviedo's involvement in contraband and narcotraffic, and to implement a fiscalization of the Paraguayan economy. The US asked the Argentine president Carlos Menen (a friend of Oviedo's and an associate in all kind of dirty deals) to keep the ex-general under strict surveillance while in exile in Argentina, to prevent him participating in conspiracies.



Brazil played a crucial role in resolving the crisis, and granted a golden exile to ex-president Cubas Grau. Brazil's involvement has little to do with democratic principles, and a lot to do with economic interests. Brazil is the principal foreign investor in Paraguay. Southern Brazil's industries get their electricity from the gigantic hydroelectric power station at Itaipu on the Paraguay side of the Parana river. During the crisis, the power station was guarded by Brazilian troops.

Brazil is also preoccupied by the 400,000 Brazilians peasants living in Paraguay. Any crisis which pushed them out of the country would exacerbate Brazil's own rural crisis and confrontations with the mass movement of landless peasants ("*Movimiento Sin Tierra*"). There is also a lobby of Brazilian businessmen and landowners with

regular and illegal business interests in Paraguay

Paraguayan agriculture was largely integrated into the Brazilian economy even before Mercosur. Brazil buys a large part of Paraguay's cotton production, and most of Paraguay's soya beans are processed in Brazil before being exported via Brazilian roads and ports.

Mainstream media in Latin America are reporting a happy ending to the Paraguay crisis: all parties are content: Oviedo and his puppet Cubas Grau are exiled, the armed forces have declared their "unconditional respect for the institutions," a coalition government is in power, the anger of the masses has been appeased, and the "unity of democratic Mercosur" has survived a trial by fire. For the tranquillity of the North American masters, there is now no danger of a civil war.

A Compromise Government

Successive governments have scrupulously maintained the close circle of benefactors created by the Stroessner dictatorship. In its latest report, Transparency International listed Paraguay as the world's second most corrupt country, right after Cameroon. A popular joke in Asuncion is that "Paraguay came second worst because it pulled a deal with Cameroon so as not to come in last."

This is a country where the state has been converted into a feeding ground for one of the most corrupt and patronage-based ruling classes in the world. The public prosecutor has over 20 ongoing investigations of ex-president Wasmosy for misappropriation of US\$6,000 million, which is the equivalent of 60% of Paraguay's GDP or 10 times its international reserves. And in the days just after the assassination of vice president Luis Maria Agana (an old collaborator in the Stroessner dictatorship and arch enemy of Oviedo), more than US\$2,000m. disappeared from the public treasury.

None of this can be understood without reference to the Colorado party's 112 year monopoly on politics and the State. The party has a membership of over 120,000, including soldiers and police. An estimated 200,000 civil servants depend on the party, which controls over half of the country's regional governments.

In other words, the party is the incontestable master of a country of five million inhabitants, of which half are

peasants; a country whose poverty level is above 45%, and whose annual per capita income is under \$1,650.

But now, for the first time in 50 years, the monopoly has been shaken. The internal disputes with the Oviedo faction which came to a head at the end of March, and the democratic rupture undertaken by the masses in the streets put an end to the conservative transition which started in 1989 (when a military coup overthrew the old dictator). It also created the conditions for the inauguration of a government of "national unity" (under foreign tutelage) presided over by Luis Gonzalez Macchi (one of the "democratic" representatives of the Colorado bureaucracy).

This government also includes the bourgeois 'Authentic Radical Liberal' party (PLRA), and the social democratic National Encounter party (*Partido Encuentro Nacional*, PEN). The architects of this project of "conciliation" hope to include the social movements, such as the *Central Unitaria de Trabajadores* (Workers United Central) and the *Federacion Nacional Campesina* (National Federation of Farmworkers) which demands the cancellation of the farmworkers debts.

It isn't clear whether this attempt at cooption will have any success, as the government is also saying that it doesn't have the "economic resources" to be able to agree to social demands.

Disputes inside the government are taking place on various fronts. One issue is whether Gonzalez Macchi should complete the time in office which would have corresponded to Cubas Grau, or call new elections within six months; another is to clean out the Judiciary and put an end to legal impunity.

The most fundamental differences are economic. The Colorado party, for obvious reasons, is opposed to privatizations, at best would accept only 'selective privatization.' The PLRA and the PEN, which account for four of the eleven ministers, agree with the IMF and BID, that privatization of state corporations such as electricity, water, and steel is the most effective way to pull the country out of paralysis and to combat the patronage and corruption. The Paraguayan 'Industrial Union' business council, along with other business organizations, has already given its support to the immediate privatization of any state corporations currently running a deficit.

As to joining Mercosur, there is very little enthusiasm among either politicians or businessmen. The new government has already announced that it will demand "a revision of the Mercosur treaty" to achieve a fairer distribution and ensure "compensation mechanisms for the poorest countries, similar to the European Economic Community." Currently, sectors such as textiles, oil, shoe manufacturing, and machining for the sugar industry have been affected by



the Mercosur agreements, especially competition from Brazil.

The "national unity" government demanded by the United States, Mercosur, and the ecclesiastical hierarchy, poses, more than anything else, uncertainties around compromises which will be difficult to achieve.

The forces for a new battle are being drawn up even though the old battle has not yet been concluded. Meanwhile, the popular movement, which was the principal protagonist of the democratic rupture, remains vigilant over its democratic rights, and is inclined to demand the social fruits of its victory. After the battle of March, a retreat seems improbable. ★

(1) In 1996, when Oviedo attempted a coup d'etat against president Wasmosy, the governments of the 'Common Market of the South' (Mercosur, created in 1991 and comprised of Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay and Paraguay) included in the treaty a "democracy clause" by which any "institutional collapse" would imply the automatic expulsion of the state in question from the Mercosur.

Llamamiento Socialista "For a Democratic, Radical and Socialist solution"

After decades of repression, the Paraguayan left was unable to play a decisive role in the transition.

The left was part of the popular resistance, although without being able to present an alternative program capable of politically centralizing the revolutionary potential of the mass mobilizations.

The Communist Party of Paraguay (PCP) called for the constitution of "a government of national salvation," while the (Castroist) 'Patria Libre' Movement (MPL) called for "a new popular and democratic state."

The two small organizations resulting from the split in the Morenist Party (Workers Party PT, and the Workers Socialist Party, PST), called for "unity in action" against Oviedo and Cubas Grau.

The New Paraguay Movement, based on the peasantry, emphasized social demands.

Only once during the crisis was there a unitary statement signed by the PCP, PST, PT, the Paraguay Socialist Party, the 'Acceso Sur' federation, and the Llamamiento Socialista (Socialist Call).

It was the comrades of the Llamamiento Socialista—an organization grouped around the magazine 'Debates for a New Epoch', and which includes those comrades who identify with the 4th International—

who participated most actively in the resistance, even producing daily political statements.

On March 31, Llamamiento Socialista issued a call to "continue the mobilizations against legal impunity, against patronage, and for the widening of the democratic victories."

They repeated the call for "the construction of a Popular Socialist Movement which with clarity and discipline gains sufficient moral authority to move forward both the struggles and the unity of the popular revolutionary movements, to then resolve the historical problems of the Paraguayan people, such as sovereignty, democratic reforms, agricultural reform, health, education, reactivation of the economy and employment."

The challenge is enormous, and appears out of proportion in relation to the immediate tasks imposed by the current situation—in particular, how to propose a broad and democratic alternative, both radical and socialist, in the context of an increase in popular mobilization, but in the absence of a history of stable alliances and unitary traditions.

The comrades of Llamamiento Socialista recognise the urgent necessity of greater ties with the multi-coloured movement which carried out the democratic revolution, but which does not yet have a clear political identity. [EH] ★



East Timor's freedom in the balance

As the August 8 plebiscite approaches, the people of East Timor are bracing themselves for the next round of attacks by the pro-integration terrorist gangs.

Jon Land

Indonesian president Habibie insists that ABRI (the Indonesian military) and police will play the main role in overseeing security in East Timor during the August vote.

The Indonesian government says that it still supports the result of the April 21-23 United Nations negotiations involving Portugal and the UN secretary-general. At those negotiations Indonesia's foreign minister, Ali Alatas, agreed to a consultation of the people of East Timor to determine whether they accept or reject the autonomy offer.

In an article in the April 29 *Sydney Morning Herald*, National Council of Timorese Resistance (CNRT) representative Jose Ramos Horta said: "The scale of the horror now visited upon the people of East Timor parallels 1975-1977, its darkest years, when 200,000 people were slaughtered in the brutal and illegal takeover".

Horta called for economic sanctions to be placed immediately on the Habibie

regime. "At the very least, all aid monies in the pipeline should be suspended for six months, until well after the vote on August 8 on the future of the country. All military sales and cooperation should be suspended immediately and Indonesian military attachés expelled."

Much of the establishment media in Australia responded coolly to the April 27 summit between Habibie and prime minister John Howard. Even Greg Sheridan, the *Australian's* foreign affairs editor and a Suharto apologist, called it a "minimal-result summit" which left key questions unanswered.

Propaganda

Some news reports have described the vote on August 8 as a "vote on independence", which it is not. It is merely a vote on the question of autonomy.

Confusion about the situation in East Timor has also been created by the media's constant use of the terms "civil war" and "warring factions". Such terms imply that the pro-integration forces exist independently of the support of the Indonesian military; they do not.

These terrorist gangs and their leaders are able to carry out their activities only because of the support they receive from the Indonesian military. The pro-integration forces are no more than an adjunct to the Indonesian military presence in East Timor.

These terms also imply that the independence movement and the armed wing of the resistance, Falintil, are currently engaged in armed conflict with the pro-integration gangs and the Indonesian military. This is totally false.

Falintil has upheld a unilateral ceasefire, which it declared last December as an act of good faith and a sign of commitment to a peaceful transition to independence. Falintil maintains the right to act in self-defence and the right to protect defenceless civilians.

The full detail of the UN plan for the vote on autonomy are still being discussed. It is understood to include provision for a UN monitoring team of some 450 to 650 personnel to oversee the vote. It will include a police force which will liaise with the Indonesian military and police on security matters, and it is likely that Australia will be requested by the UN to provide a contingent of police for the team.

This plan entrenches the control of the Indonesian military and police, who will be responsible for overall security in the lead-up to the vote. UN police will merely act in an "advisory" capacity.

It also gives legitimacy to the fake attempt by Habibie and army leader Wiranto to create a "peaceful" environment for the vote through the Commission on Peace and Stability. This commission was established by the Habibie regime after the bogus peace settlement signed on April 21. Pro-independence leaders signed this agreement only in order to show that they remain committed to peace in East Timor.

But the pro-integration gangs continued to carry out violent attacks throughout East Timor during and after the signing of the agreement.

Indonesian troops out!

There are two clear demands that must be made upon the UN in relation to its role in East Timor. First, the UN must ensure that it facilitates a fair and free act of self-determination, in accordance with past UN Security Council and General Assembly resolutions which reaffirm the right of the East Timorese people to such a process.

Secondly, in order for this to be possible, the UN must oversee the immediate withdrawal of Indonesian troops and the disarming of the pro-integration terrorist gangs. It is ludicrous to entrust the Indonesian military or police with any responsibility for East Timorese people's security.

As well, independent monitoring teams of representatives of human rights, trade union, church, student, women's and East Timor solidarity organisations should be enabled to play a role in verifying the demilitarisation of East Timor and the act of self-determination.

It is crucial that an intensive international solidarity campaign raise these

demands and place as much pressure as possible on the UN and those governments playing a direct role in the negotiations or UN plan to have the demands met.

Such a campaign must also assert the right of the legitimate representatives of the East Timorese people, such as Xanana Gusmao, to be involved in the negotiations.

Reports from East Timor tells of daily murders and terrorising by the pro-integration gangs, which remain defiant in their pledge to continue their violence.

A joint statement by East Timorese humanitarian organisations presented to British deputy minister of foreign affairs Derek Fatchett on April 28 highlighted that between last November and March 31, 18,091 East Timorese have

been internally displaced by the pro-integration groups' attacks. "In the first three months of 1999, there were at least 40 dead, 22 wounded, eight illegal detentions, and two women raped by militia."

If there is to be peace and self-determination in East Timor, there must be a significant increase in international support for the East Timorese independence struggle. We also need more solidarity with those organisations within Indonesia that support independence for East Timor, such as the People's Democratic Party. And concerted opposition to the despicable policies of the allies of the Habibie regime, such as the Howard government in Australia. ★

Green Left Weekly, May 5, 1999

Schools project

A primary school curriculum in Timor's main language, Tetum, is being developed with the support of APHEDA, the aid wing of the Australian Congress of Trade Unions. Other projects include trade union development, community health, and capacity building for NGOs in East Timor. ★

ACTU/APHEDA East Timor Appeal, Box 3, Trades Hall, 4 Goulburn St, Sydney 2000, NSW, Australia. For credit card donations © 1300 362223, fax 02 92611118, Email <apheda@labor.net.au>, www.apheda.org.au



Australia Union solidarity with Timor

Australian trade unions are starting to discuss solidarity with the East Timorese nation's fight to decide its own future, writes Jon Land.

At the end of April, aircraft maintenance workers' delegates at the Qantas Jet Base in Sydney resolved to hold a stop-work meeting to consider refusing to work on Indonesian aircraft when the first such plane requests servicing.

The Northern Territories Trades and Labor Council voted to support East Timorese self-determination and a transition to independence. It applauded the East Timorese people's perseverance in their struggle, and called for the immediate disarming of the Indonesian army sponsored militia, the release of all East Timorese political prisoners and the withdrawal of the Indonesian troops by a United Nations monitoring body.

The resolution also condemned the Australian government's response, and demanded an immediate suspension of all military ties and withdrawal of Australia's *de jure* recognition of Indonesian sovereignty over East Timor. It called on "all unions and the ACTU to immediately impose economic bans on all trade and commercial enterprises related to Indonesia", and proposed to offer support as requested by the East Timorese to rebuild their lives.

Unions in the state of Victoria are discussing cutting postal, telecommunication, airline and shipping links. Leigh Hubbard, secretary of the Victorian Trades Hall Council, said the unions hoped to play "one small part in building public pressure, public debate [and] public awareness" about the Howard government's support for the repressive Indonesian regime.

On April 30 the Australian

Confederation of Trade Unions endorsed industrial action by its affiliates to protest against the violence of the Indonesian army and its militia against the East Timorese.

In the past, the Australian trade union movement voiced support for East Timorese self-determination but ignored the complicity of Labor governments (under Whitlam, Hawke and Keating) in Indonesia's occupation of East Timor. This seems to be changing.

Australian unions' active solidarity will be an enormous aid the East Timorese people's struggle.

Organised workers are in a unique position to bring pressure to bear on the Australian government (Indonesia's principle imperialist backer) to withdraw all support for the occupation of East Timor.

The active participation of rank and file union members in the solidarity campaign will provide important opportunities to educate many more Australian workers about the issues involved. These include the record of all Australian political parties on this question, the role of Australian big business interests in East Timor, and the centrality of internationalism in defending all working people's rights.

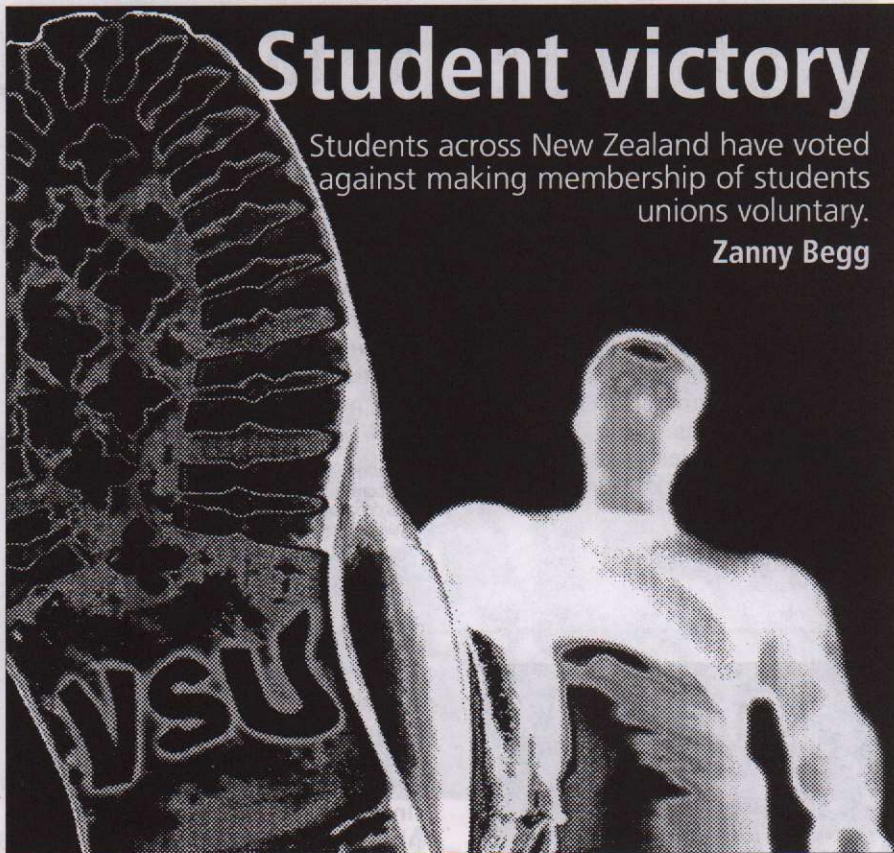
Solidarity actions will also allow members to experience the power of collective action by workers and help the unions build alliances with others in Australia and overseas who actively support the democratic rights of the East Timorese.

But union leaders must do more than "endorse" solidarity actions by individual unions. They must actively promote and provide resources for the broadest possible solidarity action by unions and their members. ★

Student victory

Students across New Zealand have voted against making membership of students unions voluntary.

Zanny Begg



The referendums were carefully constructed by the government to encourage a vote in favour of voluntary membership. Student unions were forced to spend a dollar convincing students to support voluntary student unionism for every dollar they spent convincing students that student union membership should be compulsory. The ballot paper informed students that if they voted for voluntary membership they would be refunded their student union fees. The government prohibited students from paying for their fees out of the student loan scheme.

Media, politicians and the trade union leadership told the New Zealand University Student Association (NZUSA) that they were fighting a losing battle.

Despite these hurdles NZUSA launched a massive campaign to defend students unions. As NZUSA co-president Karen Skinner explained "we were not going to take VSM lying down".

The result? Five of the seven universities voted overwhelmingly against VSM. At Massey University in Palmerston North, 46% of the student population voted, with 65% voting against VSM.

Skinner was particularly pleased that so many of Massey's 14,000 external students rejected VSM—despite their current, low level of contact with the student union.

Lincoln and Canterbury universities had already promised to guarantee student union funding if VSU is introduced. But this did not stop students mobilising to defeat voluntary membership.

At the relatively conservative Victoria University, in the capital, Wellington

46% of the student population participated in the referendum and 72% voted for compulsory membership.

At Otago the student union began the campaign against VSM 12 months ago. As a result, 57% of the student population voted, of which 77% supported compulsory membership. According to Skinner one of the strongest bases of support came from hostel students (residential colleges) where supporting compulsory unionism became the "thing to do".

The student movement only lost the referendums at Waikato and Auckland universities. At Waikato University the student association has been dominated by far right organisations since 1996. A campus referendum on voluntary membership was passed in 1996 and again in 1997. By 1999 the student union had completely collapsed. Skinner explains this meant that many students "had never seen a functioning student union and did not know what there was to support".

Only 98 votes separated the union from victory at Auckland university, where only 51% of students participated in the referendum. Skinner is defiant: "We do not consider that voluntary membership has a mandate at Auckland. We will contest the result by gathering a petition from 10% of the student population calling for a new referendum".

According to Skinner, the student union at Auckland University used the wrong tactics. They put a major emphasis on the importance of services provided by the student union. But it is hard to convince students that these services will be lost under a voluntary arrangement. As soon as the right mobilised and tried

to tell students that services would be maintained under a privatised environment our arguments fell away. We were able to mobilise people only when we explained the political nature of VSM. We had to explain to students that what they would really lose under VSM was their voice. Pushing the services line was one reason why we lost".

"One of the most convincing arguments we used in the campaign" Skinner explained "was to look at the timing of the legislation. VSM was meant to come in May. The month after a whole raft of new attacks on the tertiary education sector are going to be released by the government. Before the end of the year the National Party government has to go to the polls. VSM was about silencing student opposition to the government".

Skinner attributes a large part of the compulsory vote to a vote "against the government" and "a victory for students and for the left. It sends a clear message to the government to 'butt out' of student affairs. We don't like them interfering and we don't like their privatisation agenda in the tertiary sector, we don't like rising fees we don't like what they are doing to New Zealand".

According to Skinner students have played an important role in defending people's living standards, and have won support because of that. When the VSM legislation was announced student unions received numerous offers of support because of the "activist role we play". The teachers union distributed leaflets urging high school students to vote compulsory to all school leavers at the end of last year. People donated money to the campaign and NZUSA built alliances with trade unions and other NGOs. Skinner believes all these groups have been "empowered by the victory against VSM".

The government's response to the referendum results has been to lie low. Although the education minister helped draft the legislation no government official would publicly comment on the results.

It was left to backbencher Tony Steel to debate Skinner on radio. He tried to insinuate that student unions had reneged on the agreement to spend equal amounts on the voluntary and compulsory campaign and that the results would be challenged in court. Skinner laughed this off "we carried out the campaign totally above board and won convincingly".

The next fight facing New Zealand students will be the government's attempt to remove student and staff representation on university councils. Skinner says the campaign has already started: "We have a strong mandate to be here and to fight. We will not be silenced because we are even stronger than we have ever been". ★

Source: *Green Left Weekly*, May 12.



China Capitalism in the constitution

Proposed amendments to the Chinese constitution reflect the growing role of the private economic sector.

In March the National People's Congress (NPC) rubber-stamped the following proposals from the the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP).

Zhang Kai

1. In the Preamble, "the guidance of Marxism-Leninism and Mao Zedong Thought" will be extended to include "Deng Xiaoping's theory". Equating Deng Xiaoping's proposals for market reform with the theories of Marxism-Leninism eases the process of revision of Marxist socialist theory, and justifies the reversion to capitalism launched in the past two decades.

2. The Constitution will contain a new statement that: "At the preliminary stage of socialism, the state insists on a basic economic system with public ownership being the mainstay and multiple ownership systems in co-development; the state also insists on a distribution system with distribution according to labour input being the primary mode, and multiple distribution modes in co-existence."

3. Article 11 of the Constitution

will be amended to "non-public ownership economies such as individual economy or private economy that operate within legal binds are important components of the socialist market economy [the original is that they are "supplements to the socialist market economy] The lawful rights and interests of the individual economy and the private economy are safeguarded by the state."

These constitutional reforms reflect the growing weight of the capitalist economic sector. In the past two decades, the private economic sector has rapidly expanded. About 100 million people now work in the private sector:

- There are 970,000 private employers, employing 13.5 million workers;
- Over 234,000 foreign-registered companies, including from Taiwan, Hong Kong and Macau, have invested US\$232 billion in the mainland, employing a current workforce of 17.5 million;
- 54 million citizens have registered as self-employed;
- Large number of rural workers are now employed in private enterprises in rural industries.

In 1998, the state-owned sector represented less than one third of GDP. In 1997, state-owned industries produced only 26.5% of the total industrial output, and state-owned commerce was responsible for only 24.3% of total retail trade of consumer goods—less than the private

retail sector. These statistics were provided by Deng Liqun, usually seen as a hard-line Maoist, in *Contemporary Thought*, June 1998.)

Of course, the state continues to pump investments into state-owned enterprises. The fixed assets investment had increased from hundreds of billion yuan in previous years, to 1,082 billion yuan in 1996, to 1,342bn. yuan in 1997. The fixed assets of the state-owned economy were 6,589 billion yuan in 1996, far larger than the private sector of the economy.

If the nature of a state is primarily determined by the relations of production and property relations, then China would still be a deformed bureaucratic workers state, rather than capitalist. However, over the last two decades, state property has been eroded and undermined, and converted in different ways into private property. The current Constitutional amendments give legal recognition to the expansion of the capitalist forces.

In order to accommodate the opening of the market and the invitation of foreign investments, China must give political assurances to potential investors. Hence the new constitutional insistence that China "practises the rule of law , and constructs a socialist country ruled by law." This may offer some assurances to the safeguarding of the rights of entrepreneurs, but for the ordinary people, this new article is likely to exist in form only, like those in the Constitution that guarantee the freedoms and rights of citizens for speech, publication, gathering and association.

In practice, whenever Chinese citizens have tried to exercise these freedoms and rights, they have been arrested and sent to jail or labour camps.

In response to persistent criticism of its abusive use of the charge of "counter-revolutionary" activities to clampdown on dissidents, the CCP proposes a constitutional amendment that changes the charge of "counter-revolution" to "jeopardising state security". But this change of title does not mean that dissidents will not be persecuted. These lesser crimes can still attract long years of imprisonment.

The current constitutional change reflects the social pressure on the authorities, and their growing difficulty in using the charge of "counter revolution" against dissidents. ★

Source: October Review Vol.26 Issue 1, 1999
Contact: October Review, G.P.O.Box 10144, Hong Kong e-mail: or@earthling.net

Freedom from Debt = Freedom from Domination

Declaration of the Southern African Jubilee Debt Summit

On the eve of the new millennium, there is a rapid growth in Jubilee 2000 campaigns and other initiatives calling for abolition of III World debt

The vast majority of the people of sub-Saharan Africa live in pervasive poverty. In Southern Africa tens of millions of people are hungry, homeless, jobless, formally uneducated and die from preventable diseases.

Yet Southern Africa is not intrinsically poor. Indeed, it is a region rich in natural and human resources. Debt slavery, the same system of debt bondage that excludes four fifths of the world's population from economic and social development, is a central part of this nightmare. Southern Africa is shackled by debt owed to the same forces which initiated, enforced, condoned and sustained slavery and colonialism. Today this debt is both a manifestation and an instrument of the unjust international economic order in which the North dominates the South and the elites in our countries are willing accomplices and beneficiaries.

Countries in Southern Africa pay as much as 40% of their export earnings to

service the debt. This outflow of resources in debt repayments along with profit remittances have led to the most wretched of human conditions.

The debt burden is choking the life of Southern Africa's human potential. Indebted nations have also been pressured to agree to crippling conditionalities to get loans to repay the debt in a deepening spiral of indebtedness. The Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) have caused increasing levels of unemployment, reduced government services, higher prices of food and other basic commodities and intensified poverty.

Through the imposition of export-led growth, financial and trade liberalisation, fiscal austerity, privatisation and deregulation, our economies remain sources of cheap raw materials and pools of cheap labour for the interests of the industrialised North. Through SAPs our governments have become more accountable to the elites of the North rather than to their own people. We have been denied the right to be active participants in the decision making process of our own development. In this sense we see how debt has come to be an instrument of control and domination.

The domination of the North over the South has led to conditions which have

spawned wars and conflicts in our region that have exacerbated levels of poverty, human suffering and debt bondage.

The legacy of apartheid compounds this situation. Southern Africa, as a region, suffers the effects of apartheid-caused debt. Apartheid-sponsored wars and economic destabilisation forced nations to borrow billions of dollars because of the international communities' failure to enforce the international law violated by apartheid.

Over two million people have been killed in Southern Africa in apartheid-related wars, millions more have been maimed and thousands of schools, clinics, bridges and roads have been destroyed. Southern African nations are paying millions of dollars annually to service apartheid-caused debt to creditors who were in the main supporters of apartheid. The total cost of apartheid-caused destabilisation in Southern Africa is far greater than the actual apartheid-caused debts. The former estimated cost exceeds US\$115 billion while apartheid-caused debt is some \$27 billion.

Wars have now escalated to the point of forcing states of the region to borrow even more and thereby further deepen our dependence on militarised politics and economic management.

Under these circumstances the debt of Southern Africa is illegitimate and immoral. Yet there is a debt which we do recognise—a moral debt. This is the debt that our governments, the governments of the G7/8, multilaterals and international commercial banks owe us for unbuilt and broken down schools, for

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women and girls who continue to bear the burden of poverty and for the jobs, homes, clean water and all the fundamental human rights we do not have.

We demand:

- the unconditional, immediate and total cancellation of the debt;
- the immediate termination of the conditions attached to all the internationally designed debt relief mechanisms to tying this to further economic adjustment; and
- the scrapping of the Highly Indebted Poor Countries initiative.



The only conditions we recognise are those that are developed by the popular and representative civil society organisations. We believe that the results of debt cancellation can only benefit our people if it is accompanied by deep-going processes of democratisation, the upholding of human rights—including workers rights—transparency, accountability and the provision of basic social services.

We reiterate the call for reparations in the 1993 Abuja Declaration embracing the totality of all the quantifiable and unquantifiable costs that have been incurred. Reparations must compensate for economic and social damage incurred by our people, to finance the rebuilding of our own infrastructure and society and to restore our dignity. We believe reparations are long overdue as our initiative to regain control over our destiny and to ensure that the African holocaust will never occur again.

We call for the building of a new democratic world order upon the eradication of the present order that continues to bond us to debt through the ties of free trade, exploitative and extractive movement of Transnational corporate investment, volatile and speculative hot money flows; all within an ideology concocted by a tiny minority based in the USA, the 'Washington Consensus'.

We see the gathering of Jubilee 2000 coalitions and other popular forces in Cologne in June as an important step in the march towards the realisation of the objectives of our unifying movements.

We demand that the G7 and Bretton Woods Institutions do justice to us but are under no illusion that this will happen without an intensification of popular pressure.

That is why we deem it necessary to galvanise our forces in building up momentum for a strong South-South coalition and our own agenda for total liberation at the South-South Summit.

We affirm the Accra, Rome and Tegucigalpa Declarations and the World Council of Churches Harare Statement on Debt and welcome the forthcoming

Asia Pacific Jubilee summit as part of our South-South Jubilee process. We call on our Church and other civil society allies in the North to support our struggle and the process that has led to this and previous declarations. In so doing they would be transforming themselves, as we desire, into vehicles of genuine solidarity within a Jubilee 2000 global movement led by the South for a new world in the new millennium.

We shall continue to build Jubilee 2000 coalitions that will empower the broad masses of people to respond effectively to all the challenges posed by the debt crisis and the Jubilee clamour for a new millennium. We mean in this regard people-to-people campaigning to build our own power, capacity and "globalisation of solidarity" networking in order to ensure the achievement of our goals.

We commit ourselves to self-determination in working for debt cancellation within a broader concept of Jubilee, including assertion of our sovereignty from Northern domination and transformation towards an alternative global economic system. ★

Southern African Debt Summit, Johannesburg, 21st March 1999 Affirmed by delegates from: Angola, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Jubilee 2000 Afrika and Jubilee 2000 Coalitions from Latin America and Philippines. For more information contact: Alternative Information & Development Centre (AIDC) Tel: (021) 6851565 Fax: (021) 6851645. <Aidc@iafrica.com> Internet: aidc.org.za P O Box 1139, Woodstock 7924, Cape Town, South Africa

Mozambique Parliament demands debt cancellation

According to the World Bank, 70% of Mozambicans live below the poverty line. 60% do not have access to health services. 78% of women are illiterate. 70% of the population does not have access to drinking water. Mozambique spends three times more on foreign debt servicing than on health and education.

In 1997, the World Bank and the IMF made much ado about conceding to Mozambique the right to debt cancellation, for having been a model pupil in adjustment. In order to get this cancellation in July 1999 the government was obliged, much against its will, to commit itself to increasing yet again the costs of health care to the population.

Yet when the cancellation measures come into effect, Mozambique will have to repay as much as it has been repaying in recent years, that is, 100 million dollars a year. This is the amount that the World Bank and the IMF deem to be "sustainable".

The Minister of Planning subsequently declared that the World Bank/IMF initiative known as

"HIPC" (Highly Indebted Poor Countries initiative) "will make no significant difference to the volume of future payments".

The Mozambican parliament met in a special session on 4th and 5th December 1998 and voted unanimously in favour of demanding the total and unconditional cancellation of Mozambique's debt. (That debt is principally due to policies imposed on the countries of the region by the racist regime of South Africa in the 70s and 80s.)

The members of parliament claimed that if the 100 million dollars destined annually to repayment of the debt could be invested in health and education, the lives of 300 children and 30 women who die in childbirth could be saved every day.

A World Bank representative immediately declared that there was no question of the Bank going beyond the measures previously announced since that was "the maximum that the creditors can bear, financially". [ET] ★

Source: AWEPA (Association of Western European Parliamentarians for Africa), February 1999.

Coming soon

Conference listing

Reclaiming Cologne

On June 3rd and 4th the EU summit is taking place in Cologne, Germany. Two weeks later, the leaders of the G-8, the world's eight most powerful nations, will gather in the same city. German groups have organised themselves in different forms to take this opportunity for protest and resistance.

Last year saw the birth of a broad coalition, 'Bundnis Koln 99', made up of many different groups—from big environment and development NGOs to small left-wing groups.

The four main events are:

- Unemployment March, May 29
- Unemployment Parliament, May 30-June 4
- Alternative Summit May 28-June 1
- Activities against the G-8 Summit, June 18-20

Outside this broad platform, many left-radical groups have organised themselves in the LiRa. Within the LiRa there's a strong opinion that the EU shouldn't be reformed but firmly opposed. The LiRa has organised a demonstration against the EU on June 3rd, followed by debates and actions (until Sunday June 6th). A number of LiRa groups are also in the Bundnis.

There is a joint call from the Bundnis which serves as a base text for the activities during both the EU Summit as well as the G-8. It calls for security of existence, labour rights, a world without frontiers or racism, and cancellation of all debts of the 'developing' countries.

Although some of the practical details still have to be sorted out, Cologne is set to sparkle & boil in the first weeks of June, with demonstrations, debates and actions. The latest version of the programme is as follows:

Alternative EU Summit Cologne, May 28-June 2

More and more people turn against the consequences of the neo-liberal politics in Europe and demand a change. Five years after the opening of the free common market that would create a big amount of jobs there are more people unemployed than before. The increasing flow of goods and the fixation on economic growth destroys the environment on a big scale. The currency-union with its neo-liberal approach forces social cuts and plays marginalised people against each other.

This Europe has run its course! Now it's time to show the governments of the EU that a little sustainability and some social cosmetics is not enough. The EU alternative summit is a forum where people from all over Europe and from many other countries can develop real alternatives and put these up against the reigning politics.

The alternative summit is also meant to be a place where movements from different countries and policy areas have the possibility to reflect their development, to get contacts, to network and to plan further activities.

Program

The counter summit will concentrate on five topics: Social/employment issues • Education • Women • Environment • Campaigning
Saturday, May 29 European demonstration against unemployment, casual labour, racism and exclusion. Start: Neumarkt Platz, Koln, 13:00.

Sunday, May 30 till June 1 Workshops on the five main themes will take place everyday. There will be some extra workshops on one day only

- Social/employment issues: European Parliament of the unemployed, Social policies of the EU, Child poverty in the EU, Models of social security

- Environment: Energy policy, Climate policy, Genetechnology, Trans European Networks, Agricultural policy

- Education: Globalisation of education, Privatisation of education, Life-long learning, Selection mechanisms in educational systems, Democratisation of educational systems

- Women: Reproductive rights, Paid/unpaid labour

- Campaigning: different action forms, press work, street theatre, video workshop

Organisational

The alternative summit will take place in the 'Alte Feuerwache' in Cologne. During the summit there will be a camp site for the participants. There are also sleeping places in private houses. Food will be provided by Ramenplan, a Dutch organic/vegan cooking collective. The participation fee has not yet been decided.

Contact addresses are:
'Alte Feuerwache' Melchiorstrasse 3 50670 Cologne tel +49-221-9731550

Buendnis Koeln 99 Koernerstrasse 69 50823 Koeln tel +49-221-9520008 fax +49-221-9520077 email: koeln99@gmx.net

The alternative summit is organised by: ChemieKreis, Foundation Towards a Different Europe, European Marches against unemployment, odd jobs, racism and exclusion, freier zusammenschluss von studentInnenschaften, Green Alternative Youth Alliance, IMUN Bochum, Juso-Bundesverband, Natur Freunde Jugend, Play Fair Europe!

Unemployment parliament Cologne, 28 May-3 June

A series of meetings between movements engaged in the struggle against unemployment, casual labour and social precarity. Restricted to members of affiliated associations and trade unions. Themes will include:

- European Union policies and European Commission directives on income, social

rights and employment (in particular, the "European Pact for Employment").

- The demand for a minimum income in Europe—APEIS (France) Baladre (Spain) BAG-Unabhängige Erwerbslose (Germany) ADC Lausanne (Switzerland) Denmark or Sweden, AC! Commission Revenu (France)

- The Precarisation of Work - "Workfare" in Great Britain (Unemployment Centre, Brighton, GB) -The "Dutch Model" (ENU Group, Holland) -The situation of women in former-East Germany (ALI Thuringen / KOS Bielefeld)

- Reduction of Working Hours -The struggle for the reduction of working hours in Germany (DGB, EuroMarsch Germany) -The 35 hour week campaign in Spain (CGT, Spain) -The French 32 hour week demand and the Aubry Law on a 35 hour week (France)

- New Forms of Employment? — Introduction by MNCP (France) on alternative solidarity economy.

- Immigration. job insecurity and unemployment. The right to free circulation of people and settlement in Europe. - European immigration policies, Schengen (GISTI, France). -German question of double nationality (Turkish Immigrant Association in Turkey). -Unemployed and those in insecure jobs, their struggles against the expulsions of No Papers People.(CLLE / CACH Bruxelles) - Sans-Papiers (No Papers People) (France). -The Network of Movements for Political and Social Rights. (Greece) -Freedom of circulation/Kosovo (The Invisibles, Italy)

Contact: Secretariat des Marches Europeennes 104, rue des Couronnes 75020 Paris France Fax : (+33) 0144626345 Email : marches97@ras.eu.org

The Alternative Economic Summit

17./18. of June, Cologne

The last World Economic Summit (G-7) in this century will take place in Cologne. In Germany, social movements and NGOs are preparing several alternative events, among them a demonstration and a human chain. The "Alternative World Economic Summit" is prepared by an alliance of different organisations, among them Friends of the Earth Germany (BUND), medico international, the Heinrich-Boll-Foundation, the Youth Organisations of the socialdemocratic and green party, the Federal Congress of Development Action Groups (BUKO), Oxfam Germany, Network "no one is illegal" and others. The conference is coordinated by WEED.

The main purpose of the congress is the discussion and promotion of alternatives to the neo-liberal world order. In the light of the deepening crisis of the dominant economic paradigm the political conjuncture for alternatives has never been more favourable in the last decade. The congress will focus on three main issues: • the future of labour • migration •

towards a different world economic order, in particular the finance system. Cross-sectorial issues like ecology, peacekeeping and women will also be considered.

The first day of the congress will focus in three parallel panel meetings on the main issues. International and German experts and civil society representatives will be invited, among others: Elmar Altvater, Francois Chesnais, Susan George, Jorg Huffschnid, and Martin Khor.

The second day will integrate the results of the commissions in the plenary and try to further process alternatives. Prominent figures from social movements from all over the world will be invited. We shall try to get personalities like Noam Chomsky, Vandana Shiva and Eduardo Galeano.

Migration: With: Theophilus E. Osezua (The Voice), Osiris Bayther (Colombia), Peter Kissinger (Germany), Movimento dos Sem (Brasil).

Deportation violates human rights: Madjiguene Cisse (sans papiers), Osaren Igbinoba (Caravan of migrants and refugees), SOLATINA, Fatma Bag (Church Asylum, Germany)

Beyond labour?: Yann Moulrier Boutang (France), Karl Georg Zinn (Germany), Joachim Hirsch (Germany) and Christa Sonnenfeld (Germany, Boris Kagarlitsky (Russia), Farida Akther (Bangladesh), Maria Rojas (Chile) and Ari Sitas (South Africa).

Ethos, Utopia and labour ideology: Sigmund-Freud-Institute (Germany), Alex Demirovic (Germany), Franco Berardi (France) and Maurizio Lazzarato (France)

Regulating the financial markets: Francois Chesnais (University of Paris, France), Suzanne de Brunhoff (CNRS, France), Jorg Huffschnid (University of Bremen, Germany), Kevin Watkins (Oxfam international, UK). Moderator: Martina Metzger (University of Berlin, Germany)

Business without frontiers? World trade, Foreign Direct Investments and control of TNCs: Sunita Narain (Centre for Science & Environment, India), Martin Khor (Third World Network, Malaysia), Jessica Woodroffe (World Development Movement, UK), Charles Arden Clarke (WWF International, Switzerland) Moderator: Myriam Vander Stichele (SOMO and TNI, Netherlands)

(Re)Regulation of the world economic system—Democratic alternatives to the neoliberal world order: Candido Grzbowski (ibase, Brasil), Susanne Lutz (MPI Koln, Germany), Susan George (Author, France), Michel Chossudovsky (University of Ottawa, Canada). Moderator: Peter Wahl (WEED)

Beyond Neo-Keynesianism: Walden Bello (Focus on the Global South, Thailand), Vandana Shiva (Alternative Nobel Prize winner, India), Alain Lipietz (CEPREMAP, France).

Back to the future? Perspectives of neo-keynesian Reform-Alternatives: Andre Gorz, Saskia Sassen (Canada), Walden Bello (Focus on the Global South, Thailand), Detlev Hartmann (Germany)

Change comes bottom-up. New strategies and players?: Boris Kagarlitsky (Russia), representative of EZLN (Mexico), Pat Horn (RSA), NN (organisation of unemployed people).

It is not enough to interpret the world—ways, strategies and alliances: Martin Khor (Third World Network, Malaysia), Detlef Hensche (IG Medien, Germany), Frieder Otto Wolf (member of the European Parliament, Germany), Madjiguene Cisse (Sans Papiers, France)

Perspectives of a democratic world order with social justice and sound environment: Noam Chomsky (MIT, USA), Madjiguene Cisse (Sans Papiers, France) and Eduardo Galeano (writer, Uruguay) Moderator: Angelika Zahrnt (Friends of the Earth, Germany)

The congress will be held with simultaneous translation in English and German, in the High School for Adult Education (Volkshochschule) Cologne, Josef Haubrich Hof 2 (near Neumarkt).

For the latest information on the programme of the Alternative Economic Summit, check the WEED website at www.weedbonn.org/aktiong7/prog_e.htm

Other events

EuoMediterranean homosexuality

Marseilles, France, 24-31 July

See longer announcement in last month's magazine. Registrations and requests for information can be sent, to: Université d'Été des Homosexualités Intech Chemin des Fontaines 84110 Vaison la Romaine, France Tel: 33-4-90 28 70 10 Fax: 33-4-90 36 19 63 Organizational contacts (tel/fax): 33-4-75 27 14 04 (Jacques Fortin) Artistic programming: 33-4-91 47 29 52 (Verte Fontaine)

Women and Political Action

18-19 June, London, Great Britain

See longer announcement in last month's magazine. Contact: Gender Research Centre, Middlesex University, Queensway, Enfield, Middlesex EN3 4SF, Great Britain. Tel: [+44 181] 362 5552. fax: 362 6404. E-mail: <j.gregory@mdx.ac.uk>

International Meeting of Movements in Struggle

Paris, France, 24-26 June

This major event is a joint initiative of the European Marches network, ATTAC, (International Movement for the Democratic Control of Financial Markets and their Financial Institutions), the Coordination against the Clones of IMA, World Forum Alternatives, and COCAD/CADTM. ★

For more information contact the EuroMarch secretariat, 104 rue des Couronnes, 75020 Paris, France. Fax: (+33) 01 44 62 63 45 <marches97@ras.eu.org>

Peoples' Global Action against "Free Trade" and the W.T.O

Bangalore (India), August 23-26

The conference will launch a discus-

sion process among peoples' movements from the around the world on the role and functions that an international coordination and communication network like the PGA should play. The conference will also provide a great opportunity to plan massive mobilisations against the Third WTO Ministerial Conference.

The conference will be hosted by the Karnataka State Farmers' Association (KRRS), one of the biggest social movements in South Asia. There will be a number of organised trips to Karnataka and the North of Kerala before and after the conference.

Contact: <pga@agp.org>. Conference documentation will be posted at www.agp.org. The current Convenors' Committee of PGA is composed of: Black Communities' Process (Colombia), Canadian Union of Postal Workers, Committee of Female Workers of El Salvador, Confederation of Education Workers of Argentina, Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador, Maori Independence Movement (Aotearoa - New Zealand), National Alliance of People's Movements (India), Reclaim the Streets London (UK), Rural Organisation for Mutual Help (Mozambique), Socio-Ecological Union (federation of over 200 groups in Central/Eastern Europe).

London Anarchist Bookfair

16 October, London, Britain

Contact: <m.peacock@unl.ac.uk>

Tel. 0171 247 9249.

Participative democracy

10-13 November, Porto Alegre, Brazil

An International Seminar on Participative Democracy, based on Porto Alegre's pioneer "participatory budget process". Working languages Portuguese, Spanish and (maybe) English.

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

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/pga.htm>

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Booknotes

The fall and rise of liberation theology

Blessed Anastácia: Women, race and popular Christianity in Brazil, by John Burdick, 1998, Routledge
ISBN: 0-415-912690-1

In the early 1980s, liberation theology inspired a generation of Brazilians to struggle for social justice, sexual and racial equality, and a reform of Christian practice and theology to place the church at the service of the people.

In the 1990s, however, there has been a rapid growth in more conservative, evangelical Christianity. A new wave of "charismatic" Catholics are adapting evangelical practices in a struggle for the hearts and minds of Brazil's black and brown majority.

Not only has liberation theology's "revolution in consciousness" stalled, but many of its supporters have fallen away. Part of this is due to the growing misery of Brazil's poor, with hopelessness leading to an explosion of mystical practices of all types.

The Pope has also succeeded in his counter-reform, stacking the Brazilian hierarchy with ultra-conservatives. In another 10 years, most of the liberation theologians that have kept their positions within the priesthood will be too old to stop the conservative backlash.

And, of course, part of the evangelical tidalwave is the result of massive financial and political support from North American churches.

But these external factors only tell half the story. This book is the result of John Burdick's search for the internal contradictions of liberation theology, and those self-delusions of social activists who lumped believers into separate categories of progressive, conservative and reactionary.

Burdick's extensive fieldwork in Rio de Janeiro revealed a much more complex pattern of political and religious belief and practice among Brazil's poor.

Rather than reactionaries and fools, as some leftists had argued, many poor evangelical Christians supported the Workers Party (PT). More surprisingly, perhaps, their fundamentalist interpretation of the bible seems to have contributed to a greater racial integration of church members than in the explicitly anti-racist sectors of the church.

Through extensive interviews with black and brown women, Burdick's team exposed a complicated dynamic of racial, sexual and religious identities, with progressive and conservative values articulated within all sectors of

Brazilian Christianity, with individuals often holding mixed and even contradictory beliefs, with their progressive and conservative sides dominating in different moments of their daily life. A welcome sociological reminder of the complexity and untidiness of real life, which some social activists try to conceptualise in rigid and dogmatic ways.

Burdick reports, for instance, how black and brown Brazilians had a mixed response to the introduction of Afro-Brazilian history and culture into the liturgy in 'inculturated' ceremonies promoted by some liberation theologians and black movement activists. Some felt that it promoted a narrow black identity, forcing mixed-race Brazilians to deny a large part of their cultural heritage and family background. Others resented the 'cultural' use of African drums and dance as a concession to Afro-Brazilian religions like candomblé.

Liberation theologians were accused of a partial and manipulative use of the bible, to promote their own agendas.

Despite his sympathy with the black nationalist movement, Burdick found activists rigid and suspicious about his

findings of progressive values within the evangelical movement, and dynamics of exclusion within 'liberation theology' sectors.

Some black activists welcomed the racial integration of the evangelical churches. Others saw this as proof of the false consciousness of those blacks and browns who did not prioritise blacks as friends and spouses.

Fortunately, research like Burdick's has helped socialists in all Brazil's religions to widen their understanding of racial, sexual and religious dynamics among the poor, and to regroup their forces for a new struggle to bring Christians into the social movements, and articulate spiritual and theological concerns that correspond to the preoccupations of ordinary people rather than the religious hierarchy. ★

reviewed by Mark Johnson

Correction

The Marxism of Ernest Mandel will be published by Verso, not by Pluto, as announced in this section last month. ★

Uncle Sam is lurking

A study prepared for the US military recommends development of techniques to monitor and counter the activities of NGOs using Internet communication.

The study was sponsored by the US Deputy Chief of Staff for Intelligence and was produced in the RAND Arroyo Center's Strategy and Doctrine Program.

The Arroyo Center is a federally funded research and development center sponsored by the United States Army.

Based on an analysis of the international solidarity developed by NGOs in support of the Zapatistas, it particularly targets the Association for Progressive Communications (APC), described as "a worldwide partnership of member networks (like Peacenet and Conflictnet) that provides low-cost computer communications services and information-sharing tools to individuals and NGOs working on social issues."

The full report (in Adobe Acrobat format) is at:

www.rand.org/publications/MR/MR994/MR994.pdf/

For more information on this theme visit

www.eGroups.com/list/mediamentor

Net Working



June 4th Petition

The Global Internet Petition Campaign for the re-evaluation of the June 4th democratic movement and the Tienanmen massacre was formally launched on April 10, in ten cities, including Hong Kong, San Francisco, and Vancouver.

The petition campaign is endorsed by Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, International PEN, International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, New York Academy of Sciences, Hong Kong Alliance in Support of Patriotic Democratic Movements in China, Canadian Journalists for Freedom of Expression, and the Canadian Labour Congress

<www.June4.org>

For regular information on the Chinese democratic movement, contact Hong Kong Voice of Democracy
www.democracy.org.hk