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Haiti :

Waiting for Aristide

Canada :

Tories routed in mixed vote

Dossier :

Brazil : PT prepares for '94

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Festive greetings to all our readers, and here's to a prosperous New Year for the international class struggle.

— The Editors ★



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"Cantonisation" gains ground

THE day after the proclamation of the European Union (EU), its twelve member states decided to "relaunch the peace process in Bosnia" at the request of Alain Juppé and Klaus Kinkel, the French and German foreign ministers. According to the ministers it is "a step towards unity for ex-Yugoslavia." In reality it leaves on one side the questions of Kosovo, Vojvodine and Sandjak.

The EU has two immediate concerns: firstly, the humanitarian convoys, and secondly, the search for political agreements in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina.

The EU intends to demand that the protagonists agree to keep the promise which they gave the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) on 18 November: that aid will get through. From 25 October, following the death of a Danish driver, the UNHCR stopped all its convoys. Militants who drove three International Workers' Aid lorries had, by bravery and luck, reached the region of Tuzla in mid-November. They found a starving population, who were amazed that they had reached their destination, for with its 600 thousand refugees, Tuzla has suffered a triple blockade, by the Serb and Croat militias (the main obstacle to the convoys), and also the UNHCR, which, in stopping the convoys, for whole weeks left thousands of people besieged without food or medication. That appears to have been a cynical political choice: Tuzla Airport could have been re-opened some months ago. Alain Juppé has been quite explicit: it is not a question of agreement between the belligerents, rather that if the "Muslims" do not agree to the dismembering of Bosnia, humanitarian aid will cease after winter. Is the signing of an agreement through hunger a "principle" of the EU and the United Nations (UN)?

The Serbs have been asked to find a "modus vivendi" (way of living) in Croatia and to restore to the "Muslims" anywhere between three and forty percent of their territories. If that were to happen there would be progressive lifting of sanctions. The Croats have been asked to accept a stage-by-stage settlement of the conflicts around Krajinas and to permit access to the sea by a Bosnian state. They

would then obtain economic aid. The EU would then "invite the Muslims" to sign the agreement — who would be assured of assistance in reconstructing "their State". The Owen-Stoltenberg (in reality Milosevic-Tudjman) plan would therefore be accepted, there being the formation of three republics — which would bear little resemblance to a Bosnian Union.

Alain Juppé explicitly justifies the above position: "Whatever our preference for a united Bosnia-Herzegovina, the three sides, and also the Sarejevo government, are working on the basis that there will be three separate republics." He does not state that this was the choice of Radovan Karadzic and Mate Boban (who have supported "ethnic cantonisation" since March 1992). The principle of three ethnic republics is only reluctantly accepted by the "Muslim" and Bosnian side. It is far from supported by the mixed urban populations, particularly in central Bosnia. However, there is little alternative, given the inequality in armaments and the suffering of 3.5 million refugees within ex-Yugoslavia and 760 thousand asylum seekers outside.

Three republics

It is true that at the end of July Alija Izetbegovic accepted the principle of a Union comprised of three republics. On 16 September he even signed, with Radovan Karadzic, a declaration envisaging the right to secede (by way of a simple majority in a referendum) two years after the coming into existence of such a Union. On 29 September the Bosnian parliament (which has lost the majority of its Serb and Croat deputies) did not reject the plan in principle but did set out conditions which would have to be met: a viable State, access to the sea, guarantees from the UN and the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation and special status for Mostar and Banja Luka. The idea was clearly to gain time while a military counter-offensive was launched. The exhaustion of the besieged populations caused by the war, and the aspiration of some Muslims for their "own State" are realities bearing on whether the future State will be "Muslim" or "Bosnian". Were the recent purges in the Bosnian army aimed only at "war criminals", and "hard-liners", or rather at military leaders

who had different ideas of the nature of the State to be defended or instituted?

All that is clear at present is that the struggle must continue in each State against "ethnic cleansing", whatever agreements are signed.

Catherine Samary ★

Step forward for solidarity

AT a conference in Manchester, England in November, attended by delegations from Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Slovenia, Spain and Sweden, as well as Britain, International Workers' Aid was formally constituted to build international solidarity with the people of Bosnia and the workers of the Balkans.

The meeting agreed the necessity for political, material and humanitarian aid, on the following principles:

- Solidarity with the workers of the Balkans;
- No to ethnic cleansing and ethnic partition;
- Solidarity with multi-ethnic Bosnia;
- Asylum rights for those fleeing the war in ex-Yugoslavia.

Adopting a resolution from the Scandinavian delegation, it was agreed to establish international co-ordination within a loose structure and by decisions made by consensus, although campaigns in individual countries will be free to adopt their own slogans.

Immediate plans include the following:

- Developing on-the-spot contacts, knowledge, and channels for aid to unions, women's groups and peace groups who resist the war and national chauvinism;
- Launching a campaign demanding the opening of Tuzla Airport to humanitarian aid;
- Preparing now for a new, larger convoy, at the beginning of the new year. Alan Thornett ★

Waiting for Aristide

AFTER the coup d'etat of 30 September 1991, the deposed President, Jean-Bertrand Aristide, chose, by and large, to place his hope in international diplomacy. This strategy, which left the Haitian people on the sidelines, led to the signing of the "Governor's Island Accord". This agreement was a trap, as recent events have shown.

ARTHUR MAHON — 22 November 1993

OVER the last few weeks, we have seen some strange events in the United States of America (USA). While President Bill Clinton was saying that he did not exclude recourse to the use of force in order to secure Aristide's return, a number of politicians levelled a series of accusations against the deposed Haitian president.

The Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) brought out the old files it had assembled several years ago in collaboration with the Vatican. Henry Kissinger, said to be a representative of important American interests in Haiti's island neighbour, the Dominican Republic, described Aristide as a "psychopath and a murderer."

But the reply was swift. After an inquiry, the CNN television network, which had initially broadcast the CIA allegations, denied the existence of a psychiatrist who was said to have treated Aristide. Moreover, the press received an array of confidential information which questioned the credibility of the CIA (which former President, George Bush, once headed) and the previous Republican administration.

As a result, we learned that "many key figures in the current situation in Haiti" had worked for the CIA, and that, at the time of the 1991 coup, the American ambassador in the Haitian capital, Port-au-Prince, had arranged for the American federal anti-narcotics agency to turn a blind eye to Haiti. Consequently, Haitian military officials who had been paid for anti-narcotics work were the first to enrich themselves by traffic of cocaine.

Clinton was clearly tempted by the idea of a limited military operation. It would have been welcomed by a large part of the Haitian population; it would have been an inexpensive prestige-

building affair that would also have had the effect of somewhat intimidating the Cuban government. But there were too many vested interests opposed to such a course, both in Haiti and in the USA.

Through National Security Adviser, Anthony Lake, the Clinton administration issued a reminder that a distinction is to be made between what is "immediate and important" (the Haitian question) and "the most fundamental questions", for example, "the situation of regions with great strategic interest for us, such as Russia."

On 4 November, the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Warren Christopher, went one step further. He explained that "restoring democracy in Haiti, ending the war in Bosnia and making peace between the warring parties in Somalia are not on our list of priorities."

A United Nations (UN) official expressed the following view to a journalist from the French daily *Libération*: "Without a doubt, we are going to behave like Pontius Pilate: we will do nothing more or less than letting the sanctions run their course, and wait and see. It would be difficult for us to lift the embargo because that would mean capitulating to the Haitian army, but we can't intervene any more than that."¹

Ever since Aristide's candidacy in the Presidential elections, the USA has wavered between two different policies: getting rid of him or trying to use him. These two policies have a lot in common: the desire to exclude the people from political life and, in the absence of anything better, keep the repressive apparatus largely intact.

The first of the two approaches led to the attack on an election meeting in 1990, Roger Lafontant's January 1991 coup and the September 1991 coup

d'etat. During the day, the USA denounced the coup; by nightfall, they were sending planes filled with arms.

There then followed an attempt to set up the semblance of a civilian government. But the government of Marc Bazin was never anything more than a cover for the military dictatorship, and it collapsed in the spring of 1992 — bringing the PANPRA social democrats down with it.

After the coup d'etat, the tactic of bogging Aristide down in endless negotiations was put into play. No doubt, Washington was worried that Aristide would denounce the American role in the coup d'etat and do everything in his power to help the Haitian people to organise and mobilise. Thus the need to give Aristide some false hope, so that he would remain a President attentive to the needs of diplomacy.

Limited democracy

Clinton had a different idea. He wanted to use Aristide to establish a limited democracy in a Haiti under American control. This policy reached its climax with the signing of the Governor's Island Accord of 3 July 1993. Robert Malval, the Prime Minister whom Aristide went on to select, even declared to *Newsweek* magazine, "I can assure you that we will not have the same kind of chaos that we had in 1991 [during the Aristide presidency] for a simple reason: President Aristide was under nobody's surveillance then. Now, every morning he will wake up asking himself, 'What will my friend Bill Clinton think if I do this or that?'"

The ten-point agreement set Aristide's return for 30 October 1993, before which time an amnesty decree was to be made, a new Prime Minister was to be nominated, General Cedras was to leave and be replaced by a new commander-in-chief, and the police was to be separated from the army (and come under the control of the Ministry of Justice). The new government was to coexist with the authors of the coup d'etat, at least until Aristide's return. And almost all those respon-

1. *Libération*, 10 November 1993.

sible for the coup d'état were to remain members of the army. It required a lot of pressure, from both Clinton and Boutros Ghali, for Aristide to accept such conditions.

The Governor's Island Accord was joined two weeks later by the "New York Pact", signed on 16 July by most of Haiti's political forces. As with the Governor's Island Accord, it was imposed on supporters of President Aristide by a large measure of blackmail. It called for a six-month "political ceasefire" and for Aristide to designate a "Prime Minister of national unity".

Among the points worth mentioning, there is the one that calls for an amnesty law, the exact contours of which have not been spelled out. This law could become part of the decree signed by the President of the Haitian Republic. According to the constitution, the President can only grant amnesty to those jailed for political reasons, and not for murderers, torturers and rapists. According to the New York Pact, a "reparations fund" was to be established for victims of the coup d'état; these victims would then have to abandon their calls for justice.

Another important, but very unclear, point in the Governor's Island Accord deals with what is called "international co-operation". This concerns development assistance for legal and administrative reform, and for the "modernisation of the army and the creation of a new police force with the participation of UN personnel."

The USA, Canada, France and Venezuela were to be the guarantors for the application of the agreement. Behind all the seemingly innocuous proposals lurk the projects of placing Haiti under American tutelage and proceeding with a liberal "modernisation" of the Haitian economy — projects which were drawn up some ten years ago.

This time the USA was hoping to proceed with all the right ingredients: substantial financial and technical aid for government initiatives (such as the

recent joint mission under the auspices of the United Nations Development Programme, UNDP) and "professional" repressive forces. These forces would include a legal system, army and police force able to prevent the building of a popular movement through modern repressive methods, not through human rights violations which displease international public opinion.

For several months, the American government had been calling for the deployment of an international military force. In private, American leaders were saying that this could control the popular movement at the time of Aristide's return. In July, Aristide was told that one of the conditions for his return

(WOLA)², assembled on the basis of interviews and official documents, shows that it was something else altogether. Four programmes were planned: two concerning the army and two concerning the police, all ostensibly carried out under the auspices of the UN and its special envoy, Dante Caputo.

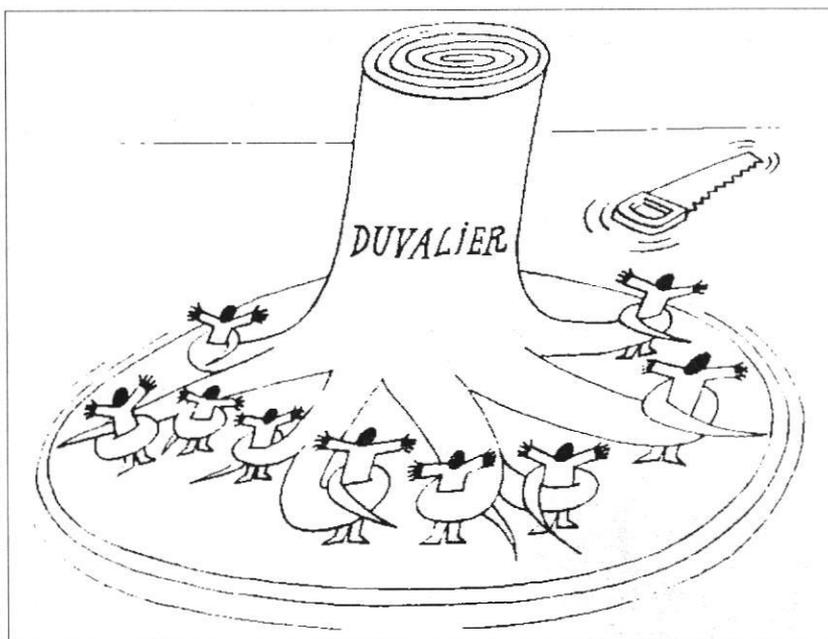
The first two programmes, concerning the army, did indeed constitute a mission of "technical co-operation". The first programme was to be headed up by 500 foreign military technicians (350 from the USA) and consisted of building new barracks, renovating medical facilities, repairing roads and teaching these techniques to Haitian soldiers.

The second programme dealt with military training. The 60 instructors would all be Americans. 2,200 Haitian soldiers would receive "non-lethal" training in the fields set out for them in the Haitian Constitution: disaster relief, search and rescue, and border surveillance. Moreover, American officials planned for 30 Haitian military personnel to receive special training in the USA.

The programmes dealing with the police were of a different type. The plan called for 567 "UN police monitors", all from Francophone countries (Canada,

France, Belgium, Switzerland and African countries). According to the WOLA study, they were to work with the Haitian police "to provide guidance and advice, monitor the conduct of police operations and ensure that legal requirements are met and police actions correctly executed." They were not to have the power "to give orders, carry out arrests, conduct investigations or intervene in the actions of the Haitian police." They were meant "to report any human rights abuses to the UN/Organisation of American States (OAS) mission." But according to WOLA's information, their real task was "to discourage civil unrest" during the transition period.

2. 'Political Violence Threatens Transition', Washington Office on Latin America, 110 Maryland Avenue, NE Washington, DC 20002-5696.



Who will return first? Aristide or Duvalier?

was that he accept the deployment of such a force. At the end of July, in a letter to the UN Secretary General, Aristide called for the sending of a 1000-strong force to Haiti. This force would serve under the UN flag, wear the uniforms of their country, be armed with simple side-arms for self-defence, and "would not be allowed to use force to control violence".

On 23 September, the UN Security Council decided on the immediate dispatch for six months of "a maximum of 567 UN police observers and a maximum of one engineering unit of about 700 men, including 60 military instructors."

Many diplomats insisted this was a simple "mission of technical co-operation". But a document from the Washington Office on Latin America

This is the force destined to prevent the people from getting out of control. It was clearly easier to give this dissuasive task to foreign police armed with nothing more than side-arms meant for self-defence, than to Haitian assassins in uniform. It should be noted that, according to Robert Malval, it was the army itself that requested 1,300 men and not the 1,000 initially planned. According to the WOLA study, the foreign police were to be progressively withdrawn and give way to a Haitian police force once it had been separated from the army and become a civilian force.

However, the plan was that later the foreign police would have their role redefined and would participate in the training of the Haitian police force, particularly in the setting up of a police academy. The WOLA study shows that, as opposed to what is generally said, the USA was meant to train the Haitian police force — and place it under its control.

Indeed, the second programme dealing with the police was a bilateral US-Haiti programme that was much more ambitious than the previous one. This training programme for 5,500 Haitians was to be led by 30 police instructors from the International Criminal Investigation Training Assistance Program (ICITAP) of the Department of Justice an arm of the American Ministry of Justice. Classes would first be held in Port-au-Prince and then fan out into the country's ten main urban centres. The ICITAP



planned to spend \$15 million over five years for this project,

which included training bodyguards for Aristide and the creation of an "Urban Disorder Unit" — otherwise known as a riot squad.

Criminals

Who was to be part of the new police force? This was never officially stated. But it is clear that it was to be composed primarily, perhaps exclusively, of current members of the army. There was a worry about having criminals and drug traffickers in the new force, but how could this be avoided without cleaning out the army — a measure which is nowhere to be found in the Governor's Island Accord? On the contrary, as WOLA writes, "The structure established by the Governor's Island Accord leaves the current high command in place through most of the transition period allowing them a role as international security assistance programs start up. There is grave concern that they will try to influence the recruitment and training of the new police force and maintain control of the security forces in the future."

At a press conference in Miami on 22-23 July — at which President Aristide met some 100 mostly Haitian businesspeople — there was an illustration of how the USA interprets the Governor's Island Accord. The American chargé d'affaires in Haiti and the representatives of the UNDP, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank and USAID had all come to voice their neo-liberal creed and spell out the need for "drastic measures" and "sacrifices". One of the participants set the tone by expressing the desire that the Haitian islands of Tortuë and Gonâve be transformed into "Disneylands".

President Aristide had arrived late for the press conference — Clinton met him beforehand, according to a member of the US administration, "to pressure him to implement the Governor's Island Accord." The worst representatives of the same Haitian oligarchy that had financed the coup d'état were present at the Miami press conference. Aristide told them, "I love you (...) Alone we are weak, together we are strong, and all together we are like an avalanche

(lavalas)", as he usually ends his speeches to the people. The central organiser of the Miami press conference was Robert Malval, the owner of a major printing house. Soon thereafter, Aristide named him Prime Minister.

Conspicuous by their absence from the political scene these last few months have been the Haitian people themselves. Malval hoped to be the symbol of the policy of "national reconciliation" imposed by the big powers and accepted by Aristide, to the detriment of the popular movement which was told to be patient and wait for Aristide's return.

On several occasions, Malval has explained what he meant by "national reconciliation". In an interview with *Libération* several months ago, he said, "There are only two real political forces in Haiti: Lavalas and Duvalierism." Having asked all the "external exiles" to return to the country (which certain Duvalierist dignitaries quickly did), he told *Newsweek* that Jean-Claude Duvalier himself "had not yet replied to the signal." He added, "if the Duvalierists wished to return and build a political party in a legal framework, I would encourage it."

At the beginning of November, he clearly spelt out his political project. The French daily *Le Monde* quotes him as saying, "Two different galaxies are face to face; that of the Lavalas and that of the Duvalierists. Either they confront one another, which would be a disaster, or we find space for agreement on their peripheries, within the moderate fringes of these two extremes."³

Given this project of "historic compromise", which could already be detected in August, the composition of the Malval government, as it was initially announced, came as a pleasant surprise. The forces that had supported the putschists were hardly represented. But before presenting the make-up of his government, Malval told journalists, "In 1991, we had a government made up of friends of the President. Now, we will have political allies of the President, what can be called a government of narrow national unity. The President has said that when he really returns to Haiti there will be a government of broad national unity." With such statements, Malval has created confusion, weakened the position of Aristide supporters and encouraged Duvalierists to return in force to the

3. *Le Monde*, 3 November 1993

Haitian political scene.

We now know that the army never had any intention of letting Aristide return. The idea was perhaps to let him return all the better to repress him. By agreeing to sign the Governor's Island Accord, Cedras secured agreement on the lifting of the embargo following the new Prime Minister's taking office. He gave nothing in exchange for this.

The army began by repressing any demonstration in favour of Aristide, any attempt to stick up posters with his photo on them or carry pro-Aristide banners. And then the repression systematically became even more severe. New "attachés" — civilian police auxiliaries — were recruited. Machetes and firearms were handed out in open daylight.

A new stage was reached at the beginning of September, when the Malval government was set up. Gangs of attachés paralysed it, storming the ministries, and preventing any reform to the national radio and television system. When the elected mayor of Port-au-Prince tried to retake office, armed men attacked the people participating in the ceremony. At the same time, death squads claimed new victims every day. Aristide spoke of a "second coup d'état". And that is exactly what it was.

Political void

In October, repression evolved into outright terror. In certain regions of the country, it is worse than it has ever been. Small Duvalierist political parties have come out into the open, filling the political void and behaving as candidates for power. On several occasions in Port-au-Prince they imposed by force so-called "general strikes", to demand their inclusion in the government. They were clearly the political smokescreen for the army, through whose good offices they were able to obtain radio time throughout the country. In their demonstrations they carried the American flag as well as that of the Duvalier regime, and called for the replacement of UN representative Caputo with a mediator from the USA.

On 11 October, the American ship "Harlan County" entered Port-au-Prince harbour, with the first UN military contingent on board. It lifted anchor the following day. With the army's complicity, several dozen Duvalierists dissuaded the USA from having 250 American and 50 Canadian soldiers on board come on shore.

On 14 October, the Minister of Justice, Guy Malary, was assassinated. The following day, in violation of the Governor's Island Accord, Cedras refused to step down. President Clinton replied to these provocations with a naval blockade with the aim of preventing arms and petrol being sent to Haiti.

Within twenty-four hours, the UN Security Council supported this decision. Six US warships and several ships from Canada, France, Holland, Argentina and Britain joined them in Haitian waters. A ship with 700 marines, helicopters and tanks arrived to strengthen the force — a force which gives a taste of what could be mobilised during a time of crisis in neighbouring Cuba. With the support of the US administration, which describes it as an "admirable initiative", the UN is trying to restart negotiations with Cedras with the idea of finding a "solution" — which may very well leave Aristide on the sidelines.

Immediately after the 1991 coup d'état, Aristide chose to rely on the so-called "international community" to return to power. This was despite the considerable reserve of combativeness in the Haitian people; a combativeness which has since largely disappeared under the blows of repression and the lack of even a minimally structured opposition. Another way was possible — one which gave absolute priority to organising the population, which supported activists who tried in such difficult conditions to sustain forms of resistance and put forward perspectives for the struggle.

Today the conditions are even more unfavourable, but this remains the only orientation which could positively change the situation. But Aristide has chosen to follow the same path as before. He is calling for a "total blockade" of Haiti. But to what end? Some military leaders might agree to step down in favour of some of their friends. The newspaper *Haiti en Marche* has said that the Clinton government proposed that Cedras himself name his successor.

Other officers might agree to sign their name to a new series of commit-

ments, such as those made in July. But the events of the last few weeks have shown that the army intends to hold on to real power and so will keep these



only if convenient, knowing that breach will be

ignored.

There is a very basic question. Is Aristide certain that the Haitian people — a people who have learnt many lessons from history — are ready, as they were two years ago, to pay the price of a "total blockade"?

Some reports have, dishonestly, tried to pin the blame for the post-1991 social and economic disaster on the embargo, even though the coup d'état itself was to blame, with the incalculable cost of repression, the disorganisation of the economy, the collapse of the health care system, and the flight of international capital. But it would be absurd to deny that the embargo has brought additional suffering to the population (price rises, job losses, and so on), while certain sections of the bourgeoisie have profited handsomely.

Perhaps it is because Aristide knows all this that he has recently begun to refer to the possibility of a military intervention. If Aristide were to champion such an idea, George Bush and Clinton would no doubt both celebrate what they would see as a great victory. Through their combined actions, they would have succeeded in making the man on whom rested the hopes of Haiti's poor renounce his commitments and lose the confidence which the majority of the Haitian people had in him. ★

Tories routed in mixed vote

PERHAPS the only comfort for the former ruling Conservatives (or Tories) is that they were not the only party to be humiliated in the recent federal election. The social democratic NDP saw its share of the vote fall from 20.4 to 6.9%. To whom then did the voters turn? Our correspondent explains.

HAROLD LAVENDER* — Vancouver, 14 November 1993

VOTERS delivered a very mixed and contradictory message in Canada's 25 October federal election.

On the one hand, they kicked out a much hated rightwing Conservative government who took only two seats out of a possible 295 — the worst setback for any government in Canadian history. At the same time, the New Democratic Party (NDP), a social democratic party with ties to the trade unions, suffered its worst result ever.

Instead, voters turned to the Liberal Party (which won a majority government by taking 177 of the 295 seats), the Bloc Québécois and the Reform Party. The Liberals, returning to office after nine years of Conservative rule, took 41% of the popular vote. They scored a major victory in Atlantic Canada and in Ontario, taking 98 of the 99 Ontario seats.

The bourgeois nationalist Bloc Québécois fielded candidates only in Québec, where they took 54 of the 75 seats. They took 49.5% of the popular vote in Québec (65% among Québec's francophone majority). In the rest of Canada, a campaign of fear and anger against the Bloc is well under way.

The Reform Party, a populist party of the hard right with a very strong, if slightly coded, racist appeal, won 52 seats, scoring a breakthrough in its western regional base of Alberta and British Columbia. From fringe party status with 2% of the vote, the Reform Party has risen to be the third largest party in Parliament, winning 19% of the popular vote (25% of the vote outside Québec, where it ran no candidates).

The results show a trend towards the breakdown of "national" parties due to the rise of Québec nationalism and also strong regional differences and animosities.

Why were the Conservatives routed?

The ongoing economic crisis was a major factor. The Conservatives failed to

convince voters that the government deficit was the overriding issue. Public concern about jobs was even higher. The official unemployment rate has remained persistently high, over ten percent, while popular living standards have stagnated and the poor have been getting poorer. The Conservatives were the architects of the Canada-US Free Trade Agreement. But the promised benefits have not materialised. Hundreds of thousands of industrial jobs (often unionised) have been lost as the Canadian economy has been massively restructured. There are widespread fears that this trend will continue if the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA)¹ is put into effect.

Deep insecurity

Statisticians tell us that Canada is now recovering from the recession which ravaged Ontario at the beginning of the 1990s. But the recovery has not seen an increase in employment. A deep climate of insecurity has settled over the working population. Fifty percent of workers express the fear that they could lose their jobs.

During their nine years in office, the Conservatives substantially raised taxes on individuals, topping it off with the enormously unpopular Goods and Services Tax. The corporate share of the tax burden continued its downward spiral. While taxes on working people were rising, social programmes and government services were slashed. The first steps were taken towards ending universal social benefits — a cornerstone of Canada's welfare state since the Second World War. Unemployment insurance was restricted. At the same time, the government found 5.8 billion Canadian dollars for state of the art EH-101 military helicopters.

The Conservatives hoped to make voters forget the hard times associated with Prime Minister Brian Mulroney by

electing a new leader, Kim Campbell. Her star rose only briefly. She told Canadians not to expect an improvement in employment till the end of the century and that a forty-seven day election campaign was not the right time to discuss major changes to social programmes. Using hopelessly optimistic economic forecasts the Conservatives said that they could eliminate the deficit by 1998 without slashing social services. Many voters turned to the Liberal Party in the vain hope that they would save the welfare state. Others turned to the rightwing Reform Party who were offering a more overtly ruthless plan to eliminate the deficit.

The last two Conservative majorities had rested on a kind of de facto alliance between pro-free trade Québec nationalists, who believed the Conservatives more open to constitutional reform than the Liberals, and voters in the west. However, Mulroney's plans for constitutional change were resoundingly defeated in the 1992 referendum² and Conservative support in Québec overwhelmingly defected to the Bloc Québécois, while in the west it rallied to the Reform Party.

The tidal wave of popular anger that swept away the Conservatives also hit the NDP as well. They now have nine seats, fewer than the number needed for official recognition as a party in the House of Commons (parliament). Their share of the popular vote fell from 20.4 to 6.9%.

Since its founding as a labour party in 1961, the NDP has had a fairly stable base within the working class outside Québec. In federal elections, its vote varied between thirteen and twenty percent. But it never made a lasting breakthrough in Québec due to its strong federalism and hostility to the national aspirations of the Québécois. This year it got under two percent of the vote in Québec, down from fourteen percent.

While a number of factors contributed to the NDP collapse, perhaps the most

* The author is a member of the section of the Fourth International in the Canadian State, Socialist Challenge/Gauche Socialiste.

1. The North American Free Trade Agreement is the new trade alliance between Canada, Mexico and the United States of America.

2. The overall result in the 1992 referendum was 54.4% opposed to the proposed constitutional changes and 44.6% in favour. For a more detailed examination of these results, particularly in Québec itself, see R. Krishnan, 'Referendum results prolong instability', *International Viewpoint*, no 238, 9 November 1992.

important was the unpopularity of their provincial governments in Ontario and British Columbia (BC). Opposition from rightwing voters is to be expected, but the NDP has managed to create high levels of cynicism and disarray in its own social base.

The Ontario NDP government, capitulating to ruling class deficit hysteria, launched a frontal assault on workers in the broad public sector. They ripped up existing collective agreements to impose "social contract" legislation on 950 thousand public sector workers, including cutbacks in services, pay and working conditions valued at 9 billion dollars. Despite hot rhetoric, the unions failed to mount an effective fightback. Many workers continue to feel bitter and betrayed.

The BC provincial government has not attacked unions directly, although it legislated striking teachers back to work. However, it has raised taxes while cutting back on education and health care. Taking up the banner of the rightwing, it is now launching a crackdown on "welfare fraud".

Perhaps its most disgraceful capitulation was to the forest multi-nationals. It by-passed its own planning process to permit logging in Clayoquot Sound, one of the most important tracts of ancient temperate rainforest left in the world, and despite the fact that native peoples have an unsettled claim to this land. The net result was the arrest this summer of eight-hundred people who attempted to block logging roads into the forest and now face gaol sentences for criminal contempt of court. The conflict has torn apart the NDP's social base, greatly reducing support for both provincial and federal wings of the Party.

The NDP's federal leadership failed to stave off looming disaster by repudiating the rightwing policies of NDP provincial governments. In a terribly misjudged response to Ontario's "social contract" legislation, it merely reaffirmed its support for collective bargaining and collective agreements. Ontario federal Member of Parliament, Steve Langdon, who did speak out in an open letter to the province's Premier, Bob Rae, won more votes than other NDP candidates in Ontario — but still lost his seat. In contrast, in BC, Svend Robinson, a gay man, outspoken advocate on issues of social justice, and who stood on the Clayoquot blockades, was re-elected, receiving more votes than any other NDP candidate.

Rather than suffering for being too outspoken and leftwing, the federal NDP suffered because it gave people virtually no reason to resist voting tactically to oust the hated Conservatives.

Liberal leader Jean Chretien ran a very clever campaign aimed at stealing working class votes from the NDP. The Liberal message of "Hope, Jobs and Economic Recovery" was writ large, while its plans for deficit reduction were not. They sounded progressive when they campaigned to scrap the helicopter deal, and by calling for re-negotiation of the NAFTA they appeased critics of the deal without raising business fears.

In congratulating Chretien for his victory, American President Bill Clinton commented on the "remarkable similarity" between Chretien's campaign and his own.

Last ditch lobby

The new Liberal government moved quickly to consolidate its support, in particular by beginning to halt the controversial helicopter deal, despite a furious last ditch lobby by defence contractors. The Conservatives' plans to transfer responsibility for immigration to a "super" Department of Public Security have also been reversed. Further, the new government has declared that it will not sign the NAFTA, already passed by the Conservatives, unless it is renegotiated.

Nonetheless, the *Globe and Mail*, the leading big business newspaper, welcomed the Liberal cabinet, hailing it as "The Right Stuff". Chretien has given the major economic portfolios to rightwing Liberals. An ardent free trader will be in charge of future trade negotiations.

The business community hopes to have a sympathetic ear for its demands for deep cuts in the deficit, no new taxes and cutbacks in social programmes. Indeed the Minister of Intergovernmental Services, Marcel Masse, has already indicated that the Liberals plan to make major cuts in public service jobs.

Despite enormous unpopularity, the Conservative government was able to impose its agenda. The Liberals have no intention of reversing history. Corporate profits have started to rise, while wage demands are falling. In a climate of immense economic insecurity, trade unionists are reluctant to strike. The government estimates that work days lost due to strikes will fall to the lowest level in fifty years.

The Mulroney government's project to take the Québec national question off the political agenda through a constitutional deal turned to ashes when voters in Québec and the rest of Canada voted "No" in the 1992 constitutional referendum. Québec's francophone majority massively rejected a deal which would have given

Québec a new symbolic status as a "distinct society" but little else, and fell far short of the demands of the Québec nationalists. The rest of Canada said "No" for a wide variety of reasons, some progressive but many reactionary, including the false but widespread perception that the deal gave too much to Québec.

The simultaneous rise of the Bloc Québécois and the Reform Party confirms that there is no possibility of a renewed federalism that could accommodate Québec. There are two political alternatives: the old federalism of the Trudeau Liberals (Chretien was part of the Trudeau government that moved toward a strong central government in Ottawa); or a rupture with the existing federal system and the creation of a new relationship between some form of sovereign Québec and Canada.

Radical forces, including the Québec labour federations, favour full independence, while the dominant bourgeois nationalist forces favour what is called "sovereignty-association", an arrangement that could look very much like the European Economic Community. The Bloc Québécois and its leader, Lucien Bouchard, emphasise the virtues of a common currency and customs unions, indicating that they are perhaps more inclined towards "association" than "sovereignty".

However, while deliberately misleading, the Bloc is portrayed particularly in the west, as hard-core separatist. Indeed, one leading western newspaper ran a front-page story about the Bloc Québécois leader Lucien Bouchard under the headline, "The man who would break up Canada."

The broad Québec nationalist bloc has come to favour a three-stage approach: Elect Bloc Québécois members to the federal parliament in Ottawa to represent the real interests of Québec until Québec democratically votes for sovereignty. Then, elect the Parti Québécois in a Québec provincial election next year. Third, follow through with the Parti Québécois' current promise to hold a referendum on sovereignty within a year of taking office. Within Québec there are widespread hopes and illusions that sovereignty is fast approaching.

But there are some glaring contradictions. What will the Bloc do in Ottawa, given that it is now the official opposition in the federal parliament? Lucien Bouchard is promising to act very responsibly, and deal seriously with common issues like jobs. His non-confrontational approach is aimed at allaying fears in the rest of Canada and perhaps above all in Washington. Such an approach underestimates the fact that any bid for sovereignty will

The shift to the right

THE election campaign demonstrated how far ruling class politics have moved to the right. Deficit reduction dominated media coverage. Only the issue of unemployment successfully broke through the rightwing agenda.

Women's rights were ignored by the mainstream. The National Action Committee on the Status of Women ran an anti-Conservative campaign but was shunted off to the sidelines and had far less dramatic impact than its call for a progressive "No" in the 1992 referendum. Similarly, native people's rights, which were central in the 1992 constitutional talks, were virtually ignored (however, the Liberals quietly wooed native leaders on the sidelines, such as Elijah Harper, who defected from the NDP and was elected as a Liberal). The ever-increasing plight of Canada's poor was a non-starter. Struggles against racism and for environmental issues were also largely confined to the sidelines.

The military helicopter contract certainly was an issue. But overall, there was little discussion about foreign policy, although the Liberals promised they would pursue a more independent line while continuing to maintain good relations with the United States of America. Canada's overall role in United Nations peace-keeping missions in Somalia, Bosnia and Haiti was neither debated nor challenged, despite an ongoing scandal about the involvement of the Canadian military in murder and cover-up in Somalia. ★

almost inevitably lead to a confrontation. The election results show that the rest of Canada is in no mood to respond favourably to Québec. Preston Manning of the Reform Party favours what he calls a "new federalism". This, it is said, would mean absolute formal equality of individuals and provinces. It is however, a schema that is completely hostile to any form of special status for Québec or special rights for native peoples or minority groups. In short, it is a coded appeal to the worst anti-Québec chauvinism.

Racist fears

Similarly, Manning wants to eliminate official bi-lingualism and federal funding for multi-culturalism, taking away any "special rights" and services for the francophone minority in the rest of Canada and Canada's many immigrant communities. He favours cutting immigration in half, pandering to racist fears that the country is being overrun with non-white immigrants.

Manning wants to supplant the Conservatives as the main party of the rightwing — and be Prime Minister in waiting if the Liberals' economic promises turn to ruins. He believes that the current political climate will cultivate a favourable basis for more overtly rightwing solutions to the questions of deficit, law and order, immigration and Québec.

Supporters of self-determination for Québec and native peoples face a daunting task. On paper, the situation does not appear so bad given that a number of organisations and movements are nominally in favour. The Canadian Labour Congress supports Québec's right to self-determina-

tion, as does the NDP and, indeed, the Conservatives.

However, support for the right of self-determination quickly evaporates when it is fully defined: the right of the people of Québec to freely choose their own destiny, up to and including independence, without any outside interference, economic blackmail or threats of force.

The reaction of Ontario's NDP provincial Premier, Bob Rae, to the rise of the Bloc Québécois, indicates the magnitude of the problem. On 29 October, Rae vowed to confront the policies of Lucien Bouchard at every level. Rae said: "If his vision is realised, he's going to hurt us. He's going to hurt all of Canada terribly... In my view, he's getting a free ride. Here's a guy who wants to break up the country. He's going to cost Québec tens of thousands of jobs. People are going to lose money and income." Rae added, "I think he (Bouchard) is deluding himself if he thinks that the rest of the country is going to sit back with some quiet resignation and accept the break up of the country. I don't intend to."

Similarly, during the campaign Mel Hurtig, the leader of the National Party, which appeals to some anti-free trade left-leaning Canadian nationalists, pledged to "get tough with the Bloc Québécois".

During the election, Socialist Challenge supporters emphasised that people in the rest of Canada should not be worried by the possibility of Québec independence, but rather that none of the major party leaders, Chretien, Campbell, McLaughlin³ nor Manning appear to have learned anything from the situation in Bosnia.

It is conceivable, although very far from certain (given that the limitations of

the bourgeois nationalist leadership in Québec could quickly lead to setbacks and a temporary ebb of the national question), that within the next few years people in the rest of Canada could be faced with a fundamental choice. To accept a Czech solution — a peaceful "divorce" into two nations; or run the risk of a Bosnian solution — in which military force is used either to prevent Québec becoming independent or to carve up the territory of an independent Québec.

The leadership of the Bloc and Parti Québécois hope to achieve some form of sovereignty and re-association in a cold businesslike manner. But they ignore the Liberals' history in office. In October 1970, Pierre Trudeau used political kidnappings by the Québec Liberation Front (FLQ) as a pretext to impose the War Measures Act suspending civil liberties. Canadian troops were sent on to the streets of Montreal and radical Québec nationalists were rounded up.

Is Canada's ruling class voluntarily willing to surrender a quarter of its population and resources and an integral part of its territory? Moves towards Québec sovereignty certainly will be countered by economic blackmail, threats, intimidation and refusals to negotiate.

Only voice?

The fate of the NDP now hangs in the balance. Some believe, perhaps with naive optimism, that the situation can return to normal. They believe that traditional NDP voters will return as the Liberals show that they are no different from the Conservatives, and as NDP members stand up as the only voice for social justice in the federal parliament. But others believe that if the NDP does not change course, it will die.

Rethinking could lead in quite different directions. The rightwing of the party feels it is now time to dump the NDP's ties to the unions. Other voices call for the NDP to dump its rightwing leadership. Steve Langdon has publically called on Bob Rae to step down. Others talk about going back to the grass roots and rebuilding the NDP as a populist party involved in extra-parliamentary movements.

Rebuilding the NDP as a labour party will require an active commitment by Party and union leaderships. But when Canadian Labour Congress President, Bob White, hails the triumph of the Liberals as a victory for the working class one wonders how committed the labour bureaucracy is to the NDP. Is it preparing to make its peace with the Liberals?

3. Audrey McLaughlin is the leader of the NDP.

Views are mixed among labour movement activists. Some believe it is still important to try to reform the NDP and reclaim it. Others, notably in Ontario, aspire to build a new labour party. Still others feel that the labour movement should concentrate on rebuilding itself, making alliances with other progressive forces, and that electoral politics should not have priority (tacitly leaving the field open to the Liberals).

Nothing good is likely to result without a mass-based fightback — a fightback by the unions on the economic level, a fightback against cutbacks in public services and a fightback against the rising tide of racism and chauvinism. ★

...and on the left

SOCIALIST Challenge/Gauche Socialiste, the section of the Fourth International in the Canadian State, advocated a vote for the NDP as a labour party in English Canada, while categorically rejecting any support for the bourgeois parties. In Québec, **Gauche Socialiste**, which in previous federal elections had supported the NDP, this time rejected such a call because of the federal Party's manifest hostility to the national aspirations of the Québécois. They also rejected any support for the **Bloc Québécois**, which despite its current overwhelming support within the Québécois working class, remains very much a bourgeois party.

The Vancouver branch of **Socialist Challenge** backed the candidacy of **Will Offley** in Vancouver East. It was an opportunity to promote socialist ideas at a time when they are almost invisible. Over twenty-thousand copies of an election platform were distributed, calling for a thirty-hour week with no loss of pay, jobs for all, cancellation of the national debt and defence of Québec's right to self-determination. While the campaign took place during a period of demobilisation it was able to solidarise with protests against the gaoing of the Clayoquot Sound protesters. It also promoted left unity and organised a successful public meeting of the **Socialist Challenge**, **Communist Party**, **Communist League*** and **Green Party** candidates, attended by over seventy-five people. ★

* The Communist League is politically aligned with the American Socialist Workers' Party.

Ontario unions in rift with Bob Rae

THE Ontario Federation of Labour (OFL) Convention held in Toronto in November, and attended by 1600 delegates, resulted in unprecedented scenes.

Public sector workers in the OPSEU, CUPE and PSAC, angry at social contract cutbacks, layoffs and contract stripping, decided in caucuses the night before the Convention to demand a toughening-up of the OFL Document #1, "Labour's relationship with the New Democratic Party when the NDP is in government."

Just prior to the key debate the following afternoon Bob Rae loyalist union leaders led delegates from the private sector's steelworkers, CEP, UFCW and SEIU from the hall. In a joint statement they declared, "We will not campaign against MPPs (Members of Provincial Parliament)... We will work to re-elect Ontario's NDP government."

However, autoworkers, construction workers and other private sector delegates joined with the public sector workers in passing an amendment that the OFL will not support the NDP at the next provincial election unless the NDP government repeals Bill 48.* The walk-out was staged because the Bob Rae loyalists knew that the amendment could not be defeated. Later that afternoon the OFL Secretary-Treasurer, Julie Davis, announced that she would resign as President of the Ontario NDP.

Immediately following the convention, an NDP union caucus was held, in preparation for the following day's Ontario NDP Provincial Council meeting. The caucus was dominated by private sector union delegates fresh from the convention. Most expressed opposition to any challenge to the Rae leadership or incumbent NDP MPPs. At the Provincial Council a demand for an Ontario NDP convention earlier than that scheduled for October 1994 was defeated. As this is only six months before when the Provincial election is expected, Bob Rae and his political team are unlikely to be deposed then and therefore there is a real risk of defeat in 1995.

Will the OFL adhere to the amendment to Document #1 and "ensure that the sixty-six members of the NDP caucus that supported Bill 48 are challenged at nomination meetings"? or "develop broad based coalitions", "shift (its) resources to grass roots mobilisation" and "build a strong community based social movement linking users and providers of services"?

What will unionists do, in the light of Bob Rae's re-stated intention to maintain Bill 48?

What if the view of the private sector delegates also prevails within the Party?

For those who believe in a mass working class socialist alternative, there now appears little choice but to begin to build a new labour party. **Barry Weisleder** ★

* Bill 48 is a so-called social contract that involves public sector cuts in Ontario amounting to C\$ 9 billion. See B Weisleder, 'Contract is a "con-trick"', *International Viewpoint*, no. 248, September 1993.



No social democratic solution

BRASIL
URGENTE

THE PT is determined to maintain its socialist perspective in developing its economic programme. It does not believe that the way forward for Brazil lies in the social democratic options of "popular democratic management" of the capitalist crisis or some kind of "peoples's capitalism".

JOÃO MACHADO — São Paulo, 18 November 1993

Dossier Introduction

PRESIDENTIAL elections in Brazil next year will be watched carefully, if for many different reasons.

Lula, the popular leader of the leftwing Workers' Party (PT) has a substantial lead in opinion polls, having come a very close second in the 1989 elections. And yet, it is only fourteen years since the formation of the PT.

The Party has had to learn quickly. Certainly, there have been many mistakes, but the advances already made by the Party and the hope which it offers for the mass movement in Brazil far outweigh any reversals or defeats.

In our opening article, João Machado states that the programme on which the PT will fight the election will not be socialist and "...the votes for Lula will not be for socialism, but because he and the PT are seen as the only force that can effect real change... without (the masses) having a specific end in mind." Why then should Washington, or elsewhere, be so concerned at the prospect of a Lula victory? Because a PT government — a popular democratic government — will still take as its starting point the needs of the working class, and that is enough to give any White House official a hernia. Moreover, as Machado continues, they will make it perfectly clear that the real changes everyone wants lead in the direction of socialism.

The PT will of course have to overcome many challenges and obstacles to the carrying out of their programme.

● In publishing major extracts from the Party's Guiding principles, agreed at its meeting in June, an overview is given of its position on political, economic and social reform and the ways in which this may be achieved.

● **João Machado** specifically examines the economic perspectives of a PT government and the extent to which it would be tempered by the prevailing international situation, whilst also proposing concrete alternatives. He refers in particular to some of the ideas of Ernest Mandel, for many years now a central leader of the Fourth International.

● **Beti Búrigo** and **Raul Pont** explain how the PT's experience of municipal government, both good and bad, can be used by the PT government to encourage and build greater mass participation in decision making at every level of society.

● **Carlos Henrique Árabe** draws a balance sheet of the progress made by the Party since its June national meeting, where the left won a substantial majority. Árabe contends that while some of the political positions agreed have been absorbed by the Party, particularly in relation to the Lula campaign, organisational problems continue to persist.

● And **José Corrêa**, in describing one of the worst problems which a PT government would face — organised assassinations — succinctly explains the roots of the violence whilst suggesting some of the measures which must be taken to counteract the situation. **Roland Wood** ★

IN the past, social democratic governments in the imperialist countries were able to make reforms within the framework of capitalism, resulting in significant gains for working people. Today however, the context is entirely different. In the last few years, even in the wealthiest capitalist countries, social democratic governments have applied neo-liberal policies rather than social democratic ones.

The social democratic parties have distinguished themselves by the dismantling of economic reforms, citing the need to increase productivity. The policies of the French Socialist Party (PS), from 1983 to the shameful electoral fiasco of March 1993, provide an example of the "de-social-democratisation of social democracy". This is also true of the policies of the Spanish Socialist Workers Party (PSOE) — which has continuously failed Spanish workers whilst also denying the rights of oppressed nationalities.

It is very unlikely that a social-democratic type policy will benefit Brazil and, indeed, those that label themselves social democrats, such as the Brazilian Social Democratic Party (PSDB), have shown their neo-liberal character on numerous occasions.

"Crisis of credibility"

This does not reduce the difficulty of placing our governmental programme within a socialist perspective. One of the consequences of the crisis of the "Eastern Bloc" countries is that socialism is confronted with a generalised "crisis of credibility"; a majority of people believe that socialism will never exist, or that it will only be possible in a far and distant future.

Moreover, the ways in which the transition from capitalism to socialism have been conceived are now considerably outdated. Both the reformist and revolutionary visions gave tremendous importance to State control over the commanding heights of the economy. For example, one of the axes of revolutionary strategy of the Third International and later its heirs (including the Fourth International) was the struggle for a workers' and peasants' or a workers'

government. One of the criteria for such governments was a high level of nationalisations, which demonstrated confrontation with the bourgeoisie and a break with capitalist logic.

The reformist strategy for a transition to socialism — which underscored the programme of the Chilean “Popular Unity” government and that of the French Union of the Left (until 1983, when the PS effectively abandoned any idea of a transition to socialism through reforms) — had at its heart the creation of an “area of social property”, or State property. This “area” was to include the strategic sectors of the economy. One of the debates between the PS and the French Communist Party (PCF) dealt precisely with the number of nationalisations which had to be carried out to achieve this. In both revolutionary and reformist strategy, socialism was not equated with nationalisation, but nationalisation was perceived as a step towards socialisation.

Suspicion

However, one of the consequences of the “crisis in the Eastern Bloc” is that there is tremendous — and justified — suspicion of nationalisation. It is seen as related to bureaucratic Statism, as in the former Soviet Union. This means that we have to approach the question of the transition to socialism in a different and innovative way — something in which until now we have made little progress.

The programme for the 1994 election campaign will not be a socialist programme. And the votes for Lula will not be for socialism, but because he and the PT are seen as the only force that can effect real change in Brazil — a change wanted by the population, without their having a specific end in mind.

Our role is to propose a programme which takes the basic needs of the population as its starting point, then sets out socialist ideas. We must make it perfectly clear that the real changes everyone wants lead in this direction. In our view, this is the meaning of the “popular democratic” alternative, first put forward at the PT’s 1987 national meeting.

The difficulties associated with thinking through the transition to socialism, and more generally the “crisis of socialist credibility”, are the background to the paradox described by César Benjamin. According to him, “Bourgeois rationality has shown itself incapable of organising the nation but it still defines the framework of the debate on the nation; and it is within these limits that the left has worked.”

César has rightly underlined the fact that as the bourgeoisie has been able to formulate its ideas so we should be able to formulate our own. In order to go beyond present-day neo-liberal “bourgeois rationality” and to be hegemonic ourselves, we must explicitly develop our own rationality.

In the economic sphere, the challenge that faces us involves rejecting the ideas disseminated by the bourgeoisie through their media, and spelling out alternatives.

“Invisible hand”

The first guiding notion of the neo-liberal bourgeoisie is that of making the market the only regulator of the economy, and the guarantor of maximum efficiency and optimal allocation of resources. This is the theory of the “invisible hand”, first advanced in the eighteenth century by the English economist Adam Smith.

However, in spite of its current popularity among the general public, the notion is increasingly absurd. “The market” is capitalists making investment decisions purely on the basis of profit maximisation. To transform maximum profit into common good would require not only an invisible hand but one which can perform miracles.

The PT’s June national meeting stated that: “The real world market is controlled by less than seven-hundred companies, and the two-hundred largest determine thirty percent of its Gross Domestic Product. The real market in Brazil is one in which a few businesses determine prices in each section of production, speculate with hidden resources and manipulate the people by way of the mass media, including advertising. A few hundred large banks, industries, large businesses and nationally and foreign owned agro-industries account, with a few State businesses, for seventy percent of our economy, and directly control both the internal market and exports.”

Never before, in the whole history of humanity, has hunger been so widespread; this is a direct consequence of the logic of the “real market”. To defend the notion of an “invisible hand” in a world riven with inequality can only result from particularly cruel ignorance or cynicism.

We will not be able to get rid of the market in the foreseeable future. Nor do we intend to eliminate small commercial, service-oriented, agricultural, artisanal, or even industrial property in the

medium-term. However, we can and must establish control over and limits upon the free play of the market.

The second guiding notion of neo-liberalism, closely linked to the first, is the idea of the minimal State.

This idea has been strengthened by the crisis in the Eastern Bloc and the decomposition of the State in various countries, including Brazil — which has been dismantled by the elites which control it. There is of course no question of combatting neo-liberal propaganda on the minimal State by defending the Brazil of today.

In the foreseeable future we will need a different kind of State — which will fulfil a number of functions. It will have to control the market, by structuring and developing a model of development. It will have to work towards the reduction of social and regional inequalities, and satisfy a range of basic needs which can only be met by public services: health care, education, housing, transportation, and a basic infrastructure. Such a State will plan urban development and proceed with the humane development of the sciences. It will guarantee respect for the environment. Last, but by no means least, it will guarantee the national currency.

Strategic sectors

In none of the above has private management through the market been effective. This is why the PT is correct to advocate the presence of the State in the strategic sectors of the economy.

Instead of reducing the State to the bare minimum and further privatising it, as prescribed by the neo-liberals, we have to *deprivatise* it so it can carry out its public functions. It must be decentralised so far as possible, and social forms of control over the State developed to the fullest. The State can even grow, so long as there is also increased popular control over its apparatus.

Another set of neo-liberal ideas, and advanced by ex-President Collor, revolves around proposals for modernisation, competitiveness, opening up of the economy and integration into the world economy, including into the international financial system.

The logic of competitiveness, including increased exposure to international competition, reflects a desire to reduce costs, which translates into a decrease in salaries, social rights and corporate participation in the financing of social programmes — and also a “rationalisation” which creates unemployment, and the

replacement of State social spending with programmes encouraging “productivity”.

This is what we are seeing today in Europe. Faced with the growing integration of their economies — without the parallel construction of a common State which unites their policies — European countries (especially the poorest) are implementing austerity measures against working people.

Working class gains, won through decades of struggle, are now being whittled away. Massive unemployment is used as a weapon against working people, with the threat that if competitiveness does not increase, further job losses are inevitable. In Brazil, the country could even be forced down the path of deindustrialisation, such as has occurred in Argentina and Chile.

Integration into the world economy as above only benefits the upper layers of the middle classes and the bourgeoisie, who can increase their consumption of luxury items, such as imported cars, which cost more than 1,000 times the minimum wage.

The alternative to this is not plunging the country into isolation and economic autarchy. We need to be selective in opening up the economy, concentrating on agreements and joint projects with countries which have the same interest as Brazil in building a more equal international order. Given the inequalities between different countries, it is absurd to envisage full economic integration.

A coherent plan for integration demands that we take present inequalities as a starting point for agreement with similarly-placed countries around common or complementary interests — which does not correspond to the logic of the market.

MERCOSUR, the “common market” which exists in South America, could play a central role for Brazil and its neighbours but must be completely redefined. The search for allies on the international level will also be crucial to the implementation of our policy of stopping payment on the external debt. In addition to governmental allies, we must establish alliances with unions, leftwing parties, non-governmental organisations and progressive movements in general.

Our aim is not to break with the international financial community. We would like it to invest capital, as opposed to the last few years. However, we cannot make concessions on sovereignty. We cannot let our economic policies be dictated by the International Monetary Fund; we cannot pay an illegitimate debt

by imposing misery on the people.

In the technological field, there is clearly progress to be made. We must define the most effective model of development, one which corresponds to our means and social and economic objectives. What we must not do is import technology which we cannot afford and which is irrelevant to our needs.

To summarise, we support improved integration into the world, but by participation in a united effort to build a different international order.

Having rejected neo-liberal ideas, we will have to say what we propose in their place. If we reject both the market and a bureaucratic State as the central regulator, how do we hope to run the economy?

Choice

Ernest Mandel refers to a third way — that of the population itself choosing alternatives. A popular and democratic government would be a starting point for such an approach. We have to give maximum encouragement to popular participation and control on all levels, so that the people can have real influence.

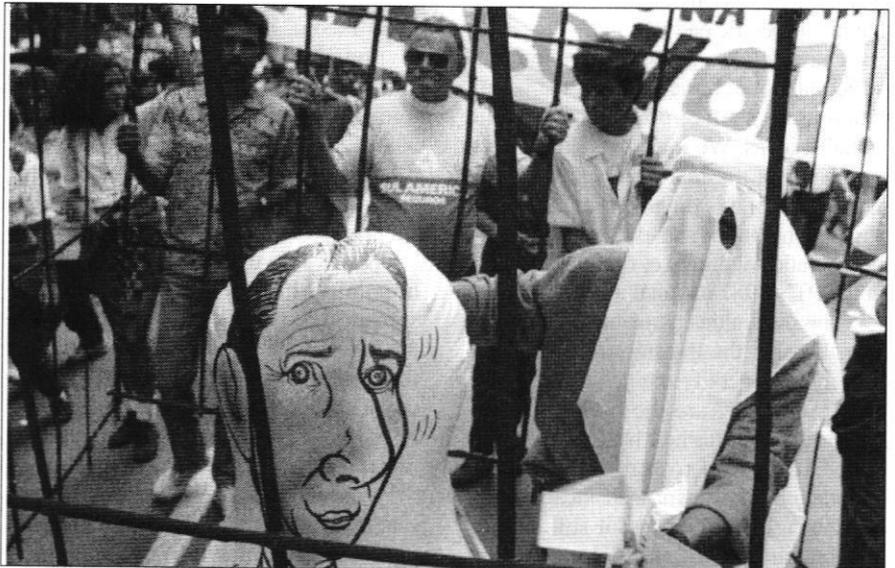
So far as control of the State is concerned, the experiences of the PT municipal governments can be built upon, especially that of popular participation in the drawing up of budget. In addition to being democratic, this is a guarantee against corruption — not an insignificant factor these days. Of course this will be more difficult to carry out on a federal level, but is entirely possible. For example, there would be no difficulty in televising the debates of the Budgetary Commission.

Moreover, in order to improve popular participation and control, we have to move towards greater decentralisation, so that a large part of public spending is administered on a community level. The widening of practices such as the participatory budget can give the population control over the use of public resources; this would make national debate on economic priorities a possibility.

It is likely that, to begin with, there would not be extensive participation in these discussions. However, once it becomes clear that they served a purpose, participation would definitely increase.

There also has to be control over private, and especially large capital. In this area, there have been interesting developments, such as that of the Sectoral Chamber of the automobile industry, which brings together the unions, employers and the government, even though its organisation is limited and not without its contradictions (one of the main problems being that negotiations within a single branch of production tend to produce a corporatist dynamic). Also, the interests of the automobile industry are not necessarily those of the whole economy and the population. Indeed, it would be more worthwhile to prioritise public transport and reduce automobile production.

What is most interesting about in the Sectoral Chamber is that by negotiating over prices, salaries and jobs, the workers can formulate a proposal for organising production, evaluating costs, investment priorities and so forth. Combined with a discussion of the all-round economic priorities of the population, under the auspices of a popular democratic government, this would result in pressure on and control over the capitalists.



Mass demonstrations helped bring down the corrupt President, Fernando Collor. Can the PT mobilise the masses for socialism?

Peoples' budgets

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Such a process would probably create the conditions for the establishment of a highly progressive fiscal policy, which would make the rich pay much more in taxes and which would have the necessary popular support. We will try to create a political and social force (based on the most organised sectors of the working class) to re-orientate the economy.

The above is the way to fight the capitalist market and system of private profit, without succumbing to State bureaucratisation. We have to build a different kind of State, one which is subject to popular control. This would constitute a change to the present logic of the economy, and would allow for development based on the creation of an internal mass market, as described in the PT's Guiding Principles (see pp. 18-22). The creation of an internal market would mean the adoption of a model of development is aimed at the satisfaction of the consumption needs of the domestic population.

Such a model would allow both economic growth and the distribution of wealth. It would allow for the creation of an economy which is run according to the priorities laid out by Mandel: the elimination of hunger, the guarantee of the right to housing, health care and education, the re-distribution of land to peasants and the elimination of unemployment.

It would also be a way to begin to go beyond the capitalist economy, without adhering to an obsolete faith in the State. The break with capitalism will not be determined by the quantity of nationalisations, but by the degree of popular control over the formulation of economic policy and the re-distribution of wealth.

Revolutionary

Without doubt, this is a revolutionary path — the changing of the economy based on a radical democratisation of society. Such democratisation is a fundamental aspect of a democratic revolution which will transform the base of power and so involve serious confrontations with the bourgeoisie.

Our conception is compatible with the Marxist vision of the process of building socialism. In the long term it will eliminate regulation by the market and the State will wither away as it is re-absorbed by society. It is also more adapted to the PT's project for socialism. It could be a decisive weapon in giving cohesion to our struggle against neo-liberal ideologies and to our struggle for hegemony. ★

ONE year after Fernando Collor — the first president to be elected by direct universal suffrage since 1960 — was thrown out, Brazil has been hit by a new wave of accusations and inquiries into corruption, placing the issue at the centre of national politics. Recently it was revealed that deputies from the Federal Budget Commission were involved in an influence-peddling racket. This has stopped dead in its tracks the constitutional reform begun in October by the right wing, threatens the survival of the country's biggest party, the Militant Party of Brazilian Democracy (PMDB), and signals the end of the already teetering Itamar government.

BETI BÚRIGO & RAUL PONT
São Paulo, 23 November 1993

THE above is happening on the eve of Presidential elections in which the Workers' Party's (PT) Lula already seems unbeatable. In a recent opinion poll he was favoured by thirty-three percent. The closest contender was preferred by only sixteen percent.

The declarations of the Assessor of the Budget Commission, which is responsible for discussion and amendments concerning the federal budget, led to the setting up of a Commission of Parliamentary Inquiry (CPI) and paralysed the process of constitutional reform. This process was the spearhead of a right-wing offensive to consolidate the implementation of the neo-liberal project, paralysing a future popular democratic government and preventing the mobilisation of democratic organisations, social movements and leftwing parties.

Even though the CPI had as its target those deputies accused of receiving bribes, the accusations also involved the government and publicly exposed the

principle beneficiaries of corruption — the big construction entrepreneurs who, during the Collor affair, managed to avoid being charged. As for the deputies, they approved amendments to the budget which endorsed useless projects or projects which were never completed.

Further, pre-determined companies would receive contracts for public works. The costs were usually over-priced, particularly as smaller firms would be sub-contracted at market rate.

In spite of the folklore around the affair of the "seven dwarves" — the members of the Budget Commission linked to the main accused, João Alves — and efforts by the rightwing to sacrifice three or four to save the rest, the accusations have already tainted leading figures in all the major parties, except the PT and the Party of Brazilian Social Democracy (PSDB), which was already tainted by the central role it plays in the government.

Tireless

PT deputies had already denounced the corruption of the Budget Commission in 1991. Their demand for a commission of inquiry was unsuccessful at that time thanks to the tireless efforts of Ibsen Pinheiro — one of the present accused — and Mauro Benevides. Both these men are members of the Militant Party of Brazilian Democracy (PMDB), are respectively Presidents of the House and of the Senate, and were previously said to be above suspicion.

However, in order to pretend that there had been some change, the number of members of the Budget Commission was changed to a hundred and twenty deputies and rotation established for the presidency. The farce continued; in the 1992 budget, more than 70 thousand individual amendments were presented.

The PT and democratic and progressive organisations are currently centring on the demand for rigorous investigation of the accusations, and for an extension of the remit of the CPI. The PT is not ruling out the possibility of elections being called earlier than the selected date of October 1994. President Itamar's spokesperson, faced with the growing crisis, has also referred to this possibility.

While the rightwing is trying to ridicule the allegations of corruption, by calling the CPI the "United Workers Central", progressive sectors should introduce concrete proposals for social control over public resources.

Beyond the punishment of both corrupters and corrupt, other measures should be taken: no further public money for private enterprises masquerading as social projects, and respect for objective criteria (shortcomings in resources, population, wealth) in deciding public investment in the regions. All this will not, however, put an end to corruption.

Effective democratisation of the distribution of public resources requires that antagonistic interests be clearly identified, and a fight waged for the interests of the majority. The current mechanisms for government obscure these antagonisms and remove the population from any real decision-making.

The presence of the PT in a dozen municipal governments has allowed a concrete debate around these questions and has avoided a situation in which the people feel powerless.

The municipal PT administrations have initiated a process of direct popular participation for the drawing up of the budget — which is really a counterpoint to the federal budgetary process, overruled as it is by private entrepreneurs. By going beyond the limits of representative democracy, this process has established another basis for negotiations for the allocation of resources and the defining of priorities, so as to win space for the defence of working people's interests.

In Porto Alegre, where the People's Front is led by the PT and Tarso Genro was elected Mayor after Olivio Dutra's four-year mandate had expired, there have been five years of experience with a participatory budget. To prepare the 1994 budget, thousands of people participated in the debates and the designation of works, in the election of representatives for the sixteen regions which make up the People's Budget Council, and of the seven-hundred delegates responsible for regional organisation, evaluation of works, and surveillance and criticism of the municipal government in the event of delays or non-implementation of decisions. The People's Budget Council formulates, along with advisers and others from the administration, the legislation which will be adopted by the Municipal Council.

By participating directly in the investment decision-making process for

the city, and in the debates and struggles around the general orientation of public policy, the organised population is well informed and familiar with the accounts and functioning of the administration. They appropriate the city and its resources and fully exercise their citizenship. They have broken with the traditional clientelism that gives mayors and municipal councillors the role of intermediary protectors; they organise themselves, increasingly making irrelevant the initial work of the municipal government team. The direct participation of citizens in the region's assemblies does not weaken the neighbourhood association, which have initial discussions and formulate demands. In Porto Alegre, more than five-hundred community associations, with leaders who have different or no political affiliations, participate in this process.

In 1994, the trade unions should now organise workers' assemblies on different themes. The combination of thematic and regional assemblies would contribute to creating a more rounded, global appreciation of the problems raised by community leaders, who at the same time help build a vision beyond the corporatism which can often characterise the ideas of representatives from the workplace.

Different vision

Organised activity by the people places pressure on and stimulates the municipal administrations, imposing a different rhythm and a different vision of responsibilities to that of career civil servants. However, the administrations are not always in a position to respond to the demands for efficiency in maintenance or construction. Without development in the population of an awareness of the obstacles which reflect the present relationship of forces in society, they can become frustrated and lose hope — which can be exploited by the conservative rightwing and bourgeois press.

Certain sectors have sought to institutionalise the participatory experience. In Porto Alegre, the municipal administration argues that the strength and value of the participatory budget lies in its spontaneous character, together with there being no delegation of power, and its rules being agreed jointly by the social movements and municipal government. To institutionalise the process would lead to its subordination to a hostile majority in the municipal council, and imprison it in rules leading to legal conflicts which would interrupt the

debates and the annual nature of the process.

The experience has resulted in more investment, in spite of the cost of maintaining the previous structure, and the losses linked to the massive number of personnel and the remuneration of municipal councillors. A new relationship with the public authorities is being built, which is also relevant to the state administrations and the Union.¹

Parties in the People's Front must play a dominant role in the politicisation of whole sectors of society, in the search for an alternative to the dominant capitalist legal conception of formal equality in citizenship.

While keeping our faith in the old utopian vision, it would be no exaggeration to say that these experiences constitute the embryo of a new conception of the public administration, and indeed of the State itself. ★

1. Brazil is a federation of twenty-three states, regulated by a constitution similar to that of the United States.



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1. THE Brazilian political, economic and social crisis will only be resolved by the victory of the popular

democratic forces. One hundred million Brazilians live in poverty; sixty million are completely destitute. Of every thousand Brazilians born, ninety will die before they are five years old and of the remaining nine-hundred and ten, scarcely ninety will complete high school.

This situation stems from the policies applied by a dominant class indifferent to the hunger and misery suffered by the majority of the people.

These policies take place within an economic model which is not only exhausted but places profit in the hands of the few. Following ten years of instability, which has aggravated the crisis, the collapse of the neo-liberal project has shown yet again the inability of the dominant class to generate an alternative model. In the same period, the working class has increased both its political and electoral strength, fighting for control in ways which have never occurred before in Brazil, including the founding of the Workers' Party (PT), the creation of the Central Union of Workers (CUT), the campaign for direct elections, and the impeachment of Collor. In the present electoral campaign it is attempting to defeat the dominant class and form an alternative popular democratic government (hereafter PDG).

2. Overturning the present State is part of the democratic revolution. Achieving real reform of Brazilian society will entail the defeat or drastic limitation of the dominant class. National-populist reformism, which believed it could reconcile opposing interests, has already collapsed. So has that section of the left which imagined it could effect democratic reforms without the support of the people — some times relying on the support of the bourgeoisie, at others on a political vanguard. Now, when the PT may well become the government, the establishment and its mass media is exerting enormous pressure to make us become part of it. We will not do so. The PT's struggle for government is basic to Brazilian workers achieving hegemony. However, we do not mistake government for power, which is much wider and rooted in economic and social relations. Nor do we confuse Lula's programme with our more radical, alternative strategic project, and in the 1994 elections the PT will argue for the construction of a new economic, political and social model.

By taking this approach, the PT explicitly rejects two forms of struggle for social-

ism which have been unsuccessful in the past. The first is that of operating only outside existing institutions, or treating them merely as an opportunity for propaganda. The second is of operating solely within the establishment. The PT reaffirms as a strategic objective the formation of a PDG from both a popular base and electoral majority.

Our project of social transformation will work only if it is supported by a solid and self-organised base of the exploited and oppressed. To achieve a true and substantive democracy we will have to set up workers' councils and consult constantly and directly with the people. We believe that the success of our struggle for reform and the democratisation of the State and society depends on both popular and governmental action against the existing order.

3. The 1994 elections will be dominated between those who wish there to be structural reform and those who wish social apartheid to continue. Following the collapse of Collor, the bourgeoisie is attempting to maintain its programme of "modernisation". The business world, and in particular the oligopolies, continues to refuse to reduce its profits and in return for any concessions it takes tax or other advantages. The bourgeoisie must be defeated and submit to the redistribution of income and the elimination of poverty. We are aiming for real change, so that poverty, hunger and exclusion will not continue.

4. For structural reform it is necessary to create a popular democratic movement. The 1994 election campaign must be a starting point for and expression of this movement, which must be based on a revived union movement, workers' and students' organisations, civil bodies, popular parties, and organisations of women, black and indigenous peoples. It must also be particularly aware of those who are marginalised and excluded by society. A movement which transcends the election campaign is essential to support the Lula government.

The PT cannot ignore the deep inequalities based on racial discrimination, in addition to economic exploitation and political oppression. The PT will not achieve a hegemony of the masses if we do not know how to argue with a black voice. Racial and sexual discrimination must be combated with the same radicalness as the exploitation of the forces of labour. We must

Guiding principles

AT its eighth national meeting in June of 1993, the CUT began to prepare for the 1994 Presidential elections. Lula da Silva, is currently leading in the polls. What direction will a Lula government take? What pressures and obstacles that it is certain to face? We publish major extracts below,¹ these a

confront both capital and the so-called "universal culture" which masks discrimination. We will not win the elections if our programme does not also express black resistance. Socialism will be a reality in Brazil only when the social apartheid caused by racial oppression is destroyed.

The CUT's present crisis requires strong determination by the PT's militants, if it is to increase its capacity to focus and direct the claims of the Brazilian workers and also continue to work on ways to overcome the economic and social crisis which has worsened so drastically over the last five years, as a result of Collor's neo-liberal project. They must consider the economic framework which has contributed to the recession — with the consequent exclusion of thousands of workers, who are now either unemployed or under-employed — so that the CUT leadership may put forward their proposals.

A project of this nature also necessitates considering the consequences for the labour movement of technological advance and the changes brought about by new forms of business management (including in the organisation of production), in the light of changes worldwide. It also requires planning for the training and re-training of the workers in this country.

The correct preoccupation of the PT that unions should be autonomous resulted in it maintaining a neutrality before the obstacles faced by the union movement, and absolving itself, in large part, from working out a policy to guide the PT's militants. In this sense, we are partially responsible for the crisis in the CUT.

5. It is necessary to win public opinion to the idea of structural reforms. The Brazilian people are tired of the lack of alternatives, of barren illusions, of unfulfilled promises. This feeling is even stronger amongst the most poor, the excluded, the workers on low incomes, the small business-people — those who were always the most affected by the "changes". This climate of desperation has fed conservatism. Those who

s for '94 election

... year the Brazilian Workers' Party (PT) elections. The PT's candidate, Luis Ignacio

How will it grapple with the enormous task? In the PT's Guiding Principles, of which many other questions have been tackled.

struggle for change must win the heart of each Brazilian with ideas of democratising ownership, income, land, means of communication and power. It must be an alternative, strategic, long-term project which breaks the iron band of short-term alternatives, plans for stabilisation which lead to even more instability and poverty, economic policies which do not confront social apartheid, and the cynical logic which states that it is necessary first to build the country then re-distribute wealth. It must be a programmatic platform which unites the majority of the people, and which affirms the social and moral superiority of radical democratic values, of humanity, solidarity, ethics, socialism. These are the ideas which in 1989 brought together millions under the slogan "Without fear of happiness".

6. Our programme for government must, in concrete ways, give shape to reforms which are anti-monopoly, anti-large estate and anti-imperialist. It will be aimed at those who make up the bulk of the population: workers, the unemployed, the middle class, and those who run small to medium-sized businesses.

Although many liberal theories still have a certain credibility, the crisis in the last government showed that the main problem facing the country is political and ethical; of equal or greater importance than the intellectual and technical coherence of our project is knowing that the social and political forces can really be mobilised to make it work.

In the last fifteen years we have witnessed the emergence of the workers' movement in Brazil, which has radically reshaped the national political struggle and redefined the concept of democracy. One major result is that its political and social dimensions no longer appear to be separate. Democracy has stopped being a means or a stage in the struggle for socialism. It has combined with socialism in such a way that the values of liberty and equality cannot now be detached.

It will fall to the PDG to take measures in which growth is linked to fair redistribution of income,

construction of an internal mass market, radicalisation of democracy, state investment, incentives for technological research and development, urban reform, land reform, taxing the rich, elimination of indirect taxes and a fair tax system compatible with popular democratic reforms and the fight against monopolies, enabling a full frontal attack on the problems of hunger, unemployment, healthcare, education, property speculation, housing and transport suffered by the majority of the people. This supposes an independent foreign policy, and the smashing of the privileges of the oligopolies, large estate-owners and financial conglomerates.

7. The popular democratic reforms must break the control of the monopolies over the national economy. We must confront those who defend the market and private capitalist business, and who discount all alternatives for economic organisation.

The dominant class and the monopolies will form an obstacle to the economic reforms which must be carried out by the PDG. From now on we must demonstrate the existing contradiction between neo-liberal theory and its practice in this country. The same elites which defend the privatisation programme and advocate reduction of the role of the State in economic activity will not voluntarily give up the profits, exemptions, subsidies and generous loans which they receive from the banks.

The real world market is controlled by less than seven-hundred companies, and the two-hundred largest determine thirty percent of its Gross Domestic Product (GDP). The real market in Brazil is one in which a few businesses determine prices in each section of production, speculate with hidden resources and manipulate the people by way of the mass media, including advertising. A few hundred large banks, industries, large businesses and nationally and foreign owned agro-industries account, with a few State businesses, for seventy percent of our economy, and directly control both the internal market and exports. This will be the sector which will show the major resistance to our programme of structural reforms. To confront it and win, and so to consolidate its programme, the PDG will work on the institutional plane, mobilising its allies and also

directing itself towards those involved in cultural and scientific activities. Amongst the people and in the unions, it will develop a full campaign of information and will call on the social movements to extend their organisations within businesses, workplaces and homes, as an anti-monopolist consciousness in defence of the programme.

To defeat those sections which now hold economic power will demand combined action by the government and its allies, especially in the union movement, through economic and administrative measures, self-organisation of workers, the stimulation of anti-monopolist feeling and the winning of support from small business-people.

This mobilisation will press for the widening of the government's parliamentary basis and will allow us to form alliances which will also support our action in the National Congress.

8. To recover growth, redistribute income and combat social apartheid the PDG must recover the capacity for planning and social and economic action. The economic model to be developed must be based on a strong market of all 150 million Brazilians, rather than 30 million as at present. For this the State will have to exercise an important role in economic regulation, be it in regulating productive investments or investing directly in certain strategic sectors.

The redistribution of income must be accompanied by an expansion in production for the mass market. The overcoming of social apartheid will require the democratisation of society, land reform and policies which stimulate and support the small businesses and also the informal economy, which cannot continue to be treated as a marginal problem. It is essential that hunger is combated and that all have access to a basic education, including those who did not have access to education at the appropriate age, so the excluded also become citizens.

Special attention must be given to tax reform, of a progressive character, which penalizes those who hoard their wealth and income, which takes on speculation and which rearranges public finances to promote productive investment and social policies.

Also there must be deep reform to the financial system, to guide resources towards production and eliminate the parasitical character of the capital markets.

1. The text has been edited considerably for reasons of style and space. For a full version of this document see *Inprecor para América Latina*, no. 35, September 1993 (available from IV for £2/30FF, cheques made out to PECEI).

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9. The democratisation of land ownership is indispensable for growth combined with redistribution of income and of wealth. The radical democratisation of the system of land ownership, to the advantage of the indigenous peoples and shanty-dwellers, combined with a new agricultural policy compatible with regional variations and also stimulates differentiated between the small and medium-sized producers, are basic strategies in the formulation of a national PT project.

In the present historical moment — shaped by a situation which combines a deep economic and social crisis with the exhaustion of the model for financial development based on external resources — the redynamising of the Brazilian economy, within the framework of socialisation of national wealth and income and the reclamation of citizenship and social justice, will only be possible by evaluating all the many possibilities for the national economy, and breaking from the present external conditions. A new model of agricultural policy and primarily, land reform, are basic requirements for this.

Our government's action will make possible the rebuilding of the shanty-towns and the formation of new rural businesses directed by their own workers. The policy will liberate productive forces, stimulate the country's economic development and modify in our favour the relation of forces in the struggle for socialism.

In addition, land reform is relevant to the environment; for example, the devastation of the Amazon region will only be reduced by a fall in migration towards that region, which presupposes the democratisation of land ownership in other areas.

On the technological plane, without land reform it will be impossible to guarantee our project of economic decentralisation, because our country's mineral resources, the basis of a new "technological revolution", would continue under the control of the large land-owners, and in particular the large national and international companies.

10. Democratising the State, eliminating the distortions inherited from the dictatorship and destroying the monopoly of the mass media is a pre-condition for the success of the PDG. We must incorporate in the 1994 election campaign the following principles:

- Strict proportionality in the electoral system (to each elector a vote of equal value, so safeguarding the representation of each state);

- The rejection of a high percentage of vote being required for parties to be recognised and represented in parliament;

- Adoption of legislation which strengthens the parties (for example, election by party list);

- Democratisation of the ownership of and access to the mass media;

- Rapid investigation and rigorous punishment of all those involved in corruption;

- Democratisation and external control of judicial power;

- Democratisation of the armed forces and struggle against the ideology of "national security";

- Respect for trade union rights and the free organisation of workers in businesses;

- Regulation of the Articles in the 1988 Constitution which enable plebiscites, referendums and popular initiatives for legislation.

11. The PT proposes a political-electoral alliance around the Popular Democratic Programme (hereafter PDP). Our policy of alliances will create a politico-social bloc of support for the programme of structural reforms, the peoples' candidates in the states, Lula's candidature and a federal government under PT hegemony. We wish to establish alliances with the organised movements and with civil bodies. The 1989 programme for government is an initial base for discussion with our allies, who must not be treated merely as our pawns in the electoral contest.

12. Our election campaign is beginning to build support for a government committed to structural reforms. It must be capable of awakening great enthusiasm, so drawing together the forces which will bring Lula to victory. Therefore, the programme, which directs the alliances, and the campaign, which organises and mobilises broad sections of the people, are two of the main bases of our "governability".

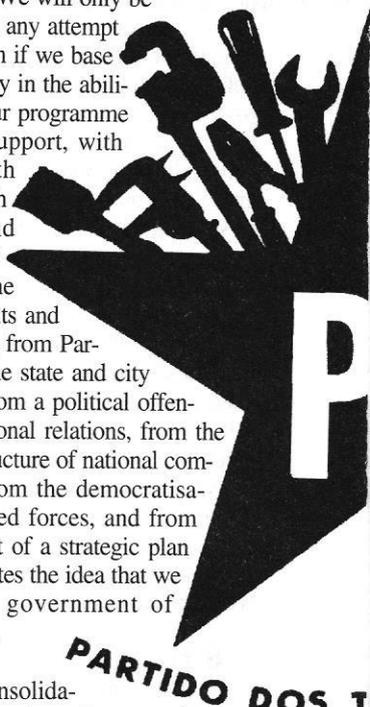
The realisation of structural reforms will unleash profound class conflict, shocks and ruptures, which will be met with action from the Party, the social movements, our allies, our parliamentary representatives and allied state governments and city councils. This is why we need a programme capable of attracting the vote of the majority, and even more importantly, inspiring and mobilising millions of people ready to struggle in defence of our government. This is why the PT wants a polarised election, in which our candidate will appear as he is: "a complete alternative to the actual system."

13. The popular democratic reforms depend on the radicalisation of democracy. The execution of the reform programme

will open up possibilities for involving small and medium-sized businesses in supporting the measures initiated by our government. At the same time we must isolate the dominant class and reduce its power of manoeuvre. The Brazilian crisis will only be resolved by sacrificing the interests of that minority which controls economic and political power, influences public opinion, has charge of international relations and, with its military, resists change as it has always done. It will not stop at breaking the law if it means the obstruction of the reforms. We will only be able to confront any attempt at destabilisation if we base our governability in the ability to execute our programme with popular support, with coherence, with clarity, with radicalness, and with organised support from the social movements and leftwing parties, from Parliament, from the state and city governments, from a political offensive in international relations, from the creation of a structure of national communications, from the democratisation of the armed forces, and from the development of a strategic plan which incorporates the idea that we will *not* be a government of "national unity".

14. The consolidation of successive democratic governments will occur through the structural reforms. Brazil will only achieve the stability which we desire when economic development is orientated towards social needs, and when the incorporation into citizenship of the majority of the population and the redistribution of income become national goals. This is why the structural reforms will have to take place as soon as we take the government. In this way we will reverse the inflationary process without falling back on recessionary or other methods of this type commonly recommended by orthodox economists.

15. A policy of independent Brazilian integration in the world scene supposes the adoption of a new model of economic and social development, based on a mass internal market. The PDG will maintain full political and economic relations with other countries and will permit the presence of foreign capital in Brazil. But it is clear that a government hegemonised by a socialist party and pledged to realising reforms which are anti-monopolist, anti-large estate



and anti-imperialist will resist the "new order", and particularly the claims of the United States over the continent. Exploiting our human, technological and natural potential, developing an internal market which involves millions in both production and consumption, exploiting the regional and world burden caused by the state of our economy and also inter-imperialist contradictions, the PDG will confront international resistance and make an independent intervention in the world market.

The strategic alternative project needs to tackle the question of the place which

Brazil should occupy in the world, as much in economic as political terms.

In the first place we wish to achieve continental integration, which does not mean merely the creation of a free trade zone in Latin America. We should be aiming towards an economic, political, social, scientific and cultural model, founded in respect for self-determination and independence, rather than seeking to construct transnational relationships.

This conception will help to prevent Brazil and other countries of the continent from being economically and politically subordinate in the new world order which is being constructed. It will allow Brazil to participate in the shaping of a new international scene founded on respect for democracy and independence.

In the same way, the construction of Mercosur² must be based on the demands of the workers for development, democracy and social justice, and not neo-liberal policies.

In promoting the São Paulo Forum — the greatest expression of leftwing organisations in the history of Latin America — the PT and similar parties within the continent will create a fundamental example in promoting discussion and political initiatives in the renewed popular forces and proposals directed towards establishing an alternative democratic and socialist project.

Brazilian foreign policy must articulate multi-lateral initiatives of resistance to the pressures exercised by the large economic blocs on developing countries, with regard to international business, the supposed protection of intellectual property and so forth, which tend to aggravate the exclusion of a

large part of humanity.

At the same time, Brazil will struggle for the democratisation of the international forums and organisations, without prejudice to our participation in these or promotion of others. Diplomatic action by the Brazilian government will concentrate on national independence, regional integration with other countries in Latin America, solidarity, struggle against the militarisation of international relations and economic and social inequalities.

16. Victory in 1994 will mean the PT and its experience of government will be a point of reference for the international socialist movement. The collapse of "real socialism" and the decadence of social democracy — expressed in electoral defeats, corruption scandals and, mainly, compromise with neo-liberal economics, confers on the PT, and on those which share with it the defence of democratic socialism, a role of international dimensions.

The PT must increase its relations with those independent organisations which reaffirm their commitment to the struggle for socialism, and encourage and participate in those international forums which give continuity to this struggle.

In a world dominated by disputes between the large capitalist powers, by American decadence, the loss of social gains, the growth of militarism and conservatism, and the worsening of living standards for most people on this planet, the PT's arrival at government in a country the size of Brazil will establish new conditions for the struggle for socialism; it is within this perspective that the PT will conduct its international relations.

17. To win the elections and alter social and power relations, the PT must maintain cohesion. In 1994 the Brazilian people will have the historic opportunity to inflict, by their vote, a defeat on the dominant class. There are some who view as defects our main virtues: radicalness, combativity, difference to the other parties and commitment to socialism. Electoralism and administrativism are not the way forward for a government committed to radical democratisation of ownership, profits, information and power. More than ever, it is necessary to maintain the coherence of the PT and remain a party firmly committed to the oppressed and exploited majority and the construction of a new socialist and democratic order.

18. The speed of application of the PDP will be defined by the correlation of forces and in particular the level of popular

mobilisation and self-organisation. Clearly our victory in 1994 will awaken enormous expectations to which we must respond rapidly with concrete governmental initiatives. To create the necessary correlation of forces we must begin by converting the Presidential election into a plebiscite on structural reforms, and especially on the measures which we will take in the first hundred days of government.

The election of the President, the winning of state governments, the expansion of our parliamentary group and the constitution of a political and social bloc of support for the government, must be accompanied by political initiatives which reduce the political power of the dominant class, especially in the mass media. However, the potential for advance by our government will be limited without a high level of activity by the social movements. In the final analysis, the success of our government will lie in popular self-organisation, participation and awareness.

We must have no illusions that the dominant class will not be in the best position to use all the methods at its disposal to obstruct our putting into practice our anti-imperialist, anti-large estate and anti-monopolist programme. If we are not able to carry forward our project our government will not be capable of leading the country from its crisis, our people will be destined to hunger and poverty and our country will be subjected to neo-liberal policies.

We will break the resistance of the dominant class by combining action by our government, our Party and allied forces with independent workers' action. We will not hesitate to give support to large popular mobilisations, measures which democratise to their roots the mass media, full and intense diplomatic activity (which prioritises building a united politics with those countries which struggle against dependency) and also legal action.

19. To enable the application of the PDP the government must continue its political initiative, co-ordinating its actions with the forces which support it. The government must apply the PDP from a strategic plan which defines the way in each situation to isolate the conservative forces, win the middle classes, and, fundamentally, broaden and consolidate popular support. In this way we will accumulate the forces necessary to apply our programme at greater speed.

² Mercosur is the trade alliance between Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay.



20. The PT needs a new leadership to direct both Lula's campaign and party activity in the next few years. It is clear that the present leadership has lost its legitimacy, a situation worsened by organisational problems and the weakening of relations with the social movements and our municipal governments.

The new leadership must be committed to the following:

- To the revolutionary socialist character of the PT, a democratic socialism which is as much an alternative to "real socialism" as to social democracy.

- To the strategic value of democracy, which for us is both a means and an end, a method of transformation and an ideal of political organisation.

- To the revolutionary beliefs of the PDP, which adheres to anti-capitalist, anti-monopolist, anti-large estate and anti-imperialist beliefs.

- To the viability of a party which affirms democracy to be the main thread of party life.

- To the renewal of the ethical and democratic contract within the Party, for the regeneration of internal democracy and against the domination of a few.

21. The PT needs to reaffirm its role of leadership, its mass character and the importance of internal democracy. Increasing party democracy will require the re-evaluation of demands, the joint participation of our allies in discussion and decision making and the strengthening of the Party press, political education and mechanisms for consultation. It is also necessary for there to be democratic control of the party leadership and of the activists who hold executive power in the government or are in the legislature. Without over-excessive leadership, but while contributing politically, the PT must increase its links within organised civil society. Listening to public opinion, but without being led by external elements, it must have a large presence in the big cities; we must broaden the dialogue so as to create firm links — and not just electoral — with those who are generally on the margin of union and popular movements.

The directive character of the Party must show itself in the democratic working-out of our politics, the discussions opened up with our allies, the contest for hegemony, the confrontation with the values of the dominant class and in the re-affirmation of the strategic objective of the PT: the struggle for a socialist and democratic society, with neither exploiters nor exploited. ★

The Workers' Party's (PT) eighth national leadership meeting was held in June of this year. The left won a substantial majority for their positions. Our correspondent examines the progress which has been made since that meeting and what obstacles the PT must still overcome.

CARLOS HENRIQUE ÁRABE — São Paulo, 25 November 1993

TO begin with, we should note the following:

- The main resolutions, agreed at the eighth national meeting in June, clearly specified what a popular democratic government would generally involve;

- The leftwing character of the resolutions were a response to the deepening crisis which has engulfed the country and is in part responsible for the growth in popularity of the Lula campaign;

- Two other elements have contributed to this growth in popularity: Firstly, the paralysis of the Itamar government, and secondly the successive collapse of various Presidential candidacies, due to the corruption scandals which have ravaged the centre and the rightwing;

- However, these elements are not sufficient for the revival of the mass movement. The social movement is on the defensive and leadership by the Central Workers Union (CUT) remains weak;

- There is a clear contrast between the strength of the Lula campaign and the campaigns of candidates in the regional states;

- Despite the positive decisions taken at the June meeting, the Party's organisational problems continue to persist, and in some respects have actually worsened. This has made it difficult to implement them.

Opportunities

The above is an overview of the contradictory situation inside the Party. Although the conditions for dealing with problems which obstruct the building of the Party are certainly better than they have been in the past, we need to act quickly if we are to grasp the opportunities which could turn the political situation in our favour, and we must also prevent or reduce the bourgeoisie's ability to react.

It would be very easy to have illusions about the current situation in Brazil. The factors which strengthen the image of the PT and the Lula candidacy, though important and resulting in large part from the political initiatives of the

party, are not linked to an increase in the political and trade union activity of the masses.

Since the June national meeting, the PT has proved unable to develop strength in the area of campaigns "within the framework of the institutions", to clearly demarcate itself in opposition to the Itamar government (which is currently dominated by the Social Democratic Party [PSDB]¹ and in a state of advanced decomposure), or to play a pivotal role in the efforts to clean up corruption. On the other hand, it has had some success in re-organising the social movement, conscious as it is of the strategic importance, both for a Lula victory and for the exercising of power by the PT, of a mass movement which supports structural reforms.

Intervention

During the June meeting the CUT was recognised as central to providing some impetus to this social movement. The new party leadership was mandated to develop a political line for intervention in the crisis of the CUT, which would unite PT trade union leaders and the rank and file.

The fifth congress of the CUT will take place in June 1994. The debates have just begun but remain limited within the framework of the positions of the last congress, which no longer reflect the reality of the CUT today. The creation of a structure for the intervention of the party and the regroupment of an array of trade union forces around the resolutions of the PT's June meeting will be decisive for the revival of militant trade unionism and providing the CUT with a central role in the building of the campaign and an eventual Lula government.

One important sector, the rural workers, have maintained a high level of organisation and activity, which has included land occupations involving thousands of families. We also have to

1. In spite of its name, the PSDB is not linked to the popular and democratic movement and is politically somewhere between social democracy and traditional liberalism.

PT meets the challenge

recognise the co-ordination now under way between the urban popular movements, which have recently set up a national office. The latter has tremendous possibilities, but their activities still occur at an uneven pace and they are far from united. There is urgent need for the intervention of our Party to offer a firm basis for and accelerate the realignment, so that it may also meet the challenge of building a popular and democratic government.

Pressure

The PT's Guiding Principles (see pp. 18-22) constitute the first phase in the elaboration of a governmental programme. Whereas in the recent past there was pressure from some sectors of the Party for Lula to adopt a centre-left position, the election campaign has in fact helped to reinforce the Party's leftwing profile.

Caravans have travelled throughout the poorest regions of the country, emphasising the struggle against hunger and exclusion. This initiative has combined with the growth of Citizens' Action Against Hunger, a movement clearly identified with Lula.

The question of alliances on the national level is conditioned by the programme. This virtually excludes any possibility of a national alliance with the PSDB and leads us back to our partners in 1989. There are no major candidates in the states who have the dynamism of Lula and only in rare cases has the party been able to set up candidacies and alliances according to correct perspectives. This includes the candidacy of Olivio Dutra in Rio Grande do Sul who has a very good chance of winning.²

In important states such as São Paulo, Minas Gerais and Rio de Janeiro, the party is able to set up strong campaigns; but the situation is not the same throughout the country. There are important states in which there is no candidacy and others in which the best known leaders are not yet ready to present themselves as candidates. Finally, in other states, alliances are being discussed which do not guarantee support for Lula — cases where the alliance candidate is not from the PT and where sec-

tors of the party support the idea of an alliance with the PSDB or the Democratic Labour Party (PDT).³

The area which has caused the most difficulty recently has been that of party organisation. If anything, the crisis has worsened since the June meeting. Unfortunately, there is no automatic link between the revival of a strong leftwing identity for the Party and the ability to reconstruct itself and provide strong leadership.

Indeed, the solution of this problem requires more than just simple agreement around the main political questions. What is needed is a majority which has a common understanding of the strategic tasks, compromises and cohesiveness required for developing a leadership plan for the party.

New leadership

As stated in the resolution of the June meeting: "The PT needs a new leadership to direct both Lula's campaign and party activity in the next few years." The creation of such a leadership was initiated with the formation of the Leftwing Option (the majority current at the meeting) and the relations which were established with other currents identifying with the resolution.⁴

Giving form to the resolution first requires the consolidation of the Leftwing Option, particularly through the adoption of common responses to the organisational problems of the party. Other important issues are the struggle for a new leadership in the CUT (where the Leftwing Option is not operational) and the preparation for the next Party meeting in April 1994 — which will set out the governmental programme.

Relations with other sectors which can be integrated into the new majority are also crucial. One of the Leftwing Option's strengths was its ability to make alliances both with sectors of the old majority (which identified with the resolutions of the June meeting) and with currents on the left of the Party (which often have difficulty winning a majority to their positions). Further development of these relations will strengthen the Party leadership. ★



2. Olivio Dutra is a PT activist in Porto Alegre, the capital of Rio Grande do Sul, and was a leader of the municipal group in the city between 1989 and 1993.

3. The PDT is the heir of the populist tradition in Brazil. Today it has strong social democratic tendencies.

4. For further details on the relationship of forces at the eight national gathering and the character of Leftwing Option, see José Corrêa, 'An historic conference' and Alfonso Moro, 'A clear shift to the left', in *International Viewpoint*, no. 247, July 1993.

Violence with impunity

BRASIL
URGENTE

IN Brazil today, assassination groups act with impunity. Their brand of violence has become endemic; indicative of the nation's crisis. It will be of no surprise that police officers have been involved. Are they implementing official policy? Our correspondent explains.

JOSÉ CORRÊA* — São Paulo, September 1993

In the state of Rio de Janeiro the Ninth Battalion of the military police are responsible for a long list of murders. In 1988 ten children were killed with bullets to the head; in 1990 it was eleven; in July of this year eight more were killed. More recently the Ninth Battalion were responsible for the massacre of twenty-one residents in the Vigário Geral district of the city.

The latter assassinations were carried out in revenge for the death of four military police officers who had joined shopowners near the slums in a protection racket.

This brand of violence has spread throughout the country. In the state of Roraima, assassinations have become a daily occurrence and Yanomami Indians, murdered by gold prospectors, have joined a list of victims that runs into hundreds. In the state of São Paulo the military police massacred 111 inmates at the Carandiru prison.

Criminality

Several explanations have been put forward for the extent of the violence: a growth in criminality linked to poverty, the "deterioration of the social fabric," government neglect, and the crisis of the State.

There are of course elements of truth in the above but none explain the growth in such criminality.

There are two linked structural causes. The first is the militarisation of the military police. Crimes committed by military police officers are tried in special tribunals, but fellow officers are the judges. Thus, it can act with total impunity. Moreover, militarisation has engendered a dehumanisation of the "troops", making sadism more the rule than the exception. It is vital that proposed legislation for the demilitarisation of the state police forces and the fusion of

the civilian and military police be passed as soon as possible.

The second cause is rooted in the federal structure of the national State, which creates a situation ripe for the control of regional state apparatuses by a handful of oligarchies. These operate on the fringes of legality, particularly in the states of Rondônia, Acre, Roraima and Amapá, all bordering the Amazon, where "might means right" and there is no public security. However, arbitrary regimes of a similar nature also exist in many other states

Institutions

The federal Ministry of the Interior needs to establish control over its corresponding institutions in the regional states (which today exist only in a formal sense) and then extend the orbit of the federal police.

The massacres are not the product of government neglect, but rather of security policies which for some time have consciously been put into operation by state governments. The Carandiru prison massacre was a point of pride for the military police of São Paulo — a police force which has already killed hundreds and perhaps thousands of innocent people. The extermination of the Yanomamis is part of the official policy of the state government of Roraima.

However, the state of Rio de Janeiro is clearly the worst example. From 1982 onwards regional security policy laid the ground for peaceful co-existence between the police and drug traffickers. The result was a close inter-twining of the two over the following decade. Today, organised crime in the state is divided between them, but the police represent the biggest threat to the population.

In practice, it is often possible for local residents to negotiate with the gangs that control their area. But it is quite another story when the gangs are

rooted inside the police. It is a vicious circle; the drug traffic survives because it gives money to the police, and the police stimulate the extension of organised crime.

We cannot afford to wait for structural reforms, linked to changes in federal legislation, in order to respond to these urgent problems. The situation in Rio is particularly serious. However, although the military police constitutes the main threat to public security in that state, sending in the army is no solution.

Reactionary layers

Although one reason for this is that the army is not trained for public security tasks, there are also sound political reasons. The most reactionary layers of the dominant class are beginning to understand that their traditional political power is decreasing and that it is likely to do so further following the 1994 Presidential elections. Increasingly, their only option lies in a break with legality.

When it has been proposed that the military run a candidate for President, a call for the army to ensure public order would be reckless to say the least. Their intervention also could make victims out of totally discredited politicians — and thus give them a second wind.

A genuine response to this problem has to be developed within a democratic framework, which includes the mobilisation of civil society and the complete dismantling of organised crime, beginning with the military police in the state of Rio.

We must not underestimate the danger represented by the increase in violence; it is neither disorganised nor a product of neglect. It is fuelling a realignment of the social fabric and a political culture which can only benefit the right but be used against the left and democracy. In Argentina, the military dictatorship's death squads began under the last Peron government as groups that hunted down and killed thieves and delinquents.

In Brazil, we must never let the snake crawl from out of its egg. ★

* The article was originally published in *Em Tempo*, no. 270, September 1993. *Em Tempo* is published by the Socialist Democracy, a Fourth Internationalist current in the PT.

Towards political recomposition?

THE elections of 19 September led to the formation of a coalition government between the Polish People's Party (PSL) and the Alliance of the Democratic Left (SLD). The prospect of running the government is provoking a number of splits within the left, while the parties of the right are trying to regroup themselves as two parties — one which is conservative and Catholic, the other bourgeois liberal. But most importantly, for the first time voters have disregarded the historic differentiation between those who administered and those who opposed the former bureaucratic regime, opening the way to a series of cross-alliances.

JAN MALEWSKI — 19 November 1993

The SLD and the PSL received twice as many votes as at the last election, while the Union of Labour (UP) tripled its vote. By contrast, parties involved in the outgoing government, which hoisted the flag of economic liberalism — the Liberal Democratic Congress (KLD) and the Polish People's Party-Popular Alliance (PSL-PL) — saw their electorate melt away. While the main liberal party, the Democratic Union (UD), maintained its vote, it did not make the breakthrough it had hoped.

The elections also signalled the relative failure of the operation over the summer by President Lech Walesa, who had attempted to regroup Solidarity trade unionists, employers, peasant leaders and regional figureheads in the Non-Party Bloc for the Reforms (BBWR).¹ With less than five percent of votes cast, it barely made it into parliament.

Divided into a number of small parties, the Catholic right wing — which concentrated their campaign on calling for an anti-communist purge and a struggle against the secular State — managed to hang on to its voters but did not achieve any deputies due to the inability of any single group to obtain the required minimum percentage of votes.²

At the time of the (partially free) elections of June 1989, Poles massively rejected the former regime and thus opened the way to the formation of the first government with origins in the anti-bureaucratic opposition. The vote was not only against the dictatorship. The

fall of the regime gave birth to the hope that a new period was opening up, although most people accepted that there would be austerity for a certain period.

This hope rested on historical precedent, as throughout the previous few decades, whenever it was shaken by popular revolts, the former regime would direct national income towards mass consumption.

The new government cruelly disappointed these hopes. The political elites with origins in Solidarnosc — won to liberal ideology during the 1980s — took the country down the path of restructuring on a capitalist basis, convinced that it was not only lack of democracy, but also excessive social protection and the underdeveloped character of the private sector, which were responsible for the economic stagnation of the former regime.

As a result they measured their success on the number of privatisations carried out, on the degree of enrichment of the new bourgeoisie and on the reduction in income of the majority of the population. The disarray and passivity of their original social base — workers in large enterprises — was interpreted as a sign that their policies were accepted they were unable to see that their policies were pushing the people too far.

"The research I have been doing," the psychologist Janusz Reykowski has written, "shows that in general Poles do not have a feeling of citizenship, insofar as they do not see themselves as having a relationship with the government or having a role in its formation. Ordinary Poles (...) feel alone in the face of a

The political parties

The **PSL** originates from a fusion of the ZSL, former peasant satellite organisation of the United Polish Workers' Party (POUP), and several leaders of the minority in Rural Solidarnosc.

The **SLD** was founded by several dozen political and trade union organisations around Social Democracy of the Republic of Poland (SDRP).

The **UP** brings together leaders of the left wing of Solidarnosc as well as activists from the POUP who left or refused to join the SDRP.

The **KLD** is a small party made up of ultra-liberal advisers close to Lech Walesa, whom he called upon to join the government in 1990.

The **PSL-PL** originates from Rural Solidarnosc. Its main leaders were in all the liberal governments from September 1989 onward.

The **UD**, the main liberal party, originated in 1990 from the civic committees opposed to Lech Walesa. Its leaders, largely former leaders and advisers from Solidarnosc, were behind the initial push towards the restoration of capitalism. ★

1. Reclaiming the symbol of the former organisation founded by Jozef Pilsudski to legitimise the Bonapartist regime which emerged from the 1926 coup d'etat, Lech Walesa attempted to bring together a number of well-known figures by using populist and corporatist phraseology, with the goal of giving himself a base for his own personal manoeuvres. The majority of the leaders of the "syndicalist" current in Solidarnosc — the Network of Large Enterprises (Siec) — joined its ranks, thereby giving the bloc considerable influence among the working class.

2. The new electoral system is based upon districts, but with additional seats going to the winners on a national level. Parties require at least 5% of the vote to be represented, while blocs or alliances need at least 8%. Parties which obtain more than 7% are favoured, and receive access to the seats set aside for national slates.

situation which goes beyond them. So they rebel (...). Poles who lean to the left are not socialists or communists. (...) People did not vote for the programme of the left, but against the government.”³ For the historian Tomasz Nalecz, the electoral victory of the left is “the expression of nostalgia for the slogans and ideals of August 1980” and the result of the “disappointment of society with the political elites.”⁴

Polls carried out after the elections confirm these observations. According to the OBOP Institute, 54% of those polled said that the left had won because the cost of the reforms was too high. For 35% of those questioned by the CBOS Institute, the SLD won the most votes because previous governments had ignored the problems of ordinary people (only 20% saying that “life was better in the days of the POUP”).

The new government is thus confronted with a high level of expectation and will be judged according to the effects of its policies on daily life. 47% of those polled by the CBOS hoped that the new government would slow down the privatisations, 35% wanted it to improve living conditions and 32% hoped that it would reduce unemployment.

Utopian

According to another poll, nearly 80% of Poles believe that the new government will increase salaries in the public sector along with pensions and retirement funds. These expectations are not merely utopian; during the 1970s the living standards of the population as a whole rapidly improved and during the revolutionary upsurge of 1980-81 Poles had real-life experience of workplace democracy.

However, the expectations are more and more at odds with the social structure, which has been greatly transformed over the last four years. Whereas until 1989 urban society was made up primarily of similarly waged employees, the number of salaried employees from all sectors has gone down by two million (11.4%) in four years — a decrease particularly visible in large State industries. By contrast there has been real growth in employment in private firms and the service sector.

Today the private sector employs 46% of the workforce, while in the last three years there has been a 100% increase in the self-employed. There are now 1.6 million private entrepreneurs, of which 15% are former nomenklatura

(State or Party bureaucrats). Unemployment affects 2.8 million people (15.4% of the active population), 40% of whom are long-term unemployed.

The social structure of the countryside has also changed, primarily due to the beginning of the privatisation of the State and co-operative agricultural sector but also due to the first capitalist forays into agriculture, made possible by the elimination of administrative checks on land sales. The countryside has seen the appearance of people who own hundreds of hectares of land, who are involved in industry and foreign trade.

However, the rapid change in the social structure has not yet led to the redefinition of the political interests of the new classes. According to a poll carried out by the INFAS polling institute, the votes of the new bourgeoisie were cast in the same way as those of the majority of the population, with a slightly greater proportion going to the liberal parties. 17% of private entrepreneurs voted for the SLD, 13% for the UD, 9% for the KLD and 8% for the BBWR.

Division

The political scene still reflects historic divisions, but at the same time is characterised increasingly by current debates on the country's political and economic orientation and its social consequences. There is much dissension for example in the areas of social and economic policy and the relationship of the new State and the Church. While the parties which originated in Solidarnosc battled with one another for four years concerning the various governments' policies — battles which led to the fragmentation of the current — those with origins in the former regime, condemned until recently to the opposition, were able to maintain a facade of unity in spite of internal differences.

The same applies to the social democrats and their parliamentary bloc, the SLD. “What unites the SLD,” writes Adam Michnik, “is the common history of its members and their opposition to the anti-communist purges. Other than that, there is only disagreement — with respect to attitudes, political opinions and interests.”

Social democracy was founded in the ashes of the POUP, on the initiative of a number of left-wing intellectuals — the “July 8 Movement” — who wanted to dissolve the party of the former regime and replace it with a modern left. During the last congress of the POUP, this minority made an alliance with a

wing of the party apparatus which was seeking to preserve itself.

However, there were inherent divisions in that while its strength was based on the investments made by members of the nomenklatura (on a personal basis and to profit the party) it also had a base in the trade union movement and various “mass fronts” of the ex-POUP. While the neo-liberal wing of the party took the leadership of the SLD and dictated economic policy, it could not ignore its traditional support — recently converted to the defence of the oppressed, with serious support both in the trade union and women's movements. The anti-communist witch hunt, begun last year by the rightwing, led the party to close ranks but divisions continue, and have already provoked sharp conflicts between social democratic ministers.⁵

Organising

The presence in the new SLD parliamentary group of 61 deputies from the OPZZ trade union, as well as some activists from groups violently opposed to neo-liberalism — such as the three deputies from the small Polish Socialist Party (PPS) — has now made it possible for the anti-liberal current to consider organising within the party without fear of marginalisation. The Vice-President of the OPZZ even let it be known that his comrades could overthrow their government if it began to renege seriously on its electoral promises.

For its part the liberal current is increasingly looking to a governmental alliance with the UD. Aleksander Kwasniewski, the leader of the SLD parliamentary group and its most outspoken representative, explained in a recent interview, “The Democratic Union would make a good governmental partner. It has specialists, prestige abroad and friends in the media (...). Today we are in government with the PSL, but the SLD never shuts the door behind itself.”

3. *Gazeta Wyborcza*, no. 220, 20 September 1993. Janusz Reykowski is a professor at the University of Warsaw and a founding member of the SDRP.

4. *Ibid.* Tomasz Nalecz is a professor at the University of Warsaw and a founding member of the July 8 Movement, a faction of the POUP which was dissolved in 1989. Once a leader of the SDRP, he left due to his belief that the party was unable to “sever its umbilical cord” with the POUP.

5. The 18 November issue of *Zycie Warszawy* reports a conflict between the Minister for Labour, Leszek Miller, and the Vice-Prime Minister and Minister for Finances, Marek Borowski. The former wanted to index retirement payments for 1994 whereas the latter was opposed to any measure which might go against the agreement with the IMF. Apparently, Borowski called on his comrade to step down.

The IMF dictat

THE conditions laid down by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) on the eve of the election and accepted by the Suchocka government are a good illustration of monetarist doctrine. The IMF did not limit itself to demanding limits on inflation; it also stated how it should be done — family allowance payments should not exceed the sum spent in 1992; accident and pre-retirement allowances should be cut back; real salaries in the public sector should be reduced by 5%.

Moreover, the Polish government must align its oil taxes with those of Western Europe (which means a big price increase) and limit subsidies on energy, hot water and rents. Bank credits to the public sector must be limited to the sum of 70, 500 billion zlotys for the year and preferential credits given to agriculture and construction should be limited to 19, 500 billion zlotys. The sum of borrowing by Polish banks abroad cannot surpass US\$1.25 billion. This restriction of credits will lead to a situation in which, in a number of cases, privatisation is the only way to modernise industry. And in case there is still any doubt, the IMF considers (in a report released on 22 September 1993) that the rhythm of privatisations, in particular that of banks and financial institutions, is still too slow.

Finally, the budgetary deficit, limited to 5% of GNP in 1993, must be reduced in 1994 to 4.5% of GNP. And this must be achieved by reducing social and government spending — in a country where already less is spent than in the majority of European countries. The IMF conditions are founded on the highly debatable premise that Polish inflation is produced by low revenues. The goal is not to impose an anti-inflation policy, but rather to place pressure on low revenues so that primitive capitalist accumulation can be accelerated.

Other conditions laid down by the IMF are not even based on ideology. The tax on imports must be lowered from 6% to 3% in 1994 and eliminated in 1995 (in spite of the fact that the growing trade deficit is a significant factor contributing to inflation!). Since customs duties are Poland's only protectionist measure (it has no non-duty protectionist measures such as norms, so common in imperialist countries), imported products will be given a great sales advantage through the elimination of the tax. Finally, the IMF has specified that foreign firms in Poland must be allowed to send out of the country unlimited amounts of profit.

The IMF conditions are a way of imposing the restoration of capitalism, based on an accelerated accumulation of private capital and increased pauperisation of the majority. It can be summarised quite simply: what is given to the rich must be taken from the revenues of the poor, or else inflation might destabilise the process of capital accumulation. ★

Last spring, during the voting on privatisation legislation, the SLD was already divided.⁶ 28 deputies voted in favour of the legislation, 17 against, with the remainder abstaining. Today, SLD ministers are seeing to it that the legislation is applied, although a recent poll by CBOS shows that 61% of public sector workers do not want their enterprise to be included in the programme and that the trade union rank and file is hostile to privatisation.

The PSL, is also divided. According to its former Vice President, "the PSL is (only) united by its desire to govern, its fear of the threat to agriculture, and its appreciation of the limited sovereignty of the country as it capitulates to the dictates of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund."

After the electoral failure of the Catholic parties, this party is being courted by the Catholic hierarchy, in the person of Mgr Orszulik, longtime episcopal secretary and an experienced politician. The announcement by Waldemar Pawlak, PSL leader and the new Prime Minister, that he was willing to ratify the Concordat is a sign of the rapprochement now under way.

Faced with the task of running the government, the PSL and the SLD will have difficulty settling the differences in their ranks. And there will be potential

pitfalls for the new government, in the economic, social and ideological fields.

The new government inherits a delicate economic situation. The State has a heavy public debt of 11 hundred-million zlotys (about US\$55 billion). Servicing this debt will cost about 18% of Gross National Product in 1994. Further, 1993 saw the appearance of a considerable foreign trade deficit, by September reaching nearly US\$2 billion. The negotiations under way for the reduction of the foreign debt take place in the context of attempts to preserve the agreements with the International Monetary Fund, the demands of which are far from purely economic (see above box).

The new government's room for manoeuvre in the area of economic and social policy will be limited so long as the "economic reforms" initiated four years ago remain unchanged. When Waldemar Pawlak introduced his government, he declared, "The new government does not ask itself whether it should pursue or reject the previous economic policy. Rather, we are wondering to what point and how it is possible and necessary to improve it."

The second area in which the governing coalition will have great difficulty maintaining its cohesion is that of Church-State relations. In the previous parliament, the Church managed to impose a

"respect for Christian values" on the media, the Catechism in schools, the outlawing of abortion and the signing of a Concordat with the Vatican which gives it many ideological and material privileges.

The Prime Minister announced that the government will "take the necessary measures to positively close the process of ratifying the Concordat which has already been signed," even though the majority of SLD deputies were opposed to this. He did not mention the question of abortion, although a recent poll showed that 65% of women are in favour of liberalising access while 80% consider that the ban on abortion is a blow to the material condition of their families.

Women deputies have set up a women's inter-party parliamentary caucus, which has asked the Prime Minister to nominate a woman for a Women's Issues Office, and has announced that it will propose legislation liberalising the

6. This programme calls for the privatisation en bloc of 600 firms (for the moment only 367 have been designated), each of which has a yearly turnover of more than US\$10 million and has made profits in previous years. 15% of the shares in these companies will be distributed amongst the employees while the remainder will be spread between about 20 national investment funds managed by banks and managerial enterprises. Part of these shares will be made available to Polish citizens in exchange for an investment certificate, the cost of which cannot be more than 10% of the average salary. This is a combination of privatisation and semi-forced savings.

Election Results

| | Votes(in thou) | % registered votes | % votes cast | Senators | Deputies |
|----------------------|----------------|--------------------|--------------|----------|----------|
| Votes 1993 | 13 800 | 51,00 | 100,00 | 100 | 460 |
| Votes 1991 | 11 219 | 40,77 | 100,00 | | xx |
| SLD 1993 | 2 815 | 10,23 | 20,41 | 37 | 171 |
| SLD 1991 | 1 344 | 4,88 | 11,98 | | 60 |
| UP 1993 | 1 000 | 3,63 | 7,28 | 3 | 41 |
| UP 1991** | 282 | 1,03 | 2,51 | | 5 |
| PSL 1993 | 2 124 | 7,72 | 15,40 | 36 | 132 |
| PSL 1991 | 973 | 3,53 | 8,67 | | 48 |
| PSL-PL 1993 | 327 | 1,18 | 2,37 | 1 | 0 |
| PSL-PL 1991 | 613 | 2,23 | 5,46 | | 28 |
| BBWR 1993*** | 746 | 2,71 | 5,41 | 2 | 16 |
| UD 1993 | 1 460 | 5,30 | 10,59 | 4 | 74 |
| UD 1991 | 1 381 | 5,02 | 12,31 | | 62 |
| KLD 1993 | 551 | 2,00 | 3,99 | 1 | 0 |
| KLD 1991 | 839 | 3,05 | 7,48 | | 37 |
| UPR 1993 | 439 | 1,59 | 3,18 | 0 | 0 |
| UPR 1991 | 252 | 0,92 | 2,25 | | 3 |
| Solidarnosc 1993 | 676 | 2,45 | 4,90 | 9 | 0 |
| Solidarnosc 1991 | 566 | 2,05 | 5,05 | | 27 |
| PC 1993 | 610 | 2,21 | 4,42 | | 0 |
| PC 1991 | 977 | 3,55 | 8,71 | | 44 |
| RDR 1993 **** | 414 | 1,50 | 3,00 | 1 | 0 |
| ZChN 1993***** | 879 | 3,19 | 6,37 | 1 | 0 |
| ZChN 1991***** | 979 | 3,56 | 8,73 | | 49 |
| KPN 1993 | 795 | 2,89 | 5,77 | 0 | 22 |
| KPN 1991 | 841 | 3,06 | 7,50 | | 46 |
| Self defence 1993 | 384 | 1,39 | 2,78 | 0 | 0 |
| Party "X" 1993 | 378 | 1,37 | 2,74 | 0 | 0 |
| Party "X" 1991 | 52 | 0,19 | 0,47 | | 3 |
| German minority 1993 | x | x | x | 1 | 4 |
| German minority 1991 | x | x | x | | 9 |

x : These votes applied only to two regions and are too small to be of significance.

xx : Thirty-nine other deputies elected in 1991 do not appear in this table, their parties having disappeared.

** For 1991 the stated votes are comprised of those for Labour Solidarity (SP) and the Social Democratic Party (RDS), which went on to form the UP.

*** Formed in June 1993, on the initiative of Lech Walesa.

**** The right-wing RDR, led by the former Prime Minister, J Olszewski.

***** The National Christian Union has stood each time in coalition with other parties.

abortion law.⁷ The UD deputy Barbara Labuda, who presides over the women's caucus, has also announced that she will be calling for the legalisation of "common-law marriage" (cohabitation) and opposing the ratification of the Concordat. The government will find it difficult to appease both the Church and its women supporters and this will open up some space for the left-wing.

The Union of Labour (UP), which made a breakthrough in the elections, is the best placed to occupy this space, being the first party not to be based on the historic division between supporters and opponents of the bureaucratic regime. While the UP considers that "the market, privatisation and competition should not be challenged", it nevertheless "reject(s) the dogma by which market regulation should have a generalised character," and has declared its desire to draw up an alternative economic programme.⁸

The discussions preceding the formation of the Pawlak government were a test for the UP, since a number of its leaders were hoping to enter into the government and so were ready to support the neo-liberal course. In the end, the UP completely turned round, putting forward its programme and refusing to capitulate to the neo-liberalism of the SLD leadership.⁹

Mobilisations

However, the UP remains a very inactive party, popular amongst intellectuals, but lacking links to the trade union movement and with virtually no working class support.

Throughout 1992, social mobilisations were taking place at a rapid pace. The preparations for the elections brought them to an end, the people prefer to place their trust in the government. But it is likely that demands will again

be made once it becomes clear that the government is neither willing nor able to satisfy their expectations.

The character of any future working class radicalisation depends in large measure on the UP and trade union representatives in parliament giving a platform to the social movements and helping them formulate a programme of transitional demands. If this parliamentary left is unable to link up with the coming strike movements, it will be the Catholic rightwing which is the beneficiary. It would then be difficult to build on the success of the left-wing in the recent elections. ★

7. It is comprised of 52 of the 73 women deputies in the parliament and includes deputies from the SLD, UP, UD and PSL.

8. *Przywrocmy nadzieje* (Restore Hope), the programmatic document of the UP, Warsaw, August 1993.

9. One of its leaders, Marek Pol, head of the FSR auto plant and former POUP leader, accepted the post of Minister for Industry "on a personal level".

The dilemma of power

THE imperialist press has placed the current situation in Algeria in the spotlight. The gruesome cycle of repression and fundamentalist assassinations has been worse. And populist leader Bélaïd Abdesselam's attempt — until he was removed in August 1993 — to escape IMF dictates was ignored abroad.

SALHI CHAWKI — Algiers, 26 November 1993

BY agreeing to promulgate an investment code which favours the imperialists and to eliminate at the year's end the ad hoc committee that oversees imports, the Algerian regime can now rely on the solidarity of a broad international "humanitarian" front against the fundamentalists.

The dramatic increase in repression after the setting up of the High Committee of the State (HCE) and the suspension of the 26 December elections was first met with silence. The fundamentalist camp was powerless and there was no other opposition, in spite of the success of the January 1992 gathering following a call by the Front of Socialist Forces (FFS).

We then became used to the grisly routine of daily assassinations of senior policemen and those close to them and the odious ritual of televised confessions of those arrested — too soon not to suspect physical abuse. And the League for the Defence of Human Rights has spoken of dozens of cases of torture.

The journey to this point has had its dramatic moments. The assassination in June 1992 of Boudiaf, President of the HCE, which led to fears of chaos and civil war, broke the isolation of the government and won it the support of modernist parties and sectors of the popular masses.

The bomb attack on the Airport and the hideous spectacle of human debris shook the public and turned it against the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS). The murder, in the spring of this year, of the sociologist Liabes, the former Minister for Higher Education, signalled the beginning of attacks on civilians, and a general climate of fear.

It was only the deaths of Francophone intellectuals, from the intellectual and journalist Tahar Djaout to the psychiatry

professor Boucebci, which alerted intellectuals in Europe to what was happening in Algeria.

While the government and its friends thought that they had put an end to the attacks, declaring that "the last fifteen minutes have arrived" (using a well-known phrase of a governor-general during the Algerian War), there were fresh victims — including the journalist Smail Yefsah, whose death provoked unanimous anger.

Fiction

A Sudanese or Iranian plot? A neo-colonial undertaking by the French? Destabilisation by the Algerian secret services and the "politico-financial mafia"? An Israeli operation? The fundamentalists themselves advanced the fiction of an Islamic army commanded by "General Chébouti", supported by a civilian diplomatic force abroad — functioning by word of mouth, with a clandestine radio station, newspapers posted at the entrances to mosques, and a list of people to be assassinated.

In reality, the armed branches of the FIS, such as El-takfir wal Hijra, were largely dismantled during the campaign of preventative repression unleashed in June 1991 following the suspension of elections. From the huge FIS activist movement, only a few thousand became involved in military activities. Although some military leaders, like Chébouti, did emerge, groups tended to be unco-ordinated and disorganised.

As fundamentalism is essentially an urban movement, with little rural base, it was not possible to establish guerrilla forces in the countryside. Those in the mountains near Algiers are city dwellers who came and held the local population hostage. While the Kabyle region is often cited as guerrilla territory, it is

almost totally hostile to the fundamentalist movement. The inaccessibility of certain mountainous regions has simply led a number of fundamentalist groups to seek refuge there; this is true of the Afghan veterans who were found in Bougaa in Kabylie.

If the small number of ambushes and the rare well-planned operation — the assassination of Boudiaf, for example, and the attempt on General Neziar, Minister of Defence — are discounted, the assassinations are usually of civilians or individual policemen doing their daily rounds. It is said that there have been 3 thousand deaths in the last two years; among them, there have been as many taxi drivers as journalists.

The attacks are the work of the small autonomous groups which identify with Chébouti and the Armed Islamic Movement (MIA), the leader of each group making decisions and determining the targets. Military powerlessness leads them to select easy prey: policemen on coffee breaks, civil servants shopping for groceries, or local leaders leaving their apartments.

The violence has become commonplace and is increasingly directed at targets likely to provoke maximum media coverage. According to police, the assassination of intellectuals and journalists is the work of one single group, whose leader, Ras el Ghorab, is on the run. Recently, the Armed Islamic Groups (GIA) and Mekhloufi's (an army deserter) movement also became specialists in this kind of operation.

On the purely military level, the fundamentalists are no threat. The attack on a small military post in Bougzoul, south of Algiers, has not been repeated elsewhere. It is in the political sphere that the government is worried. Even though fundamentalist violence has provoked universal scorn, nevertheless it has managed to terrorise the population, which consequently has elected for neutrality. If they often blame assassinations on secret forces within the government, this is usually to avoid having to confront local fundamentalists.

The attacks have obliged the police and representatives of the State to leave their homes and neighbourhoods and only appear in public in well-protected groups. To underline the presence and

authority of the State, there are numerous blockades and checkpoints, which have deepened already simmering discontent.

To the mounting calls of former democrats for the crushing of heavily populated neighbourhoods, which are the fundamentalist strongholds, the government has replied that it does not wish to throw a political and social life-line to the movement. However, the fundamentalists are already discredited. Held responsible for the general fear and insecurity, they will not be forgiven for attacking junior police officers, and the next door neighbour. They will pay a heavy price for the hundreds of hold-ups and the burned down factories.

IMF demands

The governments which have come and gone since the rise of fundamentalism have all faced the same problem. How can they set up the "market economy" demanded by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and desired by the local propertied classes without destroying the economy? They cannot afford to nourish the social desperation which breeds fundamentalism.

The problem is that with US\$7 billion to US\$9 billion in annual debt repayments — more than 70% of export earnings — the regime needs massive credits every year. Two thirds of food products are imported and the entire economy depends on imports of spare parts. Devaluations of the dinar provoke increased misery and discontent which strengthens the fundamentalists.

To liberalise imports, as the IMF demands, would provoke the immediate collapse of the industrial sector, as occurred in East Germany and Poland. It may be dependent on some outside imports and not be particularly efficient, but it is still significant. There would be no future for the steel, truck, television and railway car industries, the driving forces of the Algerian public sector. There would be no hope for the textile and shoe industries, which are already suffering from competition from smuggled goods. And it would be the end for the industrial complexes which employ thousands of workers.

The various governments have done nothing but make promises in this area, delaying the leap into darkness. It is this refusal to accept the social cost of accelerated liberalisation, within the context of a creeping civil war, which explains the military's appointment of Bélaïd Abdesselam, the father of the industrial-

sation of the 1970s, following the Bou-diaf assassination.

In opposition, Bélaïd proposed, against the liberal reformers, a war economy which could make the minimum required imports without having to go on borrowing. Now in government, he wants imports to be reduced as far as possible over the next three to five years, until the servicing of the debt drops to forty percent of export earnings.

Algeria has spent US\$26 billion over four years in interest and capital for a debt that continues to grow, and which does not include the military debt. Bélaïd intended to escape this trap by doubling the country's natural gas exporting capacity by 1996. Alas, the IMF and Algeria's creditors would not let him do so.

In particular the French demanded that the debt was rescheduled, so that the conditions are entirely clear and no escape possible. When Algeria asked that its regular debt payments be taken into consideration, Camdessus replied that, "Wealth comes to those who pay their debts, but the IMF will only help those who have a reform programme." Or rather, a programme of economic suicide and capitulation to imperialists.

In a long speech, which awakened the anti-imperialism weaved into the consciousness of the Algerian masses, Bélaïd listed the unsavoury items spelled out by Camdessus: devaluation which would halve the average working class wage; budgetary equilibrium which would forbid the government from financing public enterprises in deficit; and the disastrous opening of the national market. All for a derisory financial advantage of US\$1.5 billion.

Bélaïd's promises for the opening-up of free trade zones and facilities for foreign investors were not followed up, which greatly displeased the IMF. He then faced an avalanche of attacks from liberals for his proposed tax on estates, ranging from accusing him of Bolshevism to denouncement in the columns of a number of "independent" newspapers.

Despite his actions, Bélaïd's authoritarianism isolated him from the workers, whom, in the State enterprises, he contained and repressed with draconian disciplinary measures. The drop in the price of oil deprived Algeria of US\$ 1.4 billion in forecast revenues and his ability to revive the economy gave no reason for hope to the popular masses and unemployed youth.

Without the people his populism could not succeed. Further, his brusque style isolated him from all possible part-

ners at a time when the regime was going through a delicate phase, as December 1993 approached, the end of the HCE's "mandate". He was dismissed a few months before.

The government of his successor, Reda Malek, went about reassuring the creditors and the propertied classes. They were calmed by the nomination of Benachhou, a former IMF administrator, as Minister for the Economy. While he says that he would prefer it not to lead to de-industrialisation, he is a supporter of liberalism and plans to agree to the rescheduling of the debt.

But in the real world, he will not be given a choice; the military cannot accept social chaos on the eve of the ending of the HCE. The taboo word "rescheduling" has been excluded and both the national media and imperialist creditors have abandoned their frenetic campaign, worried by the situation of the Algerian masses.

What is disturbing about the rescheduling is not the delay in payment but the humiliating conditions and the likely consequences. The adjustment plan is ready. An investment code has been promulgated, offering considerable fiscal advantages, guarantees on profit repatriation, and administrative facilities with no requirement for re-investment, or other requirements. It authorises free trade zones, which by definition allow imperialist investors to ignore labour laws, avoid taxes, and "forget" about obtaining authorisation for their activities. The liberalisation of imports has been announced and the dinar will be devalued.

Smokescreen

The legal smokescreen created in January 1992, after the President resigned, consisted of the designation of a collegiate structure, the HCE, to act during the remainder of his term of office. But, with the term coming to an end in December 1993, accordingly the army decided to set up a "transition" period of three to five years which would maintain the current anti-democratic order. There is no longer a legal smokescreen but to give it moral legitimacy referenda, all-party conferences and bodies to supervise the period of transition are permitted.

On one side there are the "republican eradicators", who do not wish to run the risk of a referendum and call for the banning of the Islamic parties. On the other there are the "reconcilers", who with the FLN, Aït Ahmed's FFS, Ben Bella and moderate Islamicists in Hamas and

Ennahda have called for the government to show signs of openness and involve the FIS in dialogue. It is an unequal struggle as the eradicators (who have marginal electoral support) have the support of the press.

The question of the credibility of the post-HCE institutions' credibility is a central one. For the moment, the HCE and the National Dialogue Committee, made up of several generals and dignitaries from the regime, have managed well. Their communiqués announce that forty-one parties have made representations and that all support the sacred principles of the nation. It remains to be seen whether these purely formal concessions are sufficient to guarantee the support of the FFS and others for the National Conference which is currently being organised.

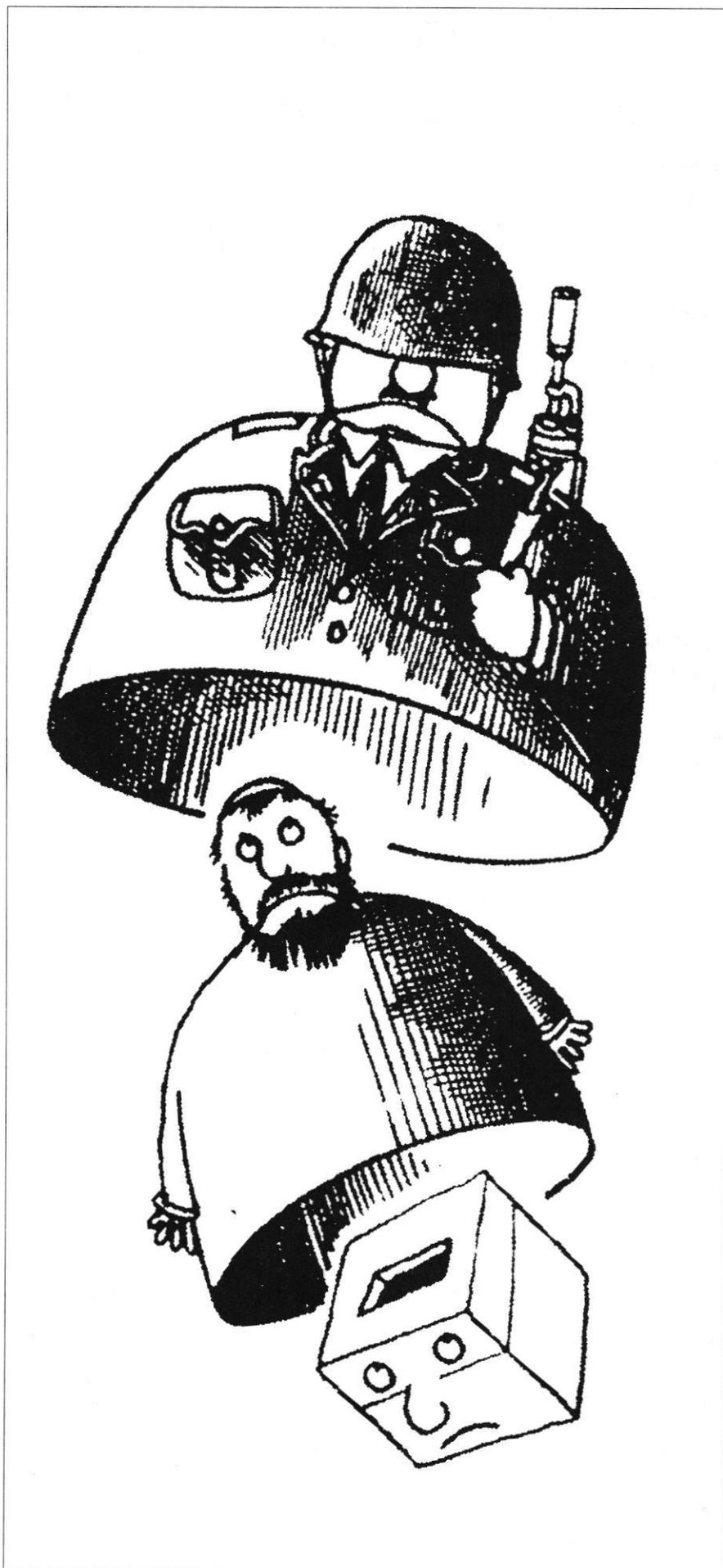
The political crisis has clearly led to a downturn in social struggle. Those sectors which involve themselves in oppositional activity, in spite of the state of emergency and the draconian circulars, have soon been discouraged by new waves of assassinations of civilians. For example, this led Air Algeria maintenance workers to withdraw their strike warning.

Nevertheless, social conflicts in the hundreds have been counted and all of a sudden, things are accelerating — a national strike of office workers in the SNAPAP trade union; notice of a strike on 6 December by the whole industrial region of Rouiba, which employs several tens of thousands of workers; a week-long general strike by education workers; calls from trade unions for a day of protest; and the campaign against the payment of the debt.

Benhammouda, General Secretary of the General Union of Algerian Workers (UGTA), previously a weapon in the liberal campaigns against Bélaïd, has taken up the last, "which was appropriated by the ruling layers."

Were it not for the discrediting of the union leadership, which called for the coup d'état and supported each successive government, and the wave of trade union repression which did little to define goals for its members, the UGTA would be the ideal framework for political recomposition among the masses and would offer a way out of the crisis.

There is still a long road before us. All the more reason to not lose one more minute — to work with all those who are willing to resist the IMF plan, to resist liberal aggression, and build an alternative for the weakest layers of society. ★



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José Borrás Medina

JOSÉ Borrás, worker militant, a member of the section of the Fourth International in the Spanish State for many years, died of cancer on 25 October 1993, aged forty-one.

José Borrás was born in Alicún de Ortega, a small town in the province of Granada. To escape poverty, he migrated to Barcelona when still very young.

In 1968 he became a militant, joining the Communist Group which would later give rise to the Revolutionary Communist League (LCR), the first organisation in Spain to affiliate to the Fourth International since the 1930s.

In the 1970s, during the Franco dictatorship, he led the metal workers' struggles in the Barcelona region and later took part in the reconstruction of the Catalunyan General Workers' Union (UGT), participating in its leadership until the bureaucracy expelled the most radical sections of the union.

For most of his life José Borrás combined the activity of worker militant with that of political leader. In the 1980s he was the principal organiser of the Catalunyan LCR and used this position to contribute decisively to the stimulation of pacifist and anti-militarist activity and also youth work.

Andalucian by origin, he made the struggle for Catalunyan self-determination his own. He decided to speak and write in Catalán and was one of the driving forces in a major collaboration with revolutionary nationalists.

Recently he had again concentrated on union work, as a member of the Workers' Commissions (CCOO) and leader of the local union committee for the parks and gardens of Barcelona, which he combined with promoting anti-racist work in his city of St Boi del Llobregat, in the industrial belt, and political militancy. Not even cancer could prevent him taking part in the activities to which he had dedicated his life.

The life of José Borrás was that of a true revolutionary worker militant, in a period of intense struggles and shameful pacts, great hopes and deep disillusion. If someone ever writes the rich history of the workers' and peoples' struggle in Catalunya during the past twenty-five years, José Borrás will occupy a distinguished place. But if, as is more likely, the story is not written, his memory, like so many real popular leaders, will still live on in the hearts of those who knew him and shared the exertions and struggles, dreams and disappointments, modest victories and deep defeats, learning the grammar of struggle, organisation and belief in the self-emancipation of the working class. ★



Sri Pathmanathan

OUR Sri Path, who stood like a giant, kind, sacrificing and unshaken, is no more. He died recently in London.

Comrade Path joined us in 1971, when the fore-runner of the Nava Sama Samaja Party (NSSP) was a faction in the Lanka Sama Samaja Party. He had high hopes for the United Front Government, and returned to Sri Lanka from England to participate in the promised revolution. It was not long before he realised his mistake and was subsequently drawn to us. He then committed himself intensely to the struggle against coalition politics and the repressive policies of the government.

Sri Path took the initiative in the campaign against eviction of estate workers. He was successful in drawing the attention of the Western media, including the BBC, to the plight of estate workers, appearing prominently in a subsequent documentary. The campaign led to the establishment of the OOTRU which pioneered the settlement of displaced workers in the Vavuniya district.

We could not have launched our paper, *Vama Sama Samajaya*, published in Sinhala, Tamil and English, without his special efforts. He would give every penny he could to the Party, particularly to help establish an independent workers' press.

He saw no way forward for the Tamil people within the Sinhala dominated bourgeois State and therefore strove to link the Tamil liberation struggle with that of the working class as a whole. On his return to England he continued, alongside the NSSP's other British supporters, to participate with militant Tamil organisations with the perspective of uniting the working masses.

Whenever one of us visited England, Sri path, his companion Sheila and their children were always ready to help. We dip our unblemished red flag of liberation, democracy and socialism for our departed comrade Sri Path: a true fighter against repression and racism, and for socialism. ★

Senegal

ON 5 November, a peaceful demonstration of several thousand people, against the proposed reduction by fifteen percent of salaries in the public sector, was violently repressed by the Senegalese police, resulting in thirty being seriously injured. A hundred and thirty-three were arrested, many of whom were leaders of the political opposition and the trade union movement: Landing Savane, a parliamentary deputy and leader of the And Jeff/African Party for Socialism and Democracy (AJ/PADS — see IV no. 221, 3/2/92); Ousmane Ngom and Abdoulaye Faye, both parliamentary deputies for the Senegalese Democratic Party (PDS); Boubacar Diop, secretary general of the Federation for Education and Research (FEDER); Amadou Guiro of PADS and member of the Fourth International; and Moustapha Sy, a leader of the Moustarchidini, an Islamic organisation opposed to the regime of Abdou Diouf.

On 12 November they were sentenced to six months in prison. As soon as the arrests were known there were protests both in Europe and the United States of America and they have now been released.

The austerity measure against which the demonstration was protesting, like similar measures, have been prompted principally by the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the French State, which is the dominant power in Senegal. In Paris orchestrated press campaigns have presented the Senegalese regime as an example of democracy and moderation. Successive French governments have hidden or minimalised what is happening in Dakar. Abdou Diouf is committed to guaranteeing French interests in Senegal; there is a French military base, the Senegalese army is regularly sent into various African countries to further French policy, and there is an important expatriate community of more than 14 thousand people who play a key role in political and economic affairs.

The situation in Senegal is a prime example of Western hypocrisy. Despite apparent support for development and democratisation the West soon returns to protect its friends and interests. An opposition is tolerated only so long as it does not engage in real social struggles, when it is seen as a threat to European and American interests. The mess that has resulted from the West's "support" has resulted in huge redundancies, wage cuts, a reduction in the number of health workers by thirty-two percent in eight years, abandonment of the rural population and a massive flight in capital. Repression has become the ultimate instrument of government. ★