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PEACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST

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The Socialist International is deeply committed to the peace process in the Middle East. We now have as members not only the Labour Party and Mapam of Israel, but also Fatah, the largest political movement in the Palestinian Authority, as well as our member parties in Egypt and in Lebanon. When Shimon Peres and Yasser Arafat met at the SI Council in Rome for the first time as fellow members of the International, this was a moving moment for us all, symbolic of the great achievement of the Oslo peace accords. We recalled the many years of patient work to establish a climate of dialogue and understanding between the parties of the region - work begun more than twenty years ago by such distinguished leaders of the Socialist International as Willy Brandt, Bruno Kreisky, François Mitterrand and Olof Palme.

Much has been achieved which once seemed impossible. Much remains to be done and the obstacles are still great. Whatever the difficulties and setbacks, there is a deep acceptance within our International, as amongst all our members in the Middle East, that peace through dialogue is now an irreversible option. There is nothing to be gained through violence, intransigence and prejudice. The international community must continue to give undiminished moral and concrete support to the Oslo process which represents the only path to the peace, understanding and development needed by all the peoples of the Middle East.

MIDDLE EAST ENCOUNTER

Shimon Peres:

This is a very moving moment, I think, for all of us, including myself. During the negotiations we have had the problem of how to address Yasser Arafat. The Palestinians call him president and we call him chairman. It almost became a national dispute of a very dangerous dimension. Then I suggested, and Arafat agreed, that we should call him 'Rais'. Rais is an Arabic president and a Hebrew chairman. So we found a solution. Today I am very happy to call him by a new title, comrade.

I myself took over the Israel Labour Party twenty years ago. Undoubtedly Palestinian/Israeli relations were then at the top of our agenda and of the Socialist International's agenda. I can remember the arguments, the disappointments, the loss of hope, the persistent sentiment. It was basically an impossible problem to solve - almost of a messianic nature. (The great thing about the messiah is that he never arrived.) And I thought it would remain a permanent subject for the Socialist International.

Permit me, on a note of sentiment, to remember some people with whom we had great arguments. If they were alive they would be the happiest people today. I am referring to Willy Brandt, to Bruno Kreisky and Olof Palme, to François Mitterrand. All these great figures in our lives who fought so nobly, so determinedly, to arrive at this moment when Yasser Arafat would become a member of this great civilised organisation. It shows that nothing is impossible. It is only people who think it is impossible.

When it comes to the Middle East, it is easier to agree about the future, but impossible to agree about the past. Now we can have a good look at the past with an agreeing eye. We fought. It was not just a matter of argument, but also of bloodshed, of people losing their lives - on the Palestinian side, on our side - of heaps of hatred, of Olympuses of misunderstanding. The roads were blocked; situations were desperate. Now we have lost the elections, but the Likud party has lost its ideology. Because for the last fifty years, since the creation of the state of Israel, the Likud party has considered the territorial issue to be the most important single subject. They insisted that Israel should control all the territories, even if this control meant controlling other people against their wishes. We said no, you cannot be 'territorial' without being immoral. You cannot be too geographic without understanding that the land is not empty. If we continue to gamble with the lives of other people we may not lose ground in the territorial sense, but we shall lose ground in the historic sense. We shall do wrong, even if we do it in a wider area.

For us, as I believe for all of us in our socialist parties, what happened between us and the Palestinians is first of all a moral victory. In these times when people have

Shimon Peres, SI vice-president and leader of the Israel Labour Party, and Yasser Arafat, President of the Palestinian Authority, attended the SI Council held in Rome in January 1997. They exchanged these words of comradeship.



Peres and Arafat in Rome

become so cynical and sceptical, this is not a triumph, this is not the winning of a war, this is a return to our basic civilisation. And from that point of view I think it is a moving moment for all of us.

It has also shown that realities occasionally may be stronger than policies. And that peace may be stronger than policies. I am not so sure that what happened in Hebron was exactly the choice of the present government. But I am very glad about it. The government has submitted to the call of a new reality. The reality of peace has a life of its own, showing a tremendous strength, and I believe this strength gained an expression in the work of our parliament when 87 members voted for the agreement and only 17 opposed it - an agreement prior to which there was supposedly not too large a majority. I liked comrade Arafat's speech in Hebron very much. It was in many ways a speech of conciliation, of renewal of our relations. All of us will have to continue and build a trust in our expressions, a bridge of new understanding. It will serve the purpose very well. Yet the Labour Party will have fought for the agreement, accepted by the two sides. And I want to tell Gro Harlem Brundtland that Oslo is coming very near to Jerusalem, visionary promises are becoming realities, and nobody can stop the march of time.

We shall support it, whether in opposition or otherwise, because, as the Labour Party, the socialist party, the issue of peace remains at the top of our agenda. I have no illusions. Hebron was actually agreed. It was then re-opened for negotiations, to my taste unnecessarily. I think these were closed without any real changes. It was rather a waste of time, and the loss of goodwill totally unnecessary.

Yet there is a long list of decisions before us, and I do not want to be light-minded about them. The basic decisions are, firstly, to implement the redeployment in the West Bank in accordance with the Oslo agreements. Maybe the government has extended the implementation period to eleven months instead of a pregnancy of

6 nine months. As far as we are concerned, we would like to see the baby being delivered on time.

Then we have to reach a permanent solution with the Palestinians - fair in nature, durable in character and correct on time, namely before the end of this century. Because there are other forces that are threatening the Palestinian's lives, and our lives also. I am referring to the fundamentalist movement which is trying to acquire nuclear bombs and using acts of terrible terror.

Then the agenda is not yet over. We cannot have a collection of separated islands of peace in the Middle East. The Middle East must become a continent of peace, where wild winds will not have a chance to blow in between and create storms and dangers. So we shall have to return and negotiate with the Syrians, with President Assad, and arrive at a comprehensive peace. Is it difficult? Yes, if we look ahead. Is it possible? Yes, if we look back. What has been achieved gives us reason to believe that we can achieve more and that we can achieve a comprehensive peace.

Then I would say: as far as we are concerned - and as far as the Socialist International is concerned - peace is a breakthrough, but one must ask, what is behind the breakthrough? What will happen afterwards? It is not enough just to get rid of the hatred and the threats. We have to offer the people a different way of life. As far as we are concerned, we think the best we can do is to introduce science, technology, information and above all education, as a common heritage to all the children of Abraham. Science, technology, information, and education do not have borders. They do not distinguish between black and white people, between north and south. This is an invitation to a world where borders, distances and differences are disappearing.

A week ago, I met with Comrade Arafat in Paris and we had an idea which I believe symbolises what I mean. In Israel we have a Weizman Institute which has really advanced science very much in the state of Israel. We suggested the building of an institute - this time not an Israeli one, but a Palestinian/Israeli one - on the border, on the line between the territory controlled by the Palestinians and the territory controlled by us. It would be in the vicinity of Jericho and the Walls of Jericho, which have been brought down once already, but by the herald of war. This time I hope the walls will disappear in the face of a different message, of a new hope, a new cooperation. We shall not stop making peace at a political line. We have to go ahead and build a new society and a new relationship.

And finally, let me say a word about the European role in the Middle East. Dear friends, you can play a tremendous role, if you are ready to have a European role, not just a European presence. Europe has decided to invest in the Middle East, in the coming five years, seven billion dollars paralleled in loans. That is 14 billion dollars. It is a very effective sum of money. Please do not distribute it to different companies and to different countries. At its simplest, foreign aid is a matter of taking money from the poor people in the rich countries and handing it over to the rich people in the poor countries. If you will, invest the seven billion dollars or the 14 billion dollars in two subjects, and in two subjects only, in two regional issues. One is education and the other irrigation. That is the best investment.

Today capital is not money, capital is knowledge and the young girl, the young boy who has no chance to acquire knowledge will be handicapped for the rest of their lives. How to cope with the new future? How to learn to learn? Today you can computerise education. This we did in our own education. The results are unbelievable, superb. There are still many illiterate young people in the Middle East. Give them a chance. This is socialism in our time: the distribution of knowledge, the intellectual equipment of a young generation. To understand that the future comes from the future; it does not mean a continuation of the past.

And another thing is irrigation. The population has grown, water has become scarce and the desert is eating up the land. The time has come to organise irrigation, both by conducting the water in more modern systems and by producing new water, say by recycling, by desalination and cooperation, by introducing new

vegetables and fruits that drink less water. What we have in mind to build in Jericho will be based on bio-technology and agriculture. 7

So let us irrigate the land and let us supply intellectual food to the children.

Yasser Arafat:

On the occasion of the Council meeting of the Socialist International, it gives me great pleasure to extend to you the compliments of the Palestinian people, who hold in high respect and appreciation this movement which has devoted special attention and care to the Palestinian problem, to the just cause of our Palestinian people, and to the conflict in the Middle East. You also continue to exert every possible effort to encourage and pave the way to Palestinian/Israeli dialogue.

On this occasion I salute with deep gratitude the memory and the role of the pioneer leaders of this movement such as Willy Brandt, Bruno Kreisky, Olof Palme, François Mitterrand, and many other leaders of the Socialist International, an organisation which remains faithful in its principles, sincere in its aspirations and goals in defending the right of peoples to self-determination, freedom, equality and democracy. I cannot forget your role, from the beginning, in pushing forward the peace process. This has touched all Palestinian and Israeli hearts.

It is not by accident that the Palestine National Liberation Movement (FATAH) has joined your venerable community as a member. This leading political movement occupies a central position in the life and history of our Palestinian people, and in pioneering its just struggle to achieve its freedom and national independence.

We are present here today at this meeting, side by side with the Israel Labour Party and other Israeli parties which were and still are our partners in the historic peace process that started in Oslo and culminated with the signing of the Declaration of Principles Agreement in Washington on 13 September 1993. The historic handshake that day with my deceased friend Yitzhak Rabin and with my dear friend Shimon Peres helped our two peoples and the peoples of the region to end a painful period and to open a new phase of cooperation, understanding and dialogue in order to establish and build a peace of the brave in our region. This peace still requires good intentions, strong persistence and a solid will to continue the peaceful march towards the achievement of our goal: this promised end which includes security, stability, welfare and prosperity for all the peoples and states of the area, so that we can achieve a just comprehensive and lasting peace for the future generations of our children.

You all know that a few days ago we signed a Protocol concerning the redeployment in Hebron. This agreement was concluded after protracted negotiations and the most welcome efforts of our friends and brothers who are concerned with the success and the progress of the peace process, besides the decision taken by Mr Netanyahu himself. In this context, we want to thank President Clinton for his personal efforts and for mandating an American delegation to the region. We also thank the European Union and its representative, Mr Moratinos. We thank His Excellency President Mubarak and His Majesty King Hussein for their good offices in achieving this Protocol. We hope it will be implemented accurately and honestly, in particular regarding the redeployment from more Palestinian land, in accordance with the designated dates and timetable, which is to say no later than the middle of next year. The materialisation of these measures, as well as the seeking and finding of rapid solutions to the pending issues of the Interim Accord, will create a new atmosphere of mutual confidence and cooperation. This will certainly contribute to the serious resumption of the Final Status Negotiations in order to find a just and lasting solution which will determine the future of coexistence and cooperation between the Israelis and the Palestinians, as well as the success of the entire peace process.

- 8 We are looking forward to achieving comprehensive peace in the Middle East, and we need your efforts and the efforts of all those who believe in this peace process to move it ahead on the Syrian and Lebanese tracks.

The Palestinian leadership entered the Madrid negotiations on the basis of the resolutions of international legitimacy, and on the principle of land for peace, and signed the Oslo agreements - the first and the second - to establish the peace of the brave with our Israeli neighbours on the basis of mutual recognition, fairness and the equal rights of the Palestinian and the Israeli peoples. By doing so we agreed on the principle of graduality, and accepted the idea of the interim period. We did so, amongst other reasons, to prove our goodwill towards the peace process. Hence peace is our irreversible strategic option. I repeat, it is our irreversible strategic option, based on equality, mutual respect and security for all.

You all know that we have shown great flexibility, self-control and full commitment to the agreements, and when we signed the executive protocol with Mr Netanyahu recently we committed ourselves, as we have always done, to the peace process and to putting it back on the right track. As we follow this approach, we urge all our friends, the forces of justice, peace, freedom and democracy, who defend the right of peoples to self-determination, to exert every possible effort and concern to maintain the huge achievements that have been realised up to now, since the initiation of the peace process, to embody this tremendous aspiration. We are all looking forward to building together the monument of a just and lasting peace in the region.

This peace we are seeking and do our best to achieve, with its cherished objectives, will not be complete and will face many risks and threats because of the support given to settlement activities all over the Palestinian territories, particularly in Holy Jerusalem, El-Quds; because of the ongoing closure policy, the closure of the occupied territories, the economic siege and the attempts to impose de facto policies from one side on a number of major issues to be discussed at the Final Status Negotiations.

On behalf of the Palestinian people and on my own behalf, I once again express our high appreciation for your support at this critical moment, in which we are designing and building a new era of peace, based on coexistence, cooperation, justice and equality. ■

ON THE FRONTIER OF THE NEW MILLENNIUM

Raimon Obiols, Chair of the International's Mediterranean Committee, underlines the importance of good relations among the peoples who live around the shores of that sea.

The great question posed by the politics of the Mediterranean today can be simply put. It is a clear alternative between two completely different scenarios.

Within a quarter of a century from now the Mediterranean will be either a sea of peace, prosperity and good-neighbourliness among cultures, or the scene of grave social, political and cultural conflicts.

This question affects not just the peoples of the Mediterranean. The Mediterranean Sea, which for classical writers was literally the 'centre of the world', is once again today on the frontier of a new century and a new millennium. It is a central space which encapsulates and concentrates the great tensions of today's world. It has stopped being the 'frontier Mediterranean' of which Braudel spoke and has become a global space for mediation and the fault-line between a developed North and an impoverished South. It is an area of different encounters and exchanges, of numerous clashes between societies and cultures which are at the same time very close and very different and which involve religious and cultural confrontations and tremendously unequal economic and social development.

It is, finally, an area full of uncertainties and great question marks about the future. Will the Mediterranean be the ideal laboratory in which to test the conservative theses about the fatal inevitability of the 'clash of civilisations'? Will it be the Rio Grande of Fortress Europe? Will it be the battleground of fundamentalist and racist doctrines of the 21st century in a context of increasing barbarism?

Or will it be a region of shared development and common prosperity for the peoples who inhabit its shores? Will it be the bridge to the future - a bridge towards re-discovery, solidarity and prosperity between Europe, Africa and Asia? Will it be a 'sun belt' or a 'slum belt'?

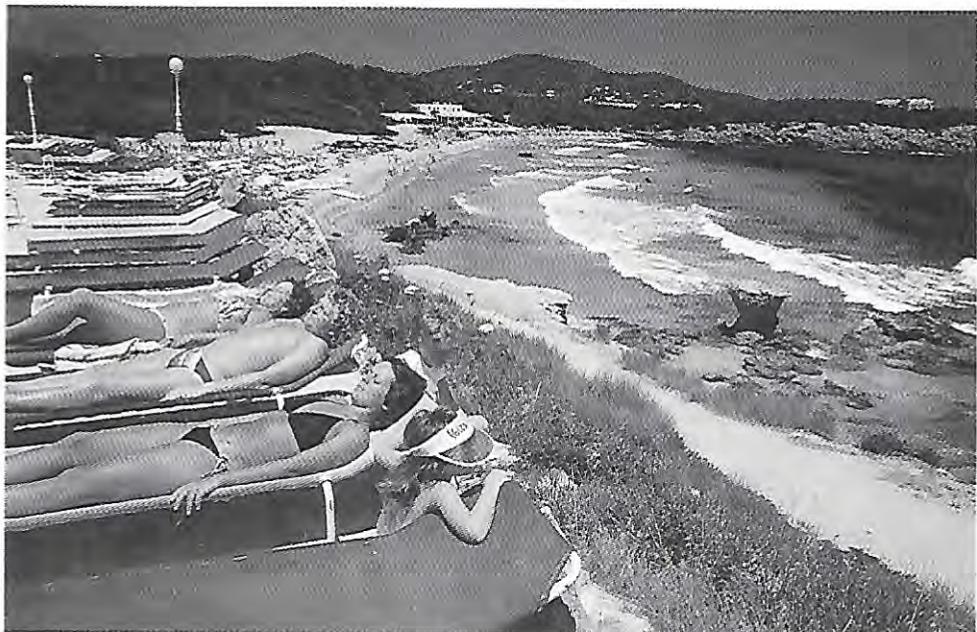
On what happens in this region in the next few years depends not just the destiny of the peoples of the Mediterranean but something more - the very character of a world development which is hovering between different possible futures. E M Forster's phrase, 'The Mediterranean is the human norm' is valid in this context. The Mediterranean is a region of age-old conflicts and is also the cradle of basic ideas and cultures without which our world would not exist. Its future will inevitably mark the future of the world, for good or ill.

We socialists of the region who have strengthened our links in the context of the Socialist International Mediterranean Committee are not inclined to agree with the prophets of gloom, with those who theorise about the end of history or with those who proclaim the clash of civilisations. We believe that the peoples and the states of the Mediterranean can advance together towards peace, prosperity, dialogue and solidarity.

Why should we resign ourselves to some hypothetical inevitability of catastrophe? Why should we give up the perfectly possible task of seeking a future of peace, openness and welfare? The solutions to future problems are not pre-ordained and already recorded in some historical law. They will be provided by what we do or fail to do in the field of politics, the economy and culture.

In a panorama marked by the simultaneous development of a number of conflicts and processes of cooperation in the region, we believe we can overcome the former and make decisive advances in the latter. There reside the hopes of the peoples of the Mediterranean for the 21st century.

But we are not naive. We know all about the enormous differences, the mutual ignorance, the widespread attitudes of rejection, the signs of xenophobia and racism. Although there is increasing awareness of a common destiny, of an economic, social and political future in which interdependence will be a more powerful link than the colonial dependency of the past, there are in the Mediterranean very deep divisions of an economic and social, cultural and religious nature which can certainly get deeper in the

*Mediterranean at play...*

next few years and give rise to tragic and uncontrollable tensions and conflicts. At the same time it will not be possible to contain such conflicts within frontiers. Never has the linkage between the two shores been so narrow and so deep. It will become narrower and deeper in the years to come.

Here are some figures. Some 20 states have a Mediterranean coastline. Four of them - France, Greece, Italy and Spain - are members of the European Union, whose 165 million inhabitants have an average annual income of 19,000 dollars. The 235 million inhabitants of the other Mediterranean states have an average annual income of 1,900 dollars, a tenth of the figure. In 1992 the four Mediterranean countries within the EU controlled about 88 per cent of the region's GNP. A Spaniard is ten times richer than a Moroccan. A French person (20,680 dollars each in 1991) is thirteen times richer than an Egyptian (600 dollars).

Less than half the population produces and uses more than four-fifths of the value of the trade done in the Mediterranean region. The trade flows among the countries of the Maghreb in the south-west and the Mashrek in the south-east do not exceed seven per cent of the trade of the region.

In the North what the experts call the demographic transition (the transition to a modern regime of balance with low levels of mortality and low birthrates) is over. In the South the transition has started but is a long way from completion.

In the space of a generation, by about the year 2025, the population of the four EU states, 170 million, will have hardly increased while that of the rest of the Mediterranean states will have risen by 70 per cent to nearly 400 million.

From Europe, which is historically accustomed to a situation where the North has more people (which explains many of the colonialist actions of the past), this growth in the population of the South is viewed with fear. It is talked about as though it was a time-bomb. This is a failure to understand that in great part it is a question of compensation or levelling out in societies which have notably fallen back demographically. Moreover the latest statistics show to what extent the speed of the fall in birthrates in the countries of the southern shore has been underestimated. The Maghreb has begun its demographic transition, to the extent that the real fault-line could be traced between the Mashrek in the south-eastern part of the Mediterranean and the Maghreb in the south-west, while the gap between Europe and the Maghreb will tend to disappear.

The problem lies rather in the economic and social circumstances in which this

southern demographic explosion is taking place, because the South has not had the economic means to carry out its demographic levelling-out. And that brings with it tremendous social consequences. In employment, for example, every year the demand for jobs, as determined by population growth, varies between 1.6 and 1.8 million - of which 80 per cent is on the southern shore. A massively young population is concentrated in the South, and there is a great deal of youth unemployment. The paradox is that around the year 2000 Tunisia will need to create more jobs than Spain despite the fact that its total population is no more than a quarter of Spain's.

In recent years unemployment has risen by 53 per cent in the South, against only nine per cent in the North. It has been accurately remarked that just as the southern shore of the Mediterranean lacks the necessary economic resources for its demographic development, so the northern shore lacks the demographic resources for its economic development. There lies one of the basic explanations of the problem of migration in the Mediterranean region. While the frontiers of the North are closed, those of the South are tending to open ever wider to allow the young people who have no work to escape at any price.

Also in the South the demographic growth taking place in conditions of poverty generates grave problems of quality of life and environmental degradation. On the southern and eastern shore, there is a tumultuous process of urbanisation, abandonment of the countryside and decay of rural life, growing destitution and urban problems. Today about 58 per cent of the population lives in the cities. It is calculated that in the medium term this percentage will rise to more than 80 per cent. The rate of urban growth on the southern shore is five times greater than that of the European cities in their period of greatest growth.

Meanwhile the destruction of the environment is proceeding faster. The Brundtland Commission showed how close is the relationship between the safeguarding of the environment and the level of development. As Willy Brandt said on this subject, 'We know very well that the continuing poverty of human beings compels them to pillage nature'. The future of the environmental balance in the Mediterranean genuinely depends on the re-establishment of a social and economic equilibrium between the two shores.

If two words can concisely define the present situation of the Mediterranean, these are imbalance and interdependency. The imbalance is dramatic and frightening - in levels of wealth, in living conditions, in demography, in the structure of production, in the structure of the labour market, in the geographic distribution of foreign trade...

The interdependency is equally obvious. The rich countries of the region cannot shut their eyes to the evidence that their future is inextricably linked with that of their southern neighbours. Although their interests may be determined more by questions of security, it is clear that advances have been made in the perception of the realities which have to be faced. The southern countries know, too, that there will be no possibility of development for them without a close relationship with the economies and societies of the North. And this is contributing to a common desire for a shared political, social and economic future.

Consequently, despite the problems and crises, the perception of our common interests is winning out over the deep gulfs and has been creating a new framework of relationships in the countries of the region. That development was boosted by the Euro-Mediterranean conference in Barcelona in 1995.

Europe has long undervalued the importance of the Mediterranean basin. It has looked more towards the North and towards the East than towards the South. That has been a gross error, because without an active role in the Mediterranean and without cooperation between its two shores the European Union will abdicate its basic responsibilities. Security, stability and cooperation in the Mediterranean are objectives which must be reached and which cannot be delegated.

In recent times the idea seems to have blossomed that the fate of the Mediterranean region will be decided in the next 25 years, for good or ill, and that the European Union must play an essential role if the challenges of the future - economic and social, political,



...Mediterranean in conflict

cultural and environmental - are to be faced satisfactorily.

In November 1995 in Barcelona the Euro-Mediterranean Conference brought together for the first time in history the fifteen countries of the European Union and their twelve neighbours to debate their common problems. The European Union had approved new assistance to the region, set at 4,685 million ECUs, to which has to be added an equivalent contribution from the European Investment Bank. This considerable increase in financial aid raised expectations that the conference would strengthen bonds between the southern Mediterranean countries and the European Union.

Naturally the mere holding of the Euro-Mediterranean conference has changed nothing. That it took place does not mean that the very grave problems which affect our regions have been solved. That is far from the case. In the field of practical accords the important practical decisions have been the agreement of the European Council at Cannes and the bilateral agreements signed with Tunisia, Israel, Morocco or Turkey.

Nevertheless the Euro-Mediterranean conference has served to create a positive spirit which should bring about a new stage in relations between the northern and southern shores of the Mediterranean, and the Barcelona Declaration has become a point of reference for the new stage founded on dialogue, mutual confidence and fair cooperation.

Now there are two risks to be avoided. The first is that frustration may be generated because expectations have not been matched by achievements. The second is that the final outcome will be no more than a free-trade area. The latter aspect is a particularly sensitive one for the socialist and progressive forces of the region. An ultra-liberal strategy would accentuate the existing inequalities in the Mediterranean, the displacement of populations, poverty and marginalisation. If religious fundamentalism has grown more important and combative, it has been for such reasons and because it has stepped into the vacuum generated by the collapse of past illusions: nationalism, state socialism, militarism and government by technocrats.

One does not have to embrace the conservative thesis of the clash of civilisations as the fatal destiny of humanity in the 21st century to see the gravity of the challenges represented by the emergence of old and new fundamentalisms in the region. We reject the view of an inevitable clash of civilisations with the Mediterranean as one of its fields of conflict. We believe rather in a future with dialogue, rapprochement and solidarity in the Mediterranean. The challenge, on both sides of our sea, is one of political will. This is an urgent task for the progressive and socialist forces of the Mediterranean. ■

CRISIS BY THE GREAT LAKES

*Ousmane Tanor Dieng,
first secretary of the
Socialist Party of Senegal,
emphasises the need for
urgent diplomacy in Africa.*

After the bloody civil conflicts in Rwanda two years ago and the trauma of genocide in Burundi a situation of war has been developing for some months past in the Zaïrean province of South Kivu. The crisis there arises from the problem of the Banyamulenges who are Tutsis of Rwandan origin who have been installed there since the last century.

The National Sovereign Conference which was held in Kinshasa, the Zaïrean capital, in 1993 had questioned the status of the Banyamulenges as Zaïrean citizens after others in the area, it seemed, had pressed for the Banyamulenges to quit Zaïre so that they could take over the vacated land. During the conflict in Rwanda in 1994 many young Banyamulenges joined the Rwandan Patriotic Front, the FPR, which has continued to this day to give them military training. It is thought that it was these young Banyamulenges who went with their arms and their equipment to Rwanda and from there to South Kivu at the end of September 1996. The Zaïrean army was not able to turn them back and sought assistance from local tribes.

At the same time the events in South Kivu can also in part be connected to the imposition of regional sanctions on the Burundian régime of Major Pierre Buyoya which took power after the coup d'état of 25 July 1995. It is certainly the case that the Rwandan and Burundian authorities have several times rejected the accusations of the Zaïrean army that their armies had invaded South Kivu. But finally Rwanda admitted that it had sent a commando unit into Zaïre in order to neutralise a unit of the Zaïrean army which had been pillaging its territory.

The internal political situation has meanwhile complicated the crisis even more. This country is undergoing a long period of transition with elections continually deferred.

In such a situation the international community is actively looking for solutions. Thus it was that on 30 October 1996 the UN Secretary General named senior Canadian diplomat Raymond Chrétien his special envoy for the Great Lakes region. His mission was to establish a ceasefire needed to open negotiations, to explore the possibilities of rapidly calling a regional conference and to submit to the Secretary General a report on the need and structure of a UN presence in the region. For their part the African countries have taken several initiatives to end the crisis; the heads of state of Zimbabwe, Cameroon, Kenya, South Africa, Uganda, Ethiopia, Egypt and Rwanda met in Nairobi on 16 December 1996 in the notable absence of Zaire. They noted on that occasion the lack of respect for the ceasefire decreed during the regional summit held in the Kenyan capital and charged their foreign ministers to take steps to seek its enforcement. The heads of state at the same time appealed to the international community to continue aid for the reception and resettlement of hundreds of thousands of Rwandan refugees, returning from Zaire and Tanzania.

But the most important result of the summit was the reaffirmation of the principle of the permanent nature of frontiers inherited from colonial days. Many fears had arisen several weeks previously when the Rwandan defence minister had alluded to a need for another conference in the Great Lakes region similar to the one held in Berlin a century ago. But it needs more than a communiqué to contain and solve the great dangers that exist in such a sensitive region as that of the Great Lakes. The real solution will come only after international public opinion has been mobilised.

Two measures could help towards a solution. The first would be the deployment of an international force between the belligerents and then the holding of an international conference on peace, security and stability in the region. Such a meeting could be convened and organised jointly by the UN, the Organisation of African Unity and the European Union. With such an aim in mind it is useful to recall the positions of the principal actors in the crisis. At the outset Zaire, with a large land area and 44 million inhabitants divided in 250 ethnic groups, seems at risk because of internal political dissensions which have been present for some years and which are aggravating economic difficulties. To that must be added the state of health of President Mobutu. Some observers also feel that the Zaïrean army is demoralised because of its lack of equipment



Natural beauty...

and not ready for any serious hostilities.

At the same time it is clear that the government of Rwanda has been successful in attaining the aims which it set itself when it took power in July 1994, viz. to oblige Hutu refugees to quit Kivu, thus putting an end to the danger of infiltration by Hutu irregulars and soldiers of the former Rwandan army who lived hidden within the refugee camps. The risk of the destabilisation of the west of Rwanda is now no longer immediate and the Rwandan government is no longer calling for a new redistribution of land in the region with the risk of changing the colonial frontiers, a move which would be clearly a grave danger for Africa.

Rwanda, as of course is the case with Burundi, has a need for more room to live than its present territory where the population density is 229 inhabitants per square kilometre, against 21 inhabitants per square kilometre in South Kivu in Zaïre. In Rwanda and Burundi alike war, fear and hate arise from the cramped conditions and the shortage of land. Then the political weight of Uganda will certainly be felt as the crisis in the Great Lakes region takes its course. It must be noted that one senior figure in the Rwandan government has previously occupied a high and powerful position in Uganda and that President Yoweri Museveni himself, a Tutsi, came to power with the help of guerrillas of the same ethnic background and currently maintains his influence thanks to his alliance with the Tutsi aristocracy which is influential in the armies of Rwanda and Burundi.

It is perhaps these very complexities which explain the hesitations of the international community to take steps in the region. The OAU and the UN seem increasing focused on the humanitarian content of the crisis, despite the fact that this is inseparable from the armed conflicts. For their part the European nations gathered in the Netherlands at the instance of France on 19 November last to prepare what was needed for a military and humanitarian intervention on behalf of the refugees and to protect the cultural integrity of Zaïre. But deep differences emerged between France, Belgium, Italy and Spain on the one hand and Great Britain, the Netherlands and Portugal on the other - the latter countries being more favourable to the US position which calls for any action to be preceded by a dialogue among Zaïreans including the rebels under Laurent Kabila who occupy territory and who threaten the stability of Zaïre. There is a risk at present of a sort of partitioning of Zaïre. This would have a catastrophic effect on central Africa - and indeed Africa as a whole - since Zaïre has frontiers with eleven other countries.

The meeting in the Netherlands delivered a communiqué to the effect that the OAU could provide the logistical support for an African force and this should be done with the

agreement of other parties, including the United States and Rwanda and Burundi which had opposed the presence of any international, or even African, force.

International opinion has not advanced from the proposition made at that time by France, which wanted two forms of international action; in the short term the resettlement of refugees returning to Rwanda and aid to those who have stayed in Zaïre and to displaced Zaïreans, and in the longer term moves to gather together the leaders of the sub-region for contacts in preparation for a regional conference on the situation in the Great Lakes. It is seen as essential to preserve the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Zaïre and to stabilise the internal situation of this strategically placed country as the effort is made to develop democracy and find a solution to the problem of the nationality of the Tutsi and Hutu refugees in Zaïre.

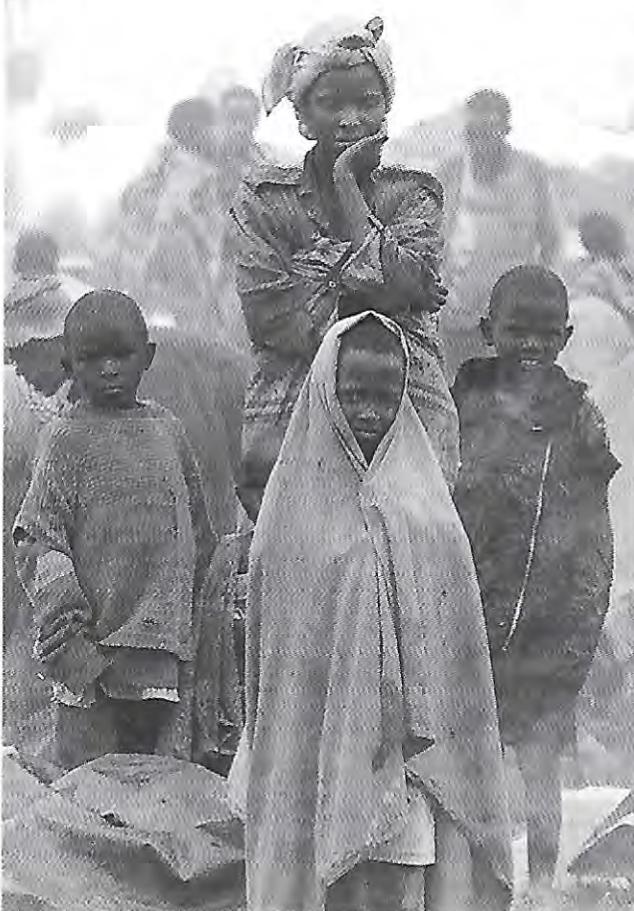
Meanwhile mention must be made of a neighbouring problem in the Horn of Africa which could have an important bearing on the Great Lakes situation as the situation between Eritrea and Sudan get worse and civil war continues in Sudan. Relations between the two countries deteriorated when Eritrea broke off diplomatic relations on 5 December 1994, accusing the Sudanese government of intimidation and terrorism aimed at destabilising it. The prospects are all the worse since Sudan, which once gave asylum to the present Eritrean head of state, continues to house some 500,000 Eritrean refugees and accuses Eritrea of practising a selective repatriation of the refugees to the detriment of Muslims. There is also the presence of Sudanese opposition figures in Eritrea.

Much mutual suspicion clouds the relationship between the two countries and that has to be tackled. The two countries' relations worsened after the attempt on the life of President Mubarak of Egypt on 26 June 1995 during the OAU summit in Addis Ababa. The three people accused of the attempt were able to escape to Khartoum and Ethiopia's formal request for their extradition has been refused by the Sudanese government. This attitude has led Addis Ababa to take reprisals against Sudan and UN sanctions have been generally applied.

That is the explanation for the decision of the Ethiopian government to revise its attitude to the Sudanese opposition and grant aid to the rebellion of John Garang which had been refused since June 1995. If the terrorists sought by the Ethiopian government were extradited this could lead to some relaxation of tension but even if that were unexpectedly to come about the fear remains that Sudan's relations with its neighbours would still be difficult while it sought to spread Islam.

Urgent international action is needed if the situation in the area is not to worsen further. ■

...human misery



Papernot/Reuter

Socialist Affairs
presents a profile of the prime minister of Greece

Costas Simitis, leader of PASOK, the Greek member of the Socialist International, is again governing a country he once had to flee from. When democracy was extinguished in Greece by colonels who took power in 1969 this Athenian academic who had obtained his doctorate at the University of Marburg in Germany and who went on to higher studies at the London School of Economics had to be careful. He was already known in Greek political circles as one of the founders of the Alexandros Pananastasiou Society for political research and studies and shortly after the colonels' putsch he helped to transform that body into Democratic Defence, to fight the regime. He avoided arrest and finally had to flee abroad leaving Greece's military rulers to try him in absentia in a military court. His wife Daphne, today the mother of their two daughters Fiona and Marilena, was captured and held in solitary confinement.

During his time in Germany he was active against the régime as he continued his academic career, first as reader at the University of Constance and later as professor of commercial and civil law at the Justus Liebig University at Giessen where he stayed until 1975. His commitments in Germany did not stop him playing his full part in Greek politics, first as a member of the National Council of the Panhellenic Liberation Movement, a forerunner of PASOK, and then in 1974 as a founding member of PASOK, where he was a member of its central committee and executive committee and where he was for a time in charge of ideological training. From 1977 he was professor of commercial law at the Panteion University of Political Sciences.

In 1981 he had his first taste of government when he was named minister of agriculture and then from 1985 to 1987 minister of national economy. He found a parliamentary constituency



COSTAS SIMITIS

in the port of Piraeus in 1985 and has represented it uninterruptedly since then. In 1993 Prime Minister Andreas Papandreou appointed him minister of industry, energy, technology and commerce, but he resigned two years later after differences with the premier.

On 22 January 1996, a week after the ailing Papandreou resigned from the premiership, Simitis was elected to the vacant post by the

PASOK parliamentary group and at the PASOK congress in June, shortly after Papandreou's death, he was elected president of the party with 54 per cent of the votes. He was returned to the premiership after he dissolved parliament and won the elections in September.

Before he went into the electoral battle in August Simitis set out his strategy in four principal objectives. They were: to play a part in developing the European Union, enabling the Union to play its own separate, unified role on the international stage; to help the emergence of peace, security, cooperation and prosperity in the Balkans and the Mediterranean; to modernise Greece's economy rapidly by attracting new investment and technology and training the workforce and, fourthly, to show effective concern for the weaker members of society.

The four points had their effect with the electorate. Some 8.5 million voters turned out on 22 September and PASOK won 41.51 per cent of their votes and a comfortable 162 seats in the 300-seat parliament.

Speaking at the Rome Council of the International in January, the Greek leader expressed his confidence in the SI and stressed the role it could play in conflict prevention, risk analysis and mediation. 'We are the most powerful world forum of democratic parties', he said. It is our duty to confront the challenges and undertake the responsibility in a world which is undergoing rapid and substantial change'.

AT WORK IN A POLITICAL LABORATORY

Umberto Ranieri,
*international secretary of
 the PDS, ponders the task
 facing the left in Italy
 and the rest of Europe.*

Mafia - no thank you

The Party of the Democratic Left, PDS, is the principal force of the Olive Tree coalition which is currently governing Italy. But the PDS won around 21 per cent of the votes cast in the 1996 elections, a somewhat lower percentage of votes than that usually won by victorious left-wing forces in European elections.

This is the anomalous situation being pondered within the Italian left, and two reflections immediately arise. The first is that the right lost but this did not happen in the context of a clear and indisputable shift to the left. The second is that the left must consolidate its unity and reformulate its programme in order to present a convincing platform for a moderate electorate.

The policies which must flow from this will be under discussion at the 1997 congress of the PDS, a party which has become a decisive political force in the government of the country.

Last year's elections in Italy bore witness to a problem common to the forces of the left throughout Europe, the key position of a moderate group of voters who are unsure of and worried by the solutions of the right, but who are not yet confident of the reliability and the capacity for innovation of the left.

The truth is that the left is still a consistent and decisive force in Europe, but if it is to gain majority support it must foster a courageous re-thinking and updating of its policies. Political competition in Europe centres on convincing moderate voters. Soon there will be new tests in countries which are important for the future of the continent, such as Germany and Britain, which will indicate to what extent the left is able to tackle such problems.



18 In order to win votes and convince voters, the left must put on one side any temptation to defensiveness and tackle head on some sensitive, even painful, questions which arise from its recent background. The most intricate of these questions is that of the reform of the provision of welfare and the place welfare provision must occupy in the future social landscape of Europe. The left must dare to decide where to put the accent, either on the defence of traditional welfare policies or on change in the policies of reform. It is becoming increasingly evident that the socialist parties do have a future if they succeed in combining a courageous re-thinking of welfare politics with a clear shifting of the culture of reform towards innovation.

In the great social democratic tradition, the protection of welfare was intimately bound up with the identification of socialists as the party of economic development and expansion. As time has passed, there has come over socialist politics a sense of the static, almost of stagnation. The first function, that of protection of benefits and policies of redistribution of income, seems isolated from the second. The time has come for socialist reformism to take on more dynamic characteristics. Europe risks going into the new century certainly more united but perhaps more distant from the cutting edge of development. The continent risks a dangerous process of loss of competitiveness and decline. One must think of what is happening in sectors such as telecommunications, information technology, biotechnology and aerospace. The enormous transformations taking place are moving the centre of dynamic capitalism from the Atlantic to the Pacific.

In such a context the socialist parties will be unable to defend the social fabric, even with the due reforms carried out, if the economic slowdown is not reversed. The culture of reform must benefit from the prospect of an upturn in development; without it no policies of social solidarity will be possible. The priority today is for growth and innovation.

In the last years of this century the crises suffered by the old model of Keynesianism and of the welfare state on the one side and the exhaustion on the other of Thatcherite revolution clear a space for a democratic and reformist left pledged to the struggle for new forms of economic and social modernisation.

The left in Europe must not make mistakes which are the mirror image of its adversary's. While the right deludes itself into thinking that Europe can relaunch itself with exclusive recourse to monetary readjustment, the left runs the risk of deluding itself that the continent can survive by raising the social profile and the arguments in justification of those public institutions which militate against 'predatory capitalism'. Both positions are fallacious. The real risk for Europe is that loss of dynamism and competitiveness in its economy could turn into permanent stagnation and decline. Who in Europe today is formulating the demand for dynamism, innovative development and growth?

The left in Europe must boldly accept the challenge of modernisation and of the 'information society'. Close attention to thought processes within the Socialist International show how the traditional stances on social democratic culture are being interwoven with new ideas which make social democracy, organised in the Socialist International, into an extraordinary laboratory for the left as it faces the new century.

Let us attempt to develop the most interesting ideas around which work can take place so we can establish a new and world-wide socialist agenda. The most important new reality with which the forces of reform have to wrestle is that of globalisation. Out of the 'national plans for reform' which characterised democratic socialists in government from the 1940s to the 1970s has come the larger project of a peaceful democratic world society with freedom, justice and solidarity. It is in this global space that democratic socialists must rethink their programmes, their objectives and their old strategies of redistribution and provision of welfare.

The Socialist International must intensify its thinking about these questions. From the ferment of today's socialist thought must emerge a new and credible platform for socialism in the 21st century. This must draw on the principles of worldwide democratisation and the extension of individual and social rights; on the demand for

Technology – yes please



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Richard Kalvar/Magnum

democratic control of the new frontiers of science and technology; on the creation of an integrated society in which social welfare is within the reach of those who have so far been excluded from the processes of modernisation; on an economic democracy where markets and social aims are harnessed together; on equal rights and opportunities for women; on an ecologically balanced development giving a better quality of life, and on a new international economic order. The exploration of these themes must be the task of 'new' democratic socialism.

In such a complex situation Italy has become one of the laboratories where the ability of socialist policies to be brought up to date is being put to the test. Italy is a large European country where the left is helping to govern. It is clear that the present government is not a government of the left. Yet at the same time it is the principal strength of the government. This imposes a great responsibility and invites legitimate ambitions, those of conceiving the Italian government as a laboratory of extraordinary interest for finding out on the ground the innovative capacity of the left, a process whose lessons may be learned outside Italy. For this reason the forthcoming PDS congress must be the occasion for shaping the process of reform today and linking it to the action of government. ■

DEMOCRACY IN A SECULAR ETHOS

The South Asian sub-continent is one of the few regions of the Third World where democratically elected regimes are in power and India has the unique distinction that, during its half century of independence, its democracy has suffered a hiccup of only one and a half years - a time when the Socialist International stood solidly for the restoration of democratic institutions.

India has achieved this distinction despite a hierarchically iniquitous caste system, religious and cultural diversities, lopsided social and economic development in the regions and a paternalistic social order. The traumatic experience of partition and the prolonged dispute in Jammu and Kashmir put enormous strains on her secular ethos. Socialists, having formed a party in 1934 as active participants in the freedom struggle and later in free India, have joined in strengthening the secular character of the state, in promoting federalism and the devolution of power to local communities, in weakening the sharp inequalities of the caste system by giving preferential opportunities to the socially backward and by promoting gender equality.

There is little doubt that such strivings were to a large extent responsible for the maintenance of democracy in India while her neighbours had to suffer long periods of authoritarianism.

Economic underdevelopment, sharp economic disparities and the predominance of an agriculture which was based on feudal relationships and traditional methods, vast under-employment of human resources and scarcity of capital have attracted the attention of all Indian planners and governments. Socialists have battled hard to remove feudalism and have advocated a planning model which would emphasise production as well as distribution and generate a massive number of new jobs. But their main contribution has been to stress an alternative strategy of socio-economic development.

They accepted the model of a mixed economy and the need for planned growth to make the country self-reliant. Instead of the capitalist strategy of maximising capital formation for industrialisation by exploiting the agricultural sector and freezing the consumption levels of the people, the socialist strategy pleaded for agricultural development with a parity in prices between agricultural produce and manufactured goods, and the creation of a vast network of decentralised small and medium-sized industrial units. Under the post-independence government of Jawaharlal Nehru the public sector achieved success in building up the infrastructure of industry, but agriculture and small industry received little attention.

A mixed economy and emphasis mainly put on rapid industrialisation and on production resulted in rapid unemployment, sharpening disparities in wealth and income and the growth of regional and sectoral imbalances. The stranglehold of big business on the political bosses even subverted the regulations imposed to deal with the problems of an economy of shortage, to check the rise of monopolies and to streamline licensing procedures.

Collusion of the rich with those in power in the bureaucracy and the ruling party went hand in hand with large-scale industrialisation, the introduction of high-yielding seeds in the production of cereals, the expansion of the bureaucracy, the emergence of many scientific technicians and the creation of a viable middle class. The hunger of this class for consumer durables distorted the production priorities of the economy so that the availability of essential commodities remained static for the mass of poor people. Population growth only worsened their plight, while conflicts with Pakistan and China created further strains on economic development as defence required more expenditure.

Unfortunately the social sector remained poorly looked after. Two-thirds of the people are still illiterate, the standards of sanitation, health and nutrition are deplorable. Old epidemics like the Plague have reappeared. Even safe drinking water is

Surendra Mohan,
*a member of the national executive of Janata Dal,
 traces the roots of the present Indian government.*

Pandit Nehru...

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not available to millions. The number of homeless has grown and slums in all large industrial metropolises are on the increase.

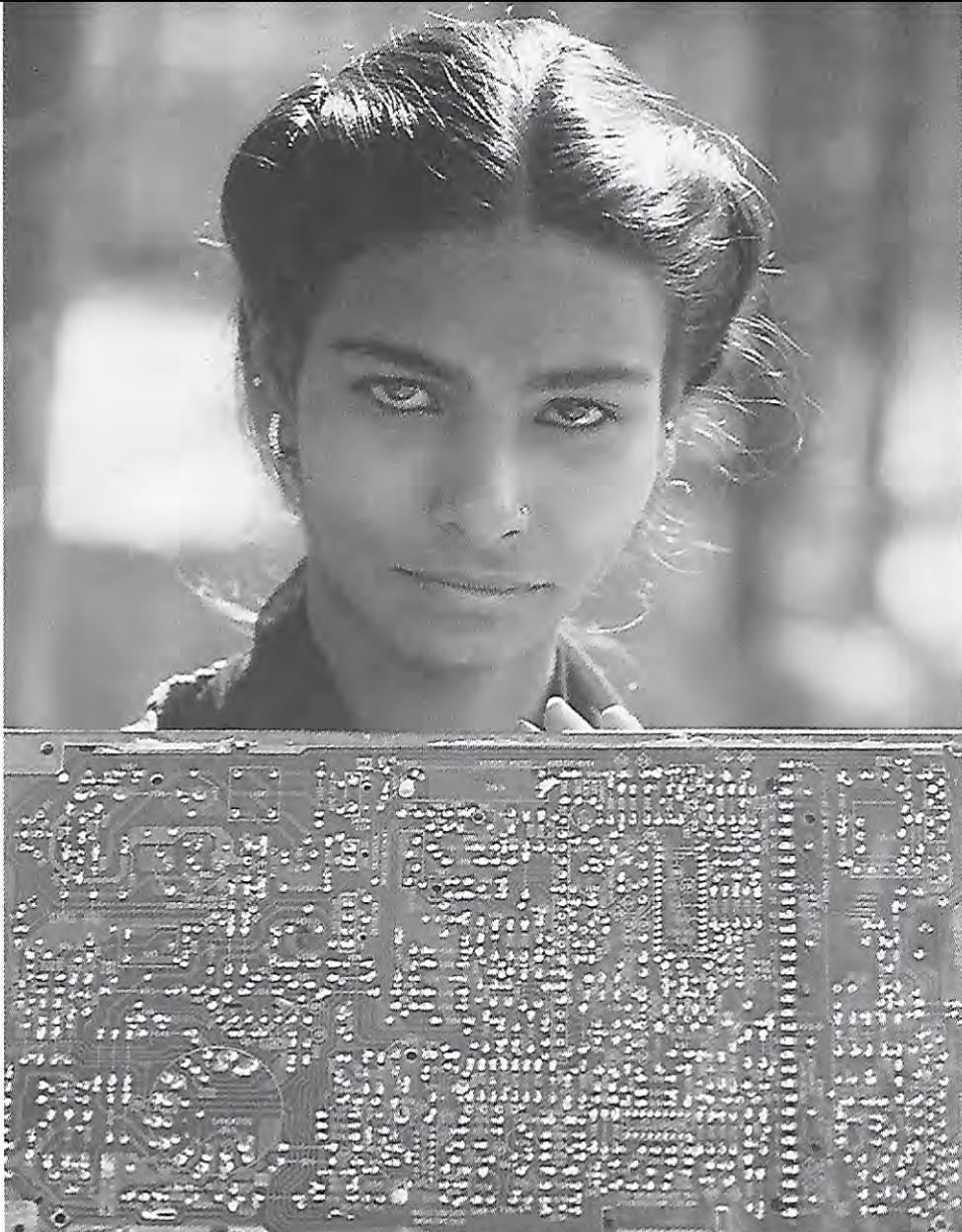
On the political side, the Congress Party long remained the single predominant party, though it suffered an electoral setback in 1967 and split in 1969. But the plethora of opposition parties failed to provide a viable alternative. The votaries of stability - who include the entire elite - favour Congress, but its long stint in power first brought about corruption, and later the need to consolidate its power led it to abuse the emergency powers in the Constitution. An erosion of federalism led in the 1980s to the emergence of strong regional parties.

After years in which the government was headed by Indira Gandhi or her son Rajiv, prime minister from 1985 to 1989, the general election of 1989 was contested by an almost united opposition. The old Janata Party's various splinters, minus the right-wing Hindu BJP, united with a group loyal to former Congress minister V P Singh to form the Janata Dal, with Singh as president. Together with the regional parties it created the National Front. The NF came to power with the outside support of the BJP on the one hand and the parties of the left on the other.

This government took firm action to reserve some public employment for the socially and educationally deprived sections of the population. The traditional caste system had enabled one 'forward' caste, the Brahmins to dominate the ministries, the bureaucracy and the professions while other similar groups had a near-monopoly of business and industry. The 'backward' castes, on the other hand, were small farmers, agricultural workers or artisans and condemned to illiteracy and poverty.

At the end of 1990 the BJP withdrew its support and this led to the fall of the NF government. After a short period of rule by a minority government with the support of the Congress Party the latter returned to power in elections in mid-1991.

During the subsequent rule of Prime Minister P V Narasimha Rao, the government followed a policy of liberalisation and privatisation which led to a deceleration of growth in the agricultural sector, the closure of a large number of small and medium-



Camera Press/B. Gysenberg

sized industrial units, increased unemployment and a neglect of the industrial infrastructure.

In May 1996 Congress lost power. In a time of increasing communal tension the Hindu BJP was strengthened and, with its ally in the state of Maharashtra, the Shiva Sen, occupied the political space vacated by the Congress Party. In the 1996 general elections it emerged as the largest single party and formed a short-lived government of the centre, with A B Vajapayee as prime minister.

The Janata Dal, however, formed an alliance with 13 other parties, led by Janata Dal's leader, H D Deve Gowda. It had 194 members in the Lok Sabha (lower house) and the Congress Party, with 144 members, pledged its support. After the BJP government resigned on 28 May 1996 for lack of support, H D Deve Gowda was sworn in as prime minister.

The government enjoys some support from the Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist), while the separate Communist Party of India participates in government. Two breakaway groups of the Congress Party are also part of the government, while the bulk of the Congress Party gives support from outside.

The United Front administration has evolved a common minimum programme which emphasises deregulation of the economy, transparency in all public dealings, reform of the public sector and disinvestment from some activities. It also gives priority to the provision of safe drinking water, housing, rural roads, the development of agriculture and the countryside, massive generation of employment, gender equality and universal education.

Janata Dal is the leading party in the government and also holds power in two states. It holds aloft the ideals of socialism as propounded by Jaya Prakash Narayan, Acharya Narendra Dao and Dr Lohia. It has also been deeply influenced by Mahatma Gandhi. It greatly values socialist cooperation across borders, and is keen to develop fraternal relations with all the parties associated with the Socialist International. ■

Douglas Payne reviews...

One World, Ready or Not: The Manic Logic of Global Capitalism

by William Greider

New York, 1997, Simon & Schuster
ISBN 0-684081141-3

Everything for Sale: The Virtues and Limits of Markets

by Robert Kuttner

New York, 1997, Alfred A Knopf
ISBN 0-394-58392-2

These two volumes by US economic journalists are trenchant rebuttals to the orthodoxy which holds that the law of supply and demand supersedes the laws made by men and women. Each writer argues convincingly and with a wealth of data that laissez-faire, neo-liberalism, or however one labels the doctrine of unfettered markets, is socially and economically unsustainable.

Greider's scope is global, and he grounds his analysis in the lives of real people and workers, from Mexico City to Jakarta, from Kansas City to Stockholm. Kuttner focuses more on trends in the United States, from where stems so much of what Greider calls the 'manic logic of global capitalism'.

Both Greider and Kuttner believe that to avert a disastrous reckoning there must be a revitalisation of politics and strengthening of civic society. Their respective positions can be aptly sum-

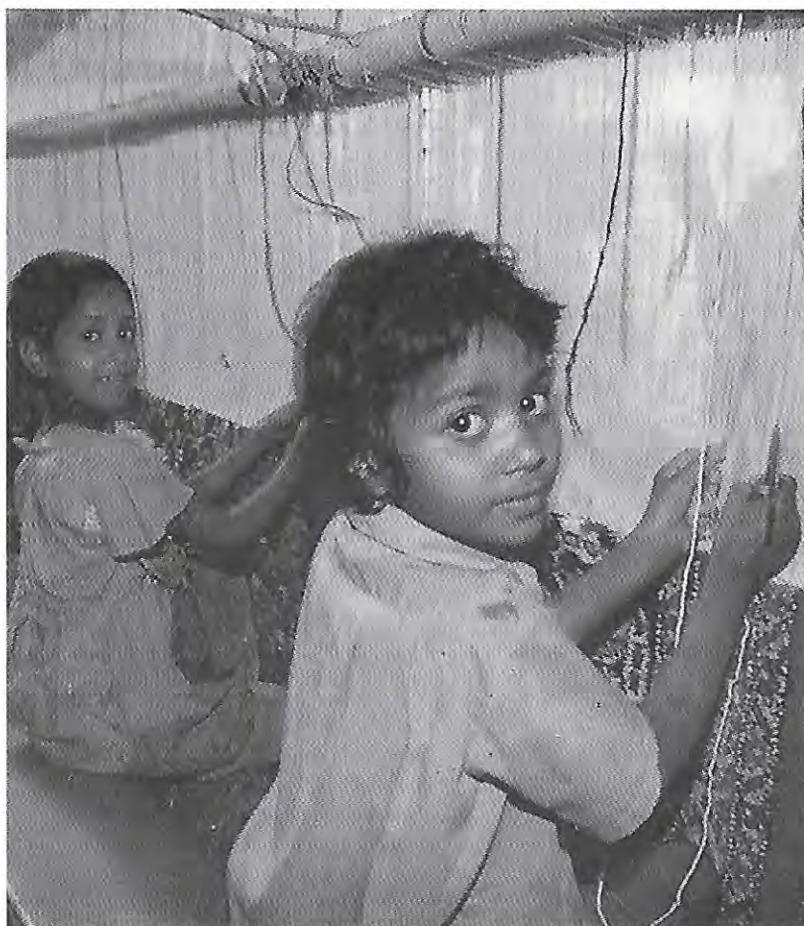
marised by the statement, 'Political democracy must prevail over economic and financial oligarchy', as expressed in the Socialist International Declaration on the World Economy at the XX Congress in New York.

Kuttner, who co-founded the journal *The American Prospect* with recently retired US Secretary of Labor Robert Reich, effectively makes the case that the market is insufficient and often counter-productive in many key areas: health, employment, banking, securities, telecommunications, energy. He then details in example after example how gov-

ernment action has made the US prosperous, from building railroads to creating a system of higher education. That he feels compelled to do so underscores the enormous sway now held by free-market ideology in US intellectual and policy circles.

A 'political jihad' is how Kuttner describes the decades-long denigration of government in the US. It is an assault, he says, by those who believe that virtually all public-sector activity - including financial support for the poor and protection of labour rights - does more harm than good, even when the evidence indicates otherwise. These 'virtuosos at math', as he

Globalisation's children?



Denis Cameron/Rex

calls them, wilfully ignore any reality that does not conform to abstract market theory, and seem to have excised from historical memory those not so distant periods when market excess paved the way to political turbulence and tyranny.

Market forms are now degrading democracy itself, Kuttner warns; at a time when it is needed most to create a balance between market, state and civil society. Marketisation, he says, has swamped politics, changing the equation from 'one citizen/one vote' to 'one dollar/one vote'. He borrows an image from Olof Palme, a 'society of sharp elbows', to underscore his account of opportunity replaced by opportunism amid increasing inequality and cynicism.

Kuttner advocates the reinvention of a mixed economy and compares much of Europe favourably to what is happening in the US. 'Unless we want our republic to degenerate into a new plutocracy, an oligarchy of the wealthy and fortunate, we face a twin challenge: to keep the market from ruining the polity and to renew the institutions of healthy civic and political life'.

In turn, William Greider's panoramic book illuminates how the market has become truly global, blurring the borders between countries, undermining the ability of governments to maintain social cohesion, and 'mocking the assumption of shared political values that supposedly unite people in a nation-state'. Greider is an editor of Rolling Stone magazine and the author of *Secrets of the Temple*, a stinging chronicle of the clandestine inner workings of the Federal Reserve Board, the US central bank.

He roams from boardrooms

and trading floor to computer-driven assembly plants, dehumanising sweatshops and unemployment lines, giving voice to people who benefit and the majority who don't. What emerges is a world divided into four competing blocs. Workers are the most obvious losers, having lost substantial control over labour markets and the terms of employment. National governments have lost ground too, having failed to exercise their power over commerce and finance.

One group of winners is multinational corporations, the 'muscle and brains of this new system'. Yet even they are insecure, scrambling under fierce competitive pressure to reduce costs and increase profits, serving their shareholders rather than their countries.

The big winner, and Kuttner would agree, is finance capital. Greider calls it the 'Robespierre of this revolution', an enforcer whose 'principles are transparent and pure: maximising the return on capital without regard to national identity or political and social consequences'.

Greider recognises that the global economy has opened new vistas and offers great opportunities. But he believes it must be slowed and guided by government actions to minimise social damage and ensure that its benefits can be shared by all. If not, he argues, the ongoing 'collision between society and free market' will set the stage for fascism, as it did a century ago.

Greider and Kuttner fall in behind the Socialist International in advocating transaction taxes to damp currency speculation, as proposed by Nobel laureate James Tobin. Greider also recommends labour agreements in trade deals,

debt relief for the developing world, and reforming the objective of central banks to support rather than thwart growth.

Such measures would take multilateral action to work, and a number of US reviewers have called Greider's remedies 'impractical' and 'pie in the sky'. Greider himself is less than optimistic, but believes that political inertia can be overcome if 'people discover their social connections to distant others around the world and act upon them'. He hopes for a convergence of organised labour, feminism, environmentalism and other civic movements to work toward a system that 'genuinely merges the market with democracy'. He says that, for lack of a better name, it might be called 'global humanism'.

What Greider envisions, and to a significant extent Kuttner too, is strikingly consistent with current thinking within the Socialist International. Both books therefore provide welcome reinforcement of social democratic ideas, particularly as the authors write from the US, home of the so-called 'Washington consensus' in favour of free markets before all else.

But these volumes can also be taken as an inspiration. The global machine that Greider depicts is awesomely powerful and quick, ploughing forward out of control. One comes away with a renewed sense that overcoming the odds to win this 'foot-race with history' depends all the more on those who work in the spirit of collective responsibility to put social democratic ideas into practice.

Hugh O'Shaughnessy

Global Business: Global Rights

by Denis MacShane

London, The Fabian Society, 1996
ISBN 0 7163 0575 5

The globalisation of the economies of the world, which has accelerated so markedly in recent years, has often been a source of perplexity for socialists in many countries. There has been a natural reaction in favour of such a development from large parts of the socialist movement worldwide, given the international outlook which should be - and many times is - an integral part of the socialist vision.

At the same time however the new interpenetration of trade and manufacturing among countries has, not unreasonably, been treated with caution, even alarm, by socialists who see workers' rights infringed and wage rates reduced by transnational operators who have set little store by trade unions or collective bargaining. Leaders on the left are not disposed to keep silent as voters' jobs are increasingly at risk and employers brandish over their employees the threat of making or doing something elsewhere at a supposedly cheaper price.

Into this fog of perplexity comes Denis MacShane, British Labour Member of Parliament for the Yorkshire industrial seat of Rotherham, formerly with the International Metalworkers' Federation in Geneva and a founder in 1992 of the European Policy Institute. Into the 27 pages

of his brief Fabian pamphlet he has packed a large store of sound reasoning and good common sense.

The case for clearer strategies for socialists is well made and the author points out that the argument in favour of placing social restrictions on international trade is not a new one. In Europe in 1906, for instance, 12 nations banned the manufacture of matches containing white phosphorus which caused disease and disfigurement to those who had to handle it. The International Labour Office has, also, had much to do with the enforcement of workers' rights. Drawing from his very wide international experience, MacShane produces some arguments about the cost of manufacturing which deserve to be remembered.

How interesting that the relatively expensive labour market in the United States attracted more inward foreign investment than anywhere else and that the high cost of labour in France drew more inward investment in 1994 than did a United Kingdom where a conservative government was keen to push down wage rates.

In a section on the need to match the global organisation of capital with the global organisation of labour, MacShane points to the suc-

cesses that have been achieved from Germany and France to Mexico and Nicaragua against the activities of one US telecommunications operator which victimised its workers.

He suggests six strategies. Among them are a great extension of horizontal links between workplaces with all unions establishing or strengthening international departments; a new and more proactive role in reporting labour conditions to international bodies and international legal initiatives to bring offending multinationals to justice.

MacShane's analysis and remedies are sound and effective. It is no exaggeration to say that his pamphlet will be of use to every member party and organisation within the Socialist International.

FABIAN
SOCIETY

FABIAN PAMPHLET 575

Global Business : Global Rights

Denis MacShane

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World Wide Web
<http://www.gn.apc.org/socint/>

The Socialist International is the worldwide organisation of socialist, social democratic and labour parties. It is the oldest and largest international political association and now brings together 139 parties and organisations from all continents. The Socialist International, whose origins go back to the early international organisations of the labour movement of the last century, has existed in its present form since 1951 when it was re-established at the Frankfurt Congress.

The International provides its members with a forum for political action, policy discussion, dialogue and exchange. Its statements and decisions advise member organisations and the international community of consensus views within the global family of socialist, social democratic and labour parties and organisations.

The late Willy Brandt, former chancellor of Germany, was president of the Socialist International from 1976 to 1992.

Pierre Mauroy, former prime minister of France, was elected president in 1992 and re-elected by the International's XX Congress in 1996. Luis Ayala (Chile), who was first elected secretary general by the Stockholm Congress in 1989, was re-elected by the Congress in 1996.

The Congress, which meets every three years, and the Council (including all member parties and organisations), which meets twice a year, are the supreme decision-making bodies of the Socialist International. Meetings of the presidium and party leaders are also held from time to time, as well as special conferences on particular topics and issues.

Committees and study groups have been established for work on Africa; Asia and the Pacific; Central and Eastern Europe; Economic Policy, Development and the Environment; Human Rights; Latin America and the Caribbean; Local Authorities; the Mediterranean; the Middle East; Peace, Security and Disarmament; and Finance and Administration. These committees and study groups have specific programmes of work and meet regularly. The Socialist International also frequently sends missions and delegations to various countries or regions.

The Socialist International, as a non-governmental organisation, has consultative status (Category 1) with the United Nations, and works internationally with many other organisations.

MEMBERS

27

Full member parties

Social Democratic Party, PSD, Albania
Socialist Forces Front, FFS, Algeria
Popular Socialist Party, PSP, Argentina
People's Electoral Movement, MEP, Aruba
Australian Labor Party, ALP
Social Democratic Party of Austria, SPÖ
Barbados Labour Party
Socialist Party, PS, Belgium
Socialist Party, SP, Belgium
Revolutionary Left Movement, MIR, Bolivia
Democratic Labour Party, PDT, Brazil
Bulgarian Social Democratic Party, BSDP
Party for Democracy and Progress, PDP, Burkina Faso
New Democratic Party, NDP/NPD, Canada
African Independence Party of Cape Verde, PAICV
Party for Democracy, PPD, Chile
Social Democratic Radical Party, PRSD, Chile
Socialist Party of Chile, PS
National Liberation Party, PLN, Costa Rica
Movement for a New Antilles, MAN, Curaçao
EDEK Socialist Party of Cyprus
Czech Social Democratic Party, CSSD
Social Democratic Party, Denmark
Dominican Revolutionary Party, PRD, Dominican Republic
Democratic Left Party, PID, Ecuador
National Democratic Party, NDP, Egypt
Mõõdukad, Estonia
Finnish Social Democratic Party, SDP
Socialist Party, PS, France
Social Democratic Party of Germany, SPD
The Labour Party, Great Britain
Panhellenic Socialist Movement, PASOK, Greece
Social Democratic Party, PSD, Guatemala
Party of the National Congress of Democratic Movements, KONAKOM, Haiti
Revolutionary Progressive Nationalist Party of Haiti, PANPRA
Hungarian Socialist Party, MSzP
Social Democratic Party, Iceland
The Labour Party, Ireland
Israel Labour Party
United Workers' Party of Israel, MAPAM
Democratic Party of the Left, PDS, Italy
Italian Democratic Socialist Party, PSDI
Italian Socialists, SI
Ivory Coast Popular Front, FPI
People's National Party, PNP, Jamaica
Social Democratic Party, SDP, Japan
Latvian Social Democratic Workers' Party, LSDSP
Progressive Socialist Party, PSP, Lebanon
Lithuanian Social Democratic Party, LSDP
Luxembourg Socialist Workers' Party, LSAP/POS
Democratic Action Party, DAP, Malaysia
Malta Labour Party
Mauritius Labour Party
Party of Democratic Revolution, PRD, Mexico
Mongolian Social Democratic Party, MSDP
Socialist Union of Popular Forces, USFP, Morocco
Labour Party, PvdA, Netherlands
New Zealand Labour Party, NZLP
Sandinista National Liberation Front, FSLN, Nicaragua
Social Democratic and Labour Party, SDLP, Northern Ireland
Norwegian Labour Party, DNA
Revolutionary Febrerista Party, PRF, Paraguay
Social Democracy of the Republic of Poland, SdRP
Union of Labour, UP, Poland
Socialist Party, PS, Portugal
Puerto Rican Independence Party, PIP
San Marino Socialist Party, PSS
Socialist Party, PS, Senegal
Party of the Democratic Left, SDL, Slovak Republic
Social Democratic Party of Slovakia, SDSS
United List of Social Democrats, ZL, Slovenia
Spanish Socialist Workers' Party, PSOE
Swedish Social Democratic Party, SAP
Social Democratic Party of Switzerland
Constitutional Democratic Assembly, RCD, Tunisia
Republican People's Party, CHP, Turkey
Democratic Socialists of America, DSA, USA
Social Democrats USA, SDUSA
Democratic Action, AD, Venezuela

Consultative parties

Radical Civic Union, UCR, Argentina
Social Democratic Front, SDF, Cameroon
Liberal Party of Colombia, PLC
Dominica Labour Party
Convergence for Social Democracy, CPDS, Equatorial Guinea
Fiji Labour Party
Gabonese Party for Progress, PGP
SIUMUT, Greenland
Working People's Alliance, WPA, Guyana
Party for National Unity, VITM, Madagascar
African Party for Solidarity and Justice, ADEMA/PASJ, Mali
Mauritius Militant Movement, MMM
Institutional Revolutionary Party, PRI, Mexico
Fretilmo Party, Mozambique
Nepali Congress Party
Party for Democracy and Socialism of Niger, PNDS
Pakistan People's Party, PPP
Democratic Revolutionary Party, PRD, Panama
Peruvian Aprista Party, PAP
Philippines Democratic Socialist Party, PDSP
Democratic Party of Romania, PD
Romanian Social Democratic Party, PSDR
St. Kitts-Nevis Labour Party
St. Lucia Labour Party, SLP
Unity Labour Party, St. Vincent & the Grenadines
Popular Unity Movement, MUP, Tunisia
Party for People's Government, PGP, Uruguay
People's Electoral Movement, MEP, Venezuela

Observer parties

Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola, MPLA
ARF Armenian Socialist Party
Social Democratic Party of Azerbaijan, SDPA
Democratic Union of Progressive Forces, UDP, Benin
Movement for Democracy and Social Progress, MDPS, Benin
Social Democratic Party, SDP BiH, Bosnia & Herzegovina
Union of Bosnian and Herzegovian Social Democrats, UBSD
Botswana National Front, BNF
Patriotic Front for Progress, FPP, Central African Republic
M-19 Democratic Alliance, Colombia
Democratic Party, PD, El Salvador
Citizen's Union of Georgia, CUG
Lavalas Political Organisation, OPL, Haiti
Hungarian Social Democratic Party, MSzDP
Janata Dal, India
Democratic Party of Iranian Kurdistan, PDKI, Iran
Social Democratic Union of Macedonia, SDUM, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
Social Democratic Party of Moldova
Social Democratic Party of Montenegro, SDPM
Fatah, Territories under Palestinian Authority

Fraternal organisations

International Falcon Movement/Socialist Educational International, IFM/SEI
International Union of Socialist Youth, IUSY
Socialist International Women, SIW

Associated organisations

Asia-Pacific Socialist Organisation, APSO
Group of the Party of European Socialists of the European Parliament
International Federation of the Socialist and Democratic Press, IFSDP
International League of Religious Socialists
International Union of Socialist Democratic Teachers, IUSD
Jewish Labour Bund, JLB
Labour Sports International, CSIT
Party of European Socialists, PES
World Labour Zionist Movement, WLZM



Committee on Local A

Berlin 5–6 December

LOCAL AUTHORITIES COMMITTEE IN BERLIN

More than 70 participants from Europe, Africa and Latin America gathered on 5 and 6 December at Willy Brandt House, the new centre of the Social Democratic Party of Germany, SPD, in Berlin, for a meeting of the SI Committee on Local Authorities, which was hosted by the SPD and organised in collaboration with the German Social Democratic Association for Local Policy, Bundes-SGK. In his opening remarks the chair, SI Vice-President Philippe Busquin, noted the appropriateness of the venue - in the city of which the late Willy Brandt, long-time president of the Socialist International, had been mayor, and in the building named after him.

Most of those present in

Berlin were mayors or elected members of local government. An enormous range of direct experience was represented by the speakers, who included the mayors of Rabat and Dakar, of La Louvière, Belgium, and Hämeenlinna, Finland, of Rosario, Argentina, and Maracaibo, Venezuela. They were welcomed to Berlin by the host party's leader, Oskar Lafontaine, who went on to speak about the ever-greater need for international cooperation on social and political issues and standards in these days of economic globalisation: 'What great movement of our time is to promote international cooperation', he asked, 'if not the social democratic

movement, which has always considered people from other nations, belonging to other races, and having different beliefs, to be brothers and sisters?'

The Local Authorities Committee was founded comparatively recently, after the very successful SI Conference of Mayors held in Bologna in 1995 (see 4/94, p. 24). In Bologna and at the meeting we organised in Istanbul last June during the United Nations Habitat II Conference, many important areas for common work on local policy were established. In Berlin the Committee focused on two of these: the economic activity of local authorities in the provision of services such as public transport, energy, water

and waste-disposal, and safety and security in cities.

Introducing the first subject, Peter Klein, general secretary of the SGK, like Oskar Lafontaine, placed the debate firmly in the context of economic globalisation. 'An unrestrained liberalisation and deregulation of markets', he stated, 'must be counteracted by local and regional management of society'. He added, 'Cities and regions, through their economic activity can help human beings. This is the reason why a social policy in cities and municipalities is to a large



extent dependent on their performance and efficiency'. He stressed the unique role of the local administration in ensuring that citizens, rich and poor, had access to efficient basic services. He did not exclude the use of private finance or management where these were the most efficient way to deliver such services. He did, however, oppose privatisation on the basis purely of price competition, which, he said 'as we know, is quite blind with respect to social distribution and ecological problems'. The internationalisation of economic activity was a challenge, he

concluded, to inter-authority cooperation. The increasing openness and expansion of markets had changed the conditions for local authorities, introducing competition where previously there had been state monopoly, but bringing also increased competition between states and regions as economic locations. We must take account of these developments and develop a strategy encouraging cooperation and agreements at both regional and international level.

In the ensuing debate, delegates from eastern Europe described the particularly severe problems posed for local authorities by the rapid economic transformation of the last few years, while some from Africa evoked a situation of rapid urbanisation, minimal infrastructure, and municipalities severely lacking in the resources to deliver the basic services they would wish to provide. Such a crisis situation was evoked most dramatically by Santiago Obama, leader of the International's new observer party in Equatorial Guinea, the Convergence for Social Democracy, CPDS, and deputy mayor of Malabo - a capital city devastated after years of neglect by the dictatorial regime.

Present too was Sead Avdic, vice-president of the Social Democratic Party of Bosnia and Herzegovina, SDP BiH, and deputy mayor of Tuzla. He referred to the enormous tasks facing the social democratic administration of that city, where war had shattered both the physical infrastructure and the social fabric, and the population was swollen by many thousands of refugees. Cooperation with local administrations in other countries was essential - both to

affirm the democratic process and to help develop the economy.

Ilan Halevi, of Fatah, the largest party in the Palestinian Authority and now an observer member of the International, described the recent holding of local elections in the large towns of Gaza and the West Bank following Israeli withdrawal, stressing that there could still be no elections in the smaller towns and villages where withdrawal had not taken place.

Opening the debate on the meeting's second theme of safety and security in cities, Hermes Binner of the Popular Socialist Party, PSP, Argentina, mayor of Rosario, spoke about rapid urbanisation as exemplified in his own city, whose population had doubled in the past 50 years, as a cause of the manifold social problems which led to insecurity. 'At the moment', he said, 'we have one million inhabitants. And an aggravating factor in this complex situation is that the current globalisation of the economy and automation of industrial processes exclude more and more people from access to work and a decent life. This increasing marginalisation generates painful differences in the social field and is also the essence of insecurity in the city. In a state of social exclusion, there is insecurity not only for those who are excluded, but for all sectors of society. The deepening of these divisions can be felt in many cities where the possibility to live in security means for some sectors living behind gates'.

Fear, he said, generated intolerance. Marginalisation generated poverty and crime, and this meant insecurity for everyone. In this situation, 'for Socialists a safe city is a city

Philippe
Busquin

**Oskar
LaFontaine**



that is governed democratically, that combats poverty and intolerance, that multiplies projects of solidarity and favours communication and social and cultural integration'. He called for political action which had a direct impact on conditions of social welfare and quality of life, citing programmes such as

special provision for both young and old, for disabled people and for AIDS victims, massive popular cultural activities, community-police liaison, and many other areas where local government could directly intervene.

Michel Debauque, of the Belgian Socialist Party, PS, mayor of La Louvière, described one particular approach taken by his party to mounting urban crime and violence. Nearly 30 municipal administrations in Belgium had negotiated 'security contracts', whereby national and regional government had provided new finance in return for a local commitment to the management of new or upgraded social, community and policing services.

Numerous urgent social problems and political approaches to their solution at the local level were raised in the

ensuing discussion. SI secretary general Luis Ayala, speaking at the end of the meeting, remarked that just a few years ago the word 'security' usually meant a discussion of military questions. 'Today', he said, 'security has a new meaning. It is about jobs, about opportunity, about the ability to feel secure and have confidence in the future, and about overcoming the new threats to citizens in a world of dazzling global economic change'.

The Local Authorities Committee will be one important forum for pursuing this vital discussion and cooperation. The committee plans a series of meetings in different continents, with the next likely to be in Latin America, culminating in a second Conference to be held some three years after the first gathering in Bologna.



SI COUNCIL IN ROME

The SI Council met on 21 and 22 January in Rome, where discussions focused on the Middle East, the former Yugoslavia and the Great Lakes region of Africa, as well as on the International's work and new structures for the coming period.



Addressing the Council meeting at its opening, SI Vice-President Massimo D'Alema, leader of the Italian Democratic Party of the Left, PDS, spoke of the delicate transition today under way in Italy: 'a long complex process, which has involved the institutions of the country and the political system itself, creating a profound crisis in parties and their leadership'. He also stressed the Italian commitment to the Mediterranean region, including the Middle East, to peacemaking in the former Yugoslavia, and to intensifying cooperation with other continents, Africa in particular. 'The fundamental challenge to government in modern societies', D'Alema said,

'is being able to extend the potential for growth and development inherent in globalisation and to curb its negative effect... This is not an easy challenge. Globalisation produces a single world market. It does away with distance, it punishes those who try to isolate themselves. In poorer countries it creates new and intense exploitation. But together with that it also brings the possibility of welfare and growth in consumption where previously this was not possible. It stimulates new expectations and demands for citizenship, for aid and for social protection'.

'We admire your determination in government to modernise the political system,

redress the economic situation, join the European single currency in the first wave and combat the mafia', SI President Pierre Mauroy told the meeting's Italian hosts. He then dwelt on some grave political questions with which, he said, 'this moment obliges us to deal'. These were the main themes on the Council's agenda, the Middle East peace process, the implementation of the Dayton peace accords in the former Yugoslavia and the continuing crisis in Zaire, Rwanda and Burundi, as well as equally serious crises elsewhere. He referred to the democratisation movement in the 1970s in southern Europe, continued throughout the 1980s in Latin

America, and amplified throughout the 1990s in every continent in the wake of the collapse of communism. But, 'Nothing can ever be taken as won once and for all... We deplore the reversals that are still so numerous today'. He cited current events in Guinea, Belarus or the Central African Republic, among others, and in particular the serious reversals for democratisation in Niger and in Algeria.

'Comrades', Mauroy concluded, 'we must be able both to respond to the urgent demands of the present time and to project ourselves into the century which is approaching. The revolution in technologies is imposing new modes of production. The communications revolution is making communication easier to obtain, but perhaps more difficult to decipher. The revolution in people's mentalities - and particularly equality between men and women - is fortunately challenging our societies and our political

formations, which often spearhead this struggle, and our own International itself... It is up to us to use these revolutions as levers in order to foster the values which we claim as our own and which are proving to be more topical than ever before, justifying our struggle to which so many are devoting their lives'.

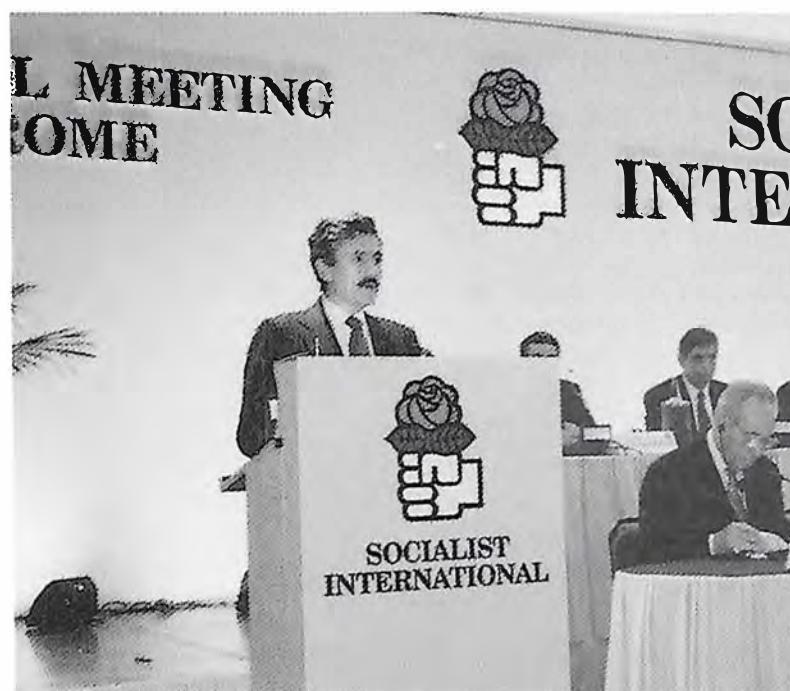
The mayor of Rome, Francesco Rutelli, attended the meeting's opening session and brought greetings from his administration. The city council was honoured to welcome a meeting of the Socialist International, he said, citing the organisation's proud tradition and the dramatic challenges facing it in today's world.

The Council was also welcomed by Italy's national government, in the person of the deputy prime minister, Walter Veltroni. 'The world looks to this tribune', Veltroni said, 'as a forum where the values and strategies to enter the new millennium are developed and debated'. He attributed the recent positive experience of the

left in Italy, in joining the present government and in its first months of office, to the willingness to collaborate with other reforming forces and to 'combine the need for rigour with the perspective of social and political reform'. He spoke of the overwhelming duty of the left towards the 'millions of jobless young people, entire generations which might be set aside from the development processes for ever', as well as the great challenge of combatting the huge and unjust gap between rich and poor countries.

Pierre Mauroy then introduced a special guest, José Ramos-Horta of East Timor, joint winner of the 1996 Nobel Peace Prize. Ramos-Horta described the invasion of East Timor by Indonesia in 1975 as 'a mere footnote to the Cold War', which had led to slaughter, displacement and the violation of human rights on a vast scale. He thanked the Socialist International for its consistent stance in favour of the right of the East Timorese people to self-determination, freedom, peace and dignity, and said that 'the Israeli-Palestinian peace talks and South Africa's transition to democracy give us renewed hope in that they demonstrate that seemingly intractable problems can be resolved if there is political will and vision by all involved'.

Massimo D'Alema addresses SI Council



The Middle East

At last year's XX Congress of the Socialist International, Fatah, the largest party in the Palestinian Authority, was admitted as an observer member. SI Vice-President Shimon Peres, leader of the Israel Labour Party, and Yasser Arafat, president of the Palestinian Authority and leader of Fatah, both attended the Council meeting in Rome, where they greeted one another for the

first time as comrades and fellow members of the International. In this issue of Socialist Affairs we carry the full text of their speeches on this historic occasion (page 4).

Both Peres and Arafat recalled - and it is fitting we should recall again here - some great SI leaders, now dead, who had worked so hard for this moment: Yitzhak Rabin, Willy Brandt, Olof Palme, Bruno Kreisky and François Mitterrand. The International's work for rapprochement, dialogue and peace in the Middle East has long been a central commitment of our organisation, furthered in particular through the SI Middle East Committee, SIMEC, which was first chaired by Mário Soares of Portugal, then for many years by Hans-Jürgen Wischnewski of Germany. In Rome, following Wischnewski's retirement, the Council elected a new chair of this important committee, Bjørn Tore Godal, Labour foreign minister of Norway, a member of the government which played such a vital role in bringing about the Oslo peace agreements. Godal, alongside Peres and Arafat, SI Vice-President Costas Simitis, prime minister of Greece, Kamal El Shazly of the National Democratic Party of Egypt, Abderrahman Youssoufi, leader of the Socialist Union of Popular Forces, Morocco, Kamal Abu Jaber, a guest at the meeting, representing Crown Prince Hassan of Jordan, and others from the region and outside, took part in the ensuing debate, which was introduced by Enrico Boselli, secretary general of the Italian Socialists.

Our meeting took place just a few days after the conclusion of the long-awaited agreement between the Israeli government and the Palestinians on Israeli redeployment in the West-Bank city of Hebron. Pierre Mauroy

hailed the agreement as 'not only a positive sign in itself, but also because it is undeniable proof that no alternative exists to the approach adopted in the Oslo agreements'. All who took part in the Council's discussion endorsed the sentiment that, despite the obstacles, not least the election of a right-wing government in Israel, there was no alternative to continuing dialogue among all the parties in the Middle East.

In the SI Council's subsequent Declaration on the Middle East it congratulated its members, the Israel Labour Party, MAPAM and Fatah, who had been the champions of the peace agreement and of the latest agreement in Hebron, as well as the US government, President Mubarak of Egypt and King Hussein of Jordan, who had mediated between the parties and been instrumental in achieving the Hebron agreement. This last was a 'very important achievement which will lead to the full implementation of the Oslo Agreements in accordance with the principles of the Madrid Conference'. Furthermore, the Council stated 'In this significant moment it is of crucial importance to renew the talks between Israel on the one hand and Syria and Lebanon on the other. These talks should be based on the principle of land for peace and on the Security Council resolutions 242, 338 and 425, which must lead to a peace agreement'. (The Declaration is printed in full on page 38)

In the context of the Middle East, the situation in Cyprus was also raised, by Costas Simitis, by



SOCIALIST INTERNATIONAL

José Ramos-Horta

Deniz Baykal, leader of the Republican People's Party, CHP, of Turkey and by Vassos Lyssarides, leader of EDEK, the Socialist Party of Cyprus. A peaceful and lasting solution to the Cyprus problem, which has serious implications for the whole of the Middle East, Mediterranean and European regions, has long been an aim of the Socialist International.

The International's deep concern about the violation of human rights in Iran, and particularly the rights of the Kurdish people, was also reiterated, following an intervention by Abdullah Hassanzadeh, general secretary of the Democratic Party of Iranian Kurdistan, PDKI, which joined the SI as an observer party at the XX Congress.

Implementing the Dayton Agreements

As the SI Council met in Rome, the streets of Belgrade were

Vesna Pesic



filled, as they had been every day for weeks past, with anti-government protesters calling for the recognition of opposition victories in the municipal elections held last November in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro). The Council welcomed among its special guests a prominent leader of those protests, Vesna Pesic, president of the Civic Alliance of Serbia. She described to the meeting the severe economic crisis, constitutional and social problems in Serbia, in the aftermath of war, and the striking scale of the current popular protests, and called on the SI and all its member parties to support the movement for democratic change. The 'Together' coalition, which had made impressive gains - subsequently denied by the government of Milosevic - in the municipal polls, had united, she said, those opposed to the conservative, xenophobic, former communist ruling party. Their shared goals could be summarised as democratisation,

freedom of expression, economic change and a new relationship with the other former Yugoslav republics and the whole region. She described herself as a social democrat, deeply committed to respect for the rights of minorities.

Pesic called for the strongest international pressure on the Serbian government for democratic change. Peace and stability in the Balkans depended on this, she said.

SI Vice-President Felipe González addressed the Council on his visit to Belgrade in December 1996 as head of an OSCE mission to investigate the allegations of fraud in the local elections. Having held talks with all the parties in Belgrade, he was convinced that the original results and important opposition victories must be recognised. He too spoke of the strength of the protest movement and the ever-growing desire for dignity and freedom expressed by the citizens of the FRY.

Piero Fassino, co-chair of the SI Committee for Central and Eastern Europe, SICEE, gave an overview of both the implementation of the Dayton peace agreements in the former Yugoslavia and the situation in south-eastern Europe as a whole. He outlined the objectives on which the Socialist International should concentrate its efforts: firstly, the consolidation of the post-Dayton process in Bosnia; secondly the strengthening of democratic institutions in Croatia and opening up the road to a democratic transition in the FRY; thirdly, furthering dialogue between government and opposition to resolve the current political crises in Albania and Bulgaria, and finally, strengthening the integration strategy of the European Union and other regional cooperation institutions.

The prime minister of Norway, Thorbjørn Jagland, and the Hungarian foreign minister, Laszlo Kovacs, were among the SI leaders who spoke on this issue, as were Dragisa Burzan of the Social Democratic Party of Montenegro, a new Observer party of the International, and another guest from Serbia, Zarko Korac of the Social Democratic Union.

In a resolution (printed in full on page 39) the Council reaffirmed the International's commitment to supporting the implementation of the Dayton accords and called for many specific measures to build democratic institutions and to reconstruct a free and dignified life for all the citizens of the republics of the former Yugoslavia, whilst expressing the fullest support for the political parties of progressive and social democratic inspiration throughout the region.

**MEMBERS OF THE
COMMISSION CHAIRED
BY SI VICE-PRESIDENT
FELIPE GONZALEZ**

Felipe González, Chair
Gro Harlem Brundtland
Audrey McLaughlin (SIW)
Nicola Zingaretti (IUSY)
Shimon Peres
Martine Aubry
Milos Zeman
Ricardo Lagos
Rolando Araya
Fathallah Oualalou
Ibrahim Boubacar Keita
Takako Doi
Kamal Azfar
Helen Clark



Zaire, Rwanda and Burundi

A debate on the continuing grave situation in the Great Lakes region of Africa was introduced by the first secretary of the Socialist Party of Senegal, Ousmane Tanor Dieng, a vice-president of the SI. He outlined in some detail the historical origins of the present crisis in the region, stressing the urgent need for international action to help restore stability. Above and beyond the much-needed humanitarian aid, he called for a limited international military intervention and reiterated the International's previous calls for the holding of a peace conference. (Ousmane Tanor Dieng writes on The Crisis by the Great Lakes, page 13).

Reinforcing this analysis, Laurent Gbagbo, leader of the Ivory Coast Popular Front, FPI, presented to the Council a comprehensive Declaration, which outlined the situation in Zaire, in Rwanda and in

Burundi and proposed a number of priorities for the international community: the stepping-up of humanitarian work, support for the establishment of a democratic government in Zaire and for national reconciliation policies in Rwanda and Burundi, and increased assistance for all aspects of reconstruction. The Council adopted this Declaration, which also proposed the visit of an SI fact-finding mission to the region in the near future, and stressed that a global solution should be sought, particularly through the holding of a peace conference involving all the states in the region, to be convened under the aegis of the United Nations and the Organisation of African Unity. (Full text of Declaration, page 37)

The González Commission

On the second day of the meeting, SI Vice-President Felipe

González took the floor to give his thoughts on the work of the new SI Commission which he is to chair - a brief entrusted to him at last year's SI XX Congress. The new Commission will address some of the great political questions of our times, which González summarised in seven main areas: globalisation, the technological revolution, macro-economic policy, the role of the state, social cohesion and the legitimisation of political power and authority, international finance, and reform of the United Nations. He also laid stress on questions such as women's equality, the environment and re-skilling the workforce, which, he said, must inform all the discussions. The Commission will also consider the evolving role and continuous development of the International in this period of unprecedented growth.

A number of SI leaders, including our president, Pierre

Mauroy, and Oskar Lafontaine, leader of the Social Democratic Party of Germany, prominent party figures from Italy, Mexico, Argentina and Australia, and the president of Socialist International Women, contributed their views to this

initial debate on the work of the new Commission, whose members are listed on page 34. A small, high-level group, chosen to be geographically representative, and with an emphasis on the participation of women, it will aim, through its

programme of meetings in the coming period to be held in different continents, to draw on the views of SI members and other personalities in intellectual and public life.

Decisions, resolutions of the Council

In addition to the new Commission, the Council in Rome agreed on the establishment of the International's regional and thematic committees, and on their chairs and vice-chairs (see box). It also agreed on the membership of the statutory SI Finance and Administration Committee, SIFAC, which Gunnar Stenarv, of the Swedish Social Democratic Party, will continue to chair.

On the recommendation of SIFAC, the Council adopted the International's budget for 1997. In accordance with a mandate from the XX Congress, it also confirmed the status of the Union of Bosnian and Herzegovinian Social Democrats, UBSD, as a new SI Observer party. It agreed to end the SI membership of the Social Democratic Party of Slovenia, SDS.

In addition to the resolutions and declarations already mentioned, on the meeting's main agenda items, resolutions adopted by the Council dealt with the terror and the urgent need for progress towards peace and democracy in Algeria, the continuing serious situations in Burma and in Niger, peace, justice, human rights and the right to self-determination in East Timor, political and institutional life in Nicaragua after the recent elections, and the latest developments regarding the status of Puerto Rico. All these are printed in full below.

SOCIALIST INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEES ESTABLISHED BY THE COUNCIL IN ROME

SI FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE, SIFAC (statutory committee)
Chair: Gunnar Stenarv (SAP, Sweden)

SI ASIA-PACIFIC COMMITTEE

Chair: Makoto Tanabe (SDP, Japan)
Vice-Chairs: to be decided by the Committee

SI AFRICA COMMITTEE

Chair: Ousmane Tanor Dieng (PS, Senegal)
Vice-Chairs: Aristides Lima (PAICV, Cape Verde), Laurent Gbagbo (FPI, Ivory Coast)

SI COMMITTEE FOR CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE, SICEE
Co-Chairs: Piero Fassino (PDS, Italy), László Kovács (MSzP, Hungary)
Vice-Chair: Jan Kavan (CSSD, Czech Republic)

SI COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC POLICY, DEVELOPMENT AND THE ENVIRONMENT, SICEDÉ

Chair: António Guterres (PS, Portugal)
Vice-Chair: Peter Jankowitsch (SPÖ, Austria)

SI COMMITTEE ON HUMAN RIGHTS, SICOHR

Chair: Clare Short (Labour Party, Great Britain)
Vice-Chair: Daphna Sharfman (Israel Labour Party)

SI COMMITTEE FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN, SICLAC

Chair: José Francisco Peña Gómez (PRD, Dominican Republic)
Vice-Chairs: to be decided by the Committee

SI MEDITERRANEAN COMMITTEE

Chair: Raimon Obiols (PSOE, Spain)
Vice-Chairs: to be decided by the Committee

SI MIDDLE EAST COMMITTEE, SIMEC

Chair: Bjørn Tore Godal (DNA, Norway)
Vice-Chairs: Christoph Zöpel (SPD, Germany), Pierre Guidoni (PS, France), Israel Gat (Israel Labour Party), Mohamed Abdellah (NDP, Egypt)

SI PEACE, SECURITY AND DISARMAMENT COMMITTEE, SIPSAD

Chair: Günther Verheugen (SPD, Germany)
Vice-Chairs: Pertti Paasio (SDP, Finland), Maria Carrilho (PS, Portugal), Mario Didò (SI, Italy)

SI COMMITTEE ON LOCAL AUTHORITIES

Chair: Philippe Busquin (PS, Belgium)
Vice-Chairs: to be decided by the Committee

RESOLUTIONS

ALGERIA

The Socialist International:

Expresses its deep concern and emotion in the face of the spiral of killings which the Algerian people have endured for five years. The increase in the number of assassinations, mass murders and indiscriminate attacks adds endlessly to the list of victims. Hostage to violence and condemned to silence, the Algerian population lives in a climate of terror aggravated by the terrible social and economic conditions. However, the Algerian people have for the most part expressed their profound aspiration to peace and democracy. A political solution could have been found after the presidential election, but the opportunity was not seized. The 1995 referendum on the constitution, as well as the new laws which completely limit, frame and control the functioning of political parties and the independent press mark a serious retreat from democracy;

Expresses its grave concern at the absence of political and technical guarantees, and control of the general elections planned for this year;

Is convinced that no solution to the Algerian crisis, no political, economic and social development, can be envisaged without a return to peace and stability;

Calls on those in power and all those political and social forces which condemn and reject violence and terrorism, to open a real dialogue in order to set in motion a dynamic for peace capable of giving back hope to the Algerian people and of securing freedom, honesty and the legitimacy of the general elections;

Assures its member party, the FFS, the other parties which believe in civil peace, the associations and the independent press, of its complete solidarity in this situation where those in power and the Islamists provide each other with the pretext for stifling individual and collective freedoms.

Through its initiatives at governmental and non-governmental level the Socialist International hopes to contribute to a return to peace and democracy in Algeria.

BURMA

Recalling the resolutions on Burma of the Council of the Socialist International adopted in Tokyo on 11 May 1994 and in Cape Town on 11 July 1995, and the resolution of the XX

Congress of the Socialist International adopted at the United Nations in New York in September 1996, the Council of the Socialist International:

Commends the European Union for warning the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) in Burma that it would hold the regime fully responsible for the personal safety of Nobel Peace Laureate Daw Aung San Suu Kyi;

Commends the government of Denmark for its strong support for the Burmese democracy movement led by Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and the exiled National Coalition Government of the Union of Burma led by Dr Sein Win;

Commends the United States government and the European Union for imposing visa restrictions on members of SLORC and their families;

Commends the foreign companies that have withdrawn from Burma because of the atrocities committed by the military;

Commends the ethnic leaders of Burma for their initiative in January to work to rebuild a new Burma based on democracy and equal rights for all its citizens, and their willingness to work with Daw Aung San Suu Kyi;

Notes with concern the continuing deterioration of the situation in Burma as witnessed by the continuing harassment of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and members of the National League for Democracy, the growing economic crisis, the recent student demonstrations, fresh allegations of the military regime's involvement in the trafficking of narcotics, and its refusal to cooperate with the United Nations and other international efforts to mediate a peaceful political solution in Burma;

Strongly condemns the ruling junta for instigating a mob to attack Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's motorcade on 9 November, and for restricting her freedom of movement and that of her colleagues;

Condemns the closing down of universities and high schools by the junta as a means of crowd control instead of seriously addressing the issues of police brutality and justice demanded by the students;

Condemns the junta's continued use of intimidation and force rather than dialogue and political negotiation to resolve political problems;

Condemns the beating and manhandling of journalists and deportation of tourists caught up in the recent student demonstrations;

Calls on the United Nations Secretary-General to urgently address

the question of Burma and to make a concerted effort to implement General Assembly resolutions which have been ignored by the Burmese regime;

Calls on the President of the United States of America to impose sanctions against new investments, given the deteriorating political situation in Burma;

Calls on the European Union to suspend Burma's trade privileges under the General System of Preferences and further restrict European investments in Burma until the generals respond positively to the international community;

Calls on the Association of South East Asian Nations to reconsider its decision to admit Burma as a full member in 1997;

Calls on the government of Japan to withhold aid and restrict investments while actively seeking to promote change in Burma;

Calls on TOTAL S.A. of France, UNOCAL and TEXACO of the United States, NIPPON OIL of Japan, and PREMIER of Great Britain, to withdraw or suspend their operations in Burma until human rights atrocities being committed by the military in Burma, especially in ethnic areas, are ended;

Urges SLORC to release all political prisoners including Win Htein, Aye Win, and student leaders who were arrested recently;

Urges SLORC to lift all laws restricting fundamental freedoms, including the freedom of speech, assembly, association, the press, and the right to draft a constitution, and

Urges SLORC to begin a political dialogue with Aung San Suu Kyi, all political parties and ethnic peoples.

DECLARATION ON THE SITUATION IN THE GREAT LAKES REGION OF AFRICA

Eastern Zaire and the Great Lakes region are threatened with mayhem because of the threat of confrontation between Rwanda and Zaire with the presence, amongst others in this eastern part of Zaire, of the Banyamulengue, originally Tutsis from Rwanda, who settled several generations ago in the south of Kivu and on the Zaire-Rwandan border.

But the main reason for this armed conflict is the threat to Rwanda of almost two million Rwandan refugees, under the orders of the former armed forces of Rwanda on Zairean territory.

The situation in eastern Zaire presents at least two main features:

- the threat of war between Zaire and Rwanda;
- a civil war between the Zairean central government and the Banyamulengues, the People's Revolutionary Party, the National Resistance Council for Democracy and the Revolutionary Movement for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire. The insurgents intend to exploit the weakness of a country which has been virtually without a government or any effective authority in power for over three years.

The crisis in eastern Zaire has rightly aroused public opinion because Zaire is an immense country bordering on 11 other states. But this crisis can only be properly appreciated if set in the global context of the crisis which has been assailing the Great Lakes states since the beginning of the 1990s.

The problem

1. Burundi

Burundi's adoption of a new Constitution in March 1992, introducing multiparty democracy into the country, was greeted as heralding in a new age.

The election victory of the Front for Democracy in Burundi (FRODEBU) over the Union for National Progress (UPRONA) seemed to signal the end of the period of intercommunal hatred between the Hutu majority and the Tutsi minority.

But on 21 October 1993, the world was forced to face reality: the Burundian army hit the headlines with an outbreak of violence which led to the death of the first civilian President of Burundi, Melchior N'Dadaye and a large number of officials and politicians. This coup severely jeopardised the democratic process, and it also revived intercommunal hatred, opening up a period of turmoil with mass murders on both sides, and massive migration.

In this state of extreme tension, Cyprien Ntaryamira, the former Minister of Agriculture replaced Melchior N'Dadaye as Head of State with the support of the UN and the OAU on 5 January 1994. His appointment was the result of a difficult compromise between the ruling party, the opposition and civil society. But on 6 April 1994, President Cyprien Ntaryamira lost his life in an air crash together with his Rwandan counterpart Juvenal Habyarimana. The death of the new Head of State reopened the crisis. In an attempt to halt it, a government Convention was agreed by all the political groups bringing Sylvestre Ntubatugagna to power. But the violence continued to

devastate the whole country until, on 25 July 1996, Major Pierre Buyoya seized power in a coup, adding yet another difficulty to an already highly complicated situation.

2. Rwanda

Until 1990, Rwanda appeared to be a comparatively stable country in the Great Lakes region. Three events were rapidly to change that state of affairs:
- the opposition to democratisation which was forced on President Habyarimana in 1990;
- the economic crisis aggravated by famine in the south of the country;
- the needs of the Tutsi refugees in Uganda, demanding Rwandan nationality and to be returned home.

On 1 October 1990, the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) launched a massive armed offensive against Kigali. The regime of President Habyarimana was seriously shaken. The UN, the OAU, France, Belgium and the US managed to force the Rwandan government and the RPF to the negotiating table. Negotiations were held at N'Sélé, at Gbadolité and a peace agreement between the Rwandan government and the RPF was signed in Arusha on 4 August 1993. This agreement provided, inter alia, for the establishment of a broadly-based transitional government.

Due to different constructions placed on the agreement by government and opposition, rivalries between the Tutsi and the Hutu, regional tension between the North and the South, and the reluctance of President Habyarimana to implement an agreement stripping him of most of his prerogatives, the country was paralysed and the crisis deepened. It was in this tense climate that the presidential aircraft crashed on 6 April 1994, killing Juvenal Habyarimana and his Burundian opposite number, Cyprien Ntaryamira.

With the deaths of N'Dadaye, Ntaryamira and Habyarimana, three Hutu presidents lost their lives in the two countries (Burundi and Rwanda) in less than a year. Violence had reached its peak. For Rwanda alone, the genocide has resulted in hundreds of thousands of victims.

The situation in Rwanda and Burundi triggered off a widespread exodus of Tutsi and Hutu depending upon whether the Tutsi or the Hutu held power in Kigali or Bujumbura. Hundreds of thousands of Burundians and Rwandans, in fear of their lives, fled to Uganda, Tanzania and Kenya, and in even greater numbers to Zaire, the province of Kivu.

What are the solutions?

What solutions can the Socialist International propose?

1. Because of the insecurity caused by the war in these countries, an unprecedented human disaster is unfolding before us, putting the lives of several million people in jeopardy. Even under normal circumstances Burundi and Rwanda are overpopulated countries, faced with an acute shortage of arable land. A few months ago the return to Rwanda of at least one million refugees from camps in Zaire led the international community to cancel the deployment of the multinational force to protect the people and humanitarian convoys.

We believe, however, that we must urge the international community to step up its humanitarian work.

2. Helping to establish a democratic government in Zaire is the only way to secure lasting stability and to prevent Zaire from exploding with wholly unpredictable repercussions on the whole of Central Africa.

3. The civil wars that are undermining the countries in the region must be brought to an end, as must the war between the states there.

4. National reconciliation policies must be established and implemented in Zaire, Rwanda and Burundi in order to foster the immediate resumption of the democratisation process on bases that are defined jointly by the national political authorities. The security of some cannot be guaranteed through the insecurity of others.

5. Once this climate has been created, the peaceful and voluntary return of the refugees must be supervised.

6. Lastly, we must step up our efforts to ensure that the international community provides assistance of all kinds for the reconstruction of Burundi, Rwanda and Zaire.

7. The mission of the SI: to implement the decision taken in February 1996 in Ouagadougou to send a fact-finding and evaluation mission to the Great Lakes region within three months.

8. Legal and judicial security must be promoted to protect the right of exiles to return home, and the right of defence guaranteed to those accused of genocide.

9. A global solution must be sought in the Great Lakes region, particularly in the framework of a conference on peace, security, stability and development involving all the states in the region, convened under the aegis of the United Nations and the OAU.

DECLARATION ON THE MIDDLE EAST

Since its early days in Madrid, the peace process in the Middle East has made considerable progress. The Declaration of Principles and the Interim Agreements signed by Israel and the PLO in Washington constitute a major breakthrough on the road to a lasting peace. The Socialist International welcomes the recent developments, particularly the agreement on Hebron, and congratulates the government of Israel and the Palestinian Authority for this very important achievement which will lead to the full implementation of the Oslo Agreements in accordance with the principles of the Madrid Conference.

The Socialist International congratulates its members, the Israel Labour Party, MAPAM and FATAH, who have been the champions of the peace agreement and the last agreement on Hebron.

The Socialist International also congratulates the government of the United States, President Mubarak and King Hussein, who mediated between the parties and who were instrumental in achieving this agreement, and it welcomes the increased political role of the European Union.

In order to achieve peace in the Middle East, it is necessary to count on continuing world support, including the European community which has shown how historic enmities can give way to economic and political cooperation.

The Socialist International has always supported the peace process and will continue to support in the future the efforts to achieve a just, lasting and comprehensive peace, and the historic reconciliation between Israel, the Palestinians and the Arab states.

In this significant moment it is of crucial importance to renew the talks between Israel on one hand and Syria and Lebanon on the other. Those talks should be based on the principle of land for peace and on the Security Council resolutions 242, 338 and 425 which must lead to a peace agreement.

Particular attention must be paid to the issue of terrorism which is supported by some political forces and states in the area. The Socialist International pays tribute to the efforts made by the Palestinian Authority in this field.

The Socialist International reaffirms the paramount importance of the affirmation and respect of human rights and democracy throughout the region, which implies as a priority the rights of the Palestinian people to self-determination.

DECLARATION ON NICARAGUA

We note the report of the Socialist International delegation which observed the electoral process in Nicaragua and which, despite the many and very serious irregularities, makes very clear the democratic will of the Nicaraguan people who turned out to vote in massive numbers and in an orderly fashion. We are also pleased to note that the FSLN came out as the strongest party in Nicaragua and we support the efforts of former president Daniel Ortega to bring about a national agreement which would guarantee democratic governability and the rule of law. We also support the agreements reached between President Arnoldo Alemán and Daniel Ortega on the urgent need to resolve as soon as possible the issue of property, which affects more than two hundred thousand peasant families without resources and more than one hundred thousand city-dwellers.

THE SITUATION IN NIGER

Considering that the regime of General Baré has resulted from a coup d'état which put an end to an authentic democratic experience;

Considering the serious dictatorial character that this regime has assumed as from Saturday 11 January 1997;

Considering the legitimacy and the legality of the demands of the member parties of the Front for the Restoration and Defence of Democracy;

The Council of the Socialist International meeting in Rome on 21-22 January 1997:

Strongly condemns the imprisonment of the leaders of the opposition parties as well as the many arrests carried out without any legal foundation;

Rejects all recourse to special tribunals to judge citizens whose only fault has been to organise a legal peaceful demonstration;

Demands the immediate release of all political prisoners, especially of Mahamadou Issoufou, President of the Party for Democracy and Socialism of Niger, PNDS;

Demands that all democratic governments use their influence to convince the government to return Niger to democratic rule and to respect human rights.

THE NOBEL PEACE PRIZE AWARDS

Considering that 7 December marked the 21st anniversary of the occupation of East Timor by the Indonesian army, which has caused the slaughter of one

third of the Timorese population;

Considering that in spite of the international community's appeals to the Indonesian authorities to allow access to the territory of East Timor for impartial observers, United Nations humanitarian and assistance organisations, and independent journalists, an arbitrary climate of repression still exists in that non-autonomous territory;

Considering the Socialist International resolution of October 1993 in Lisbon, the Tokyo resolution of May 1994, the Manila Declaration of February 1995, and the General Congress Resolution of September 1996 in New York, concerning the human rights situation in the territory;

Noting that it is still necessary for the international community to maintain a vigilant attitude and to alert public opinion to the dramatic repression and intolerance suffered by the Timorese people, the Socialist International:

Expresses its satisfaction at the Nobel Committee's decision to award the 1996 Nobel Peace Prize to Bishop Carlos Ximenes Belo and to José Ramos-Horta, who honour the cause of peace, justice, human rights, and the right to self-determination of the people of East Timor;

Congratulates the Nobel Peace Prize laureates for their continued efforts in support of the East Timorese cause, urging them to pursue their struggle to defend the legitimate rights of the people of East Timor, and to publicly denounce the atrocities perpetrated by the Indonesian authorities in the territory;

Appeals for a change of policy on the part of the Indonesian authorities towards a more constructive attitude of respect for the cultural, linguistic and religious rights of the people of East Timor, as well as towards a rapid improvement of the human rights situation in the territory.

PUERTO RICO

The Socialist International reaffirms its previous resolutions on Puerto Rico, and taking into account that the US Congress is about to consider plebiscite legislation regarding Puerto Rico, calls upon the US Congress to fully respect in this matter the applicable principles of international law, and to guarantee that under any status formula presented to Puerto Rico, the right of the Puerto Rican nation to its self-determination and the full enjoyment of its cultural rights be respected.

THE CURRENT SITUATION IN SOUTH-EASTERN EUROPE AND THE BALKANS

The Council of the Socialist International, meeting in Rome on 21-22 January 1997,

In accordance with the action undertaken in the past few years by the Socialist International, and in full agreement with the positions and action which the SI Committee on Central and Eastern Europe, SICCE, has constantly pursued in order to support peace in Bosnia and democratic stability in South-Eastern Europe and the Balkans:

1. Noting with satisfaction that Bosnia-Herzegovina has not seen war for over a year and that the Dayton and Paris Accords are being gradually implemented;

Reaffirms its support of the implementation of the peace accords, and noting the difficulties they are encountering, confirms the need for the international community to continue to support this process, to finance the reconstruction of the various territories in Bosnia, and to enable Bosnia to exist as a unitary secular state, with respect for pluralist norms.

Welcomes the creation of the unitary Bosnian institutions elected on 14 September, and deems it necessary to set a date for the municipal elections with effective international supervision and guaranteed access to the media for all parties;

Shares the commitment of the international community to support the peace process - particularly with respect to the SFOR mission and the presence of international police contingents - and to speed up the implementation of reconstruction and economic aid programmes;

Believes that the return of refugees to their homes in all of the territories needs to be accelerated and is a vital condition to encourage the re-birth of peaceful coexistence and multi-ethnicity and to guarantee a unitary future for Bosnia;

Reaffirms its support for the International Claims Tribunal in The Hague and confirms that war criminals must be arrested and brought before the Tribunal and also believes that it is of urgent importance to provide mental and physical care facilities for those who have suffered from war crimes, in particular women and children;

Expresses its concern at the obstacles imposed on freedom of movement and requests the authorities to permit it in all the territories in Bosnia;

Hopes that a reciprocally

satisfactory solution to the negotiations over the Brcko corridor can be reached;

Further hopes that the Untaes administration in eastern Slavonia is provided with all the means necessary to carry out its mandate, and that an accord among the parties is reached on a consensual basis in order to redefine that region's territorial set-up and to defend the rights of the Serbian minority.

2. Convinced that peace and stability require the full democratic development of all of the states born of the break-up of former Yugoslavia:

Expresses its concern at the serious political and institutional crisis unfolding in Belgrade;

Expresses its solidarity with the opposition forces and the student movement, which, through their action, have given Serbia a new, democratic image;

Urges the Belgrade authorities to accept the OSCE recommendations and fully recognise the results of the local elections of 17 November, and in particular the opposition victory in the cities mentioned in the González report;

Believes that once these results have been fully recognised, a dialogue between government and opposition must begin, with the aim of defining the rules and stages of a democratic transition - in particular new electoral laws - and guarantees for freedom of information, and transparent procedures for elections scheduled for 1997;

Believes furthermore that the recognition of the elections of 17 November and the opening of dialogue could encourage the swift re-introduction of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia into international institutions;

Requests a re-examination of the correctness of the elections also in Montenegro;

Stresses furthermore that democratic developments within the Yugoslav Federation will enable the Kosovo issue to be approached in new and negotiated terms acceptable to the Albanian majority and the Serbian minority in Kosovo;

Hopes that the municipal elections scheduled for next March in Croatia will be an opportunity to consolidate definitively its democratic institutions, independent media activity, and the recognition of the autonomy of local institutions;

Further hopes that the democratic opposition forces and the parties of social democratic inspiration - and in particular the Social Democratic Party, SDP, which obtained a significant result in the municipal elections of 1995 - can provide the voters with a

credible alternative to the current system;

Asks that the Croatian government respect the will of the voters and permit the opposition to finally govern in Zagreb;

Asks the Croatian government to encourage the return home of citizens of Serbian origin;

Stresses the key role which the European Union can play - with a regional strategy of cooperation and association agreements - and which can make a crucial contribution to furthering economic growth and democratic stability in the countries of the region;

Further stresses that regional organisations such as the CEI, the SECI and the Black Sea Cooperation Council can contribute to re-enforcing cohesion, cooperation and integration among the countries of the region.

3. Observing the events unfolding in other Balkan countries:

Welcomes the positive progress in relations between Athens and Skopje, and expresses its hope that the negotiations taking place under the auspices of the UN result speedily in a normalisation of relations between the two countries;

Expresses its satisfaction at the victory of the democratic forces in the recent elections in Romania, and welcomes with particular warmth the success of the Social Democratic Union and of their leaders Petre Roman and Sergiu Cunescu;

Observes with particular concern the events unfolding in Bulgaria and hopes that dialogue between the parties will specify the timing and the manner of new elections, which will enable the Bulgarian citizens to decide who will govern the country in the coming years;

Believes that in Albania - following the serious crisis caused by the widespread electoral fraud which ensued after the general election of May 1996 - the local elections of 20-27 October 1996 constituted a first step which must now be followed by a dialogue between government and opposition, a new Constitution and eventually new elections.

In pursuing its political and organisational initiatives in the past few years, the Socialist International and its member parties have been committed to supporting in each country those political movements and parties of progressive and social democratic inspiration, in the knowledge that today more than ever the values, the policies and the programmes of democratic socialism are essential in order to further equitable economic growth and full democratic stability in South-Eastern Europe and in the Balkans.

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PHILIPPINES

Philippines Democratic Socialist Party, PDSP
Elizabeth Angsioco

ROMANIA

Democratic Party, PD
Victor Bostinaru
Adrian Mihăilescu
Catalin Ghita
Mariana Stoica

ROMANIA

Romanian Social Democratic Party, PSDR
Constantin Avramescu

URUGUAY

Party for People's Government, PGP
Antonio Gallicchio

OBSERVER PARTIES

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Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola, MPLA
Paulo Jorge
Antero De Abreu
Ruth Neto
María José Gama

ARMENIA

ARF Armenian Socialist Party
Mario Nalpatian
Hilda Tchobonian

BOSNIA & HERZEGOVINA

Social Democratic Party of Bosnia and Herzegovina, SDP BiH
Milan Mrđa

BOSNIA & HERZEGOVINA

Union of Bosnian and Herzegovinian Social Democrats, UBSD
Mevlida Kunosic Vlajic
Sejfudin Tokic

COLOMBIA

M-19 Democratic Alliance
Alvaro Jiménez Millán

GEORGIA

Citizen's Union of Georgia, CUG
Michael Machavariani

HUNGARY

Hungarian Social Democratic Party, MSzDP
László Kapolyi

IRAN

Democratic Party of Iranian Kurdistan, PDKI
Abdullah Mahmood
Ghacem Hosseini
Khosrow Abdollahi

FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA

Social Democratic Union of Macedonia, SDUM
Ilinka Mitreva

MONTENEGRO

Social Democratic Party of Montenegro, SDPM
Zarlo Rakcevic
Dragisa Burzan

TERRITORIES UNDER PALESTINIAN AUTHORITY

Fatah
Yasser Arafat
Ilan Halevi
Hani El Hassan

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International Union of Socialist Youth, IUSY
Nicola Zingaretti
Alfredo Lazzaretti
Antonio Mondragón
Vinicio Peluffo
Claudio Accogli

Socialist International Women, SIW
Audrey McLaughlin
Marlène Haas

ASSOCIATED ORGANISATIONS

Group of the Party of European Socialists of the European Parliament
Pauline Green
Luigi Colajanni
Nadia Van Hamme

International League of Religious Socialists, ILRS
Franz Gundacker
Chris Herries

International Union of Social Democratic Teachers, IUSD
Liisa Tommila
Hans Spiess

Party of European Socialists, PES
Rudolf Scharping
Jean-François Vallin

SI Secretariat
Latifa Perry
Justina Pang
Gabriela Shepherd
Jean Morris
Fred Smith
Doug Payne

GUESTS - INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS/PARTIES

Coordinating Body of Human Rights Organisations in Cuba, CODEHU
Elizardo Sánchez

European Forum for Democracy and Solidarity
Conny Fredriksson

Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, FES
Ernst Kerbush

Jean Jaurès Foundation
Gilles Finchelstein
Axel Queval
Vera Matthias

SAMAK
Tom Saxén

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Win Khet
Oung Myint Tun

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Social Democratic Action, ASA
Silvije Degen

CROATIA
Social Democratic Union, SDU
Ljubinka Karpowicz

JORDAN
Kamel Abu Jaber

RUSSIAN FEDERATION
Russian Social Democratic Union, RSDU
Vladimir N. Mironov

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Claudio Fecici
Stefano Macina
Antonio Carattoni

SERBIA
Civic Alliance
Vesna Pescic

SERBIA
Social Democratic Union, SDU
Zarko Korac

UKRAINE
Social Democratic Party of Ukraine, SDPU
Yuriy Buzdugan
Mykola Karnauch
Olena Skomorochtchenko

GUESTS - INDIVIDUALS

José Ramos-Horta
Klaus Lindenberg
Dieter Koniecki
Ebrima Manneh
Ilir Meta

PEOPLE



Viktor Klima (above) of the Social Democratic Party of Austria, SPOe, replaced Franz Vranitzky as his country's chancellor in January (see Socialist Noteboook, page 56). He had been a member of the Austrian cabinet for five years, most recently as finance minister.

On taking office, the new chancellor made several changes to the SPOe ministers in his team. His new appointments included **Rudolf Edlinger** (finance), **Karl Schlägl** (interior), **Casper Einem** (science and transport), **Lore Hostasch** (labour, health and social affairs), **Barbara Prammer** (women's issues and consumer protection), **Peter Wittmann** (minister of state in the chancellery) and **Wolfgang Ruttendorfer** (minister of state in the finance ministry).

The SPOe has designated Viktor

Klima as its leader, pending the party congress due to be held in April. The party also has a new general secretary, **Andreas Rudas**.

Following the elections of last November in Romania (see Socialist Noteboook, page 62), the new coalition government includes several ministers from the Social Democratic Union, USD, which unites the two SI consultative parties in that country, the Democratic Party, PD, and the Romanian Social Democratic Party,



PSDR. They include **Adrian Severin** (above) as minister of foreign affairs, as well as **Alexandru Athanasiu** (labour and social protection), **Victor Babiuc** (defence), **Traian Băsescu** (transport), **Ioan Oltean** (water, forestry and environmental protection), **Bogdan Bujor Teodoriu** (research and technology) and

Bogdan Niculescu Duvăz (relations with parliament).

Petre Roman, leader of the PD, is president of the Senate.

The Social Democratic Party of Switzerland has a new general secretary, **Barbara Haering Binder**.

Marinos Sizopoulos is now secretary general of EDEK Socialist Party of Cyprus.

The international bureau of the Social Democratic Party, SDP, Japan, has a new director. She is **Masako Owaki**.

The new general secretary of the Institutional Revolutionary Party, PRI, Mexico, is **Juan Millán Lizárraga** and the party's new coordinator of international affairs is **Alfredo Phillips Olmedo**.

The Party for Democracy, PPD, Chile, has a new general secretary, **Víctor Manuel Rebollo**, international secretary, **Luciano Tommassini**, and vice-presidents, **José Auth**, **Sofía Prats**, **Guido Girardi**, **Francisco Vidal**, **Roberto Muñoz Barra** and **Laura Soto**.

FROM
THE
ARCHIVE**THE COMMITMENT TO PEACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST**

'I consider the problem of the Middle East as a crucial question for peace in the world in this phase of our history. If we were successful in bringing about a peaceful solution peace would be a historical accomplishment of such magnitude which has been denied to humanity for centuries...

If rapprochement were possible, the idea of peace would have gained a great, universally visible victory, and the Socialist International would have contributed its share.'

Bruno Kreisky, then chancellor of Austria, reporting on the first SI mission to the Middle East, which took place in three stages in 1974, 1975 and 1976.



WOMEN & POLITICS

Journal of Socialist International Women

Publisher and Editor
Marlène Haas

BUREAU MEETING, 18-19 JANUARY 1997, ROME, ITALY

WOMEN AND THE GLOBALISATION OF THE WORLD ECONOMY

The Bureau of Socialist International Women met in Rome on 18-19 January 1997. The meeting was hosted by the Democratic Party of the Left, PDS and was opened by SIW President Audrey McLaughlin. In her first Bureau meeting as SIW President she stated that 'with reference to the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, structural adjustment programmes reflect a profound lack of understanding of the human experience. These policies have disproportionately and negatively affected women.' She told the meeting that at the World Conference on Women in Beijing none of the governments had mentioned that perhaps some international monetary policies caused and even increased poverty. She suggested that SIW could go some way to help close the gap in understanding between women who are affected by increasing globalisation and governments who make policies on behalf of these same women.

The Women's Coordinator of the PDS, Francesca Izzo, stressed the challenges that lie ahead for SIW. She stated that 'in order to be in a position to confront the new tasks of the left in the age of globalisation, we need new ideas and strategies; we need more robust and thriving transnational institutions and organisational networks. In the current transition to a new age we can play a major, irreplaceable role, taking up the challenges expressed by the Beijing Conference, and translating them into forceful programmes and policies.'

The theme of the Bureau meeting was 'Women and the globalisation of the world economy'. The first key-note speaker, Aminata Mbengue Ndiaye, SIW Vice-President and Minister for Women, the Child and the Family in Senegal, addressed the economic situation of women in rural areas of Africa and outlined measures to be adopted to strengthen their role in the economy. The massive 80 per cent illiteracy rate of Senegalese women prevents access to training and information and their lack of access to credit is the main constraint on their economic productivity. Positive measures to address some of these problems should include the promotion of women's enterprises in rural areas and the access of women to credit, to land, to agricultural equipment and to modern soil techniques.

The second keynote speaker, SIW Vice-President Pia Locatelli from the Italian Socialists, SI, Italy, focused on the transformation of the welfare state in Europe which has undergone major changes in the last decade. The role of the State has come under attack and globalisation of the markets and technical innovation have taken over. The State still has an important role to play in creating not only a just but also an efficient society, 'passing from assistance which supports passive attitudes to policies offering opportunities which stimulate personal responsibility and initiative.'

Elisabeth Angsioco, chair of the Democratic Socialist Women in the Philippines outlined the serious problems neoliberalism poses to the unindustrialised or still industrialising nations, where large numbers of poor peoples suffer worsening poverty and marginalisation as a result. She stated that 'the onset of neoliberal economic policies in the Philippines has brought about dangerous changes or trends in the world of work: migration, labour flexibilisation and informalisation, and child labour. These trends affect both men and women but they are a lot harsher on women'. She concluded that the globalisation of social democracy is the alternative

to neoliberalism.

Anna Finocchiaro, the first Minister for Equal Opportunities in Italy who spoke about the policies and action the government was pursuing to promote the cause of women and Livia Turco, Minister for Social Solidarity in Italy briefly spoke about the government's immigration policy.

The Bureau meeting adopted the resolution below.

Resolution

In today's world women are playing increasingly indispensable roles in international, national and household economies, but they still have a disadvantaged economic position compared to men.

The new opportunities offered by globalisation will not be fostered if women, new actors on the world scene, do not play key roles in the economy, in social and political life and in the family. The Beijing Conference stressed the growing awareness of the leading role of women and declared that women's rights are human rights. A new balance of power and resources is needed if we want to prevent the new autonomy and freedom from resulting in worsening conditions for women and quality of life for all.

The rise of neo-liberalism and the free market philosophy which see society, both domestic and international, primarily as a market, where everyone is both a producer and a consumer, pose a direct threat to equality and social justice. A deregulated market economy which has no regard for social or environmental concerns cannot promote global economic and social well-being and will fail to protect the environment and to ensure sustainable development. Neo-liberalism increasingly threatens women's hard won rights, particularly the right to education, to gainful employment and to health. Neo-liberalism likewise results in the weakening of people's democratic gains as states continue to give political concessions in the pursuit of more foreign investment.

Today globalisation is being led by a few hundred transnational corporations, which have economies larger than many national economies. Not subject to national regulation, these increasingly important transnational corporations disregard human and labour rights and the environment in their quest for higher profits. More and more they are shaping global work, finance, consumption and culture. Rarely do women play any role in their decision making, but often women are their victims.

In both the developing and developed world there is growing poverty; the gap between rich and poor continues to increase, both between countries and within countries. Most of the poor are women as they are the primary victims of exploitation and marginalisation and educating and training women and girls especially in non-traditional work is the key to their economic development. Targeting resources at women by recognising their right to health, education and training, by giving them full access to economic resources, and promoting gender-balance in decision-making, is essential in order to overcome poverty.

The Euro-Mediterranean initiative which was launched in Barcelona in 1995 is an economic forum which, in order to be equal to competition with other blocks, must work for a greater involvement of women. They constitute indisputable human and economic capital which must be judiciously mobilised.

In Africa, women produce around 80 per cent of the food and constitute more than half of small-scale farmers and provide about three-quarters of the workforce in food production and processing. But women still lack access to land. Without secure land ownership rights, they are unable to obtain credit and support for production.

In Algeria and in countries where there is war, violence and extremism of any sort women are the primary victims of atrocities. The very heavy economic consequences lead to unacceptable levels of distress and poverty. Structural adjustment imposed on certain countries by international institutions (IMF etc), the harsh transition to a 'unregulated' market economy instead of a 'social' market economy, add their disastrous effects to the situation.

In Asia and Latin America the dominance of neo-liberal policies has led to a burgeoning informal sector, dominated by women and children, where flexible working practices are largely unprotected by labour and health regulations. So-called efficiency and profit are pursued at enormous social cost.

In many developing countries, where there is an acute shortage of gainful employment opportunities, millions of women opt for migrant work, particularly in areas that make them more vulnerable to emotional, psychological, physical and sexual violence. While these women significantly help their countries' economies, they are not only blamed for the social costs of migration but are also largely left unprotected.

Deregulation and privatisation may increase efficiency in the production of goods and services, but also increase the risk of poverty. In much of the developed world, structural unemployment affects women in particular and they constitute the majority of low-paid, temporary and part-time workers and the long-term unemployed. For women in the former centrally planned economies, the transition to market economies has had a disproportionately negative impact on them, in terms of conditions of life and of higher rate and longer-term unemployment. Unemployment is not only a macroeconomic problem. The unemployed lose not only their means of support, but also part of their humanity and identity. Salaries are still often determined by gender rather than the skills required for the job, resulting in unequal pay for equal work. Women's skills are a necessary resource for economic growth and development. Women must therefore be fully integrated into the labour market without any discrimination. Such integration requires adequate labour and social policies and investment of public and private resources in every field.

Institutions of the social state have become objects of attack and in many countries have been swept away by market ideology. Often, behind the need for an austerity programme, there lies an ideological antagonism to the welfare state. The cutting of government subsidies and social welfare provisions has hit women the hardest making it more difficult for them to escape poverty. The provision of education, housing, healthcare and childcare, lessen the economic burden on women and assist their economic independence.

The old social state was based on a patriarchal model. A new welfare state must now take into account the new conditions of the world economy and labour market, the changed role of women, the growing presence of immigrants, the need to include men in family responsibilities etc. Social rights should belong to the individual citizen and not be derived from family status. Active policies that provide women and men with increased choices for work and family life must be implemented in both public and private sectors.

Child labour is a product of poverty and is a global problem. UNICEF estimates there are 250 million children working world-wide, many in the sex trade and in bonded labour. Employers exploit children who represent cheap labour, often in hazardous conditions and those akin to slavery. Of particular interest is the phenomenon of feminisation of child labour which is becoming increasingly evident. We cannot wait for poverty to end before child labour is eliminated.

Socialists and social democrats must face the challenge of the interdependence of the modern world and offer a competing vision of globalisation which focuses on markets serving people and on the distribution of the world's resources based on justice. Building a new contract between the genders must be a fundamental pillar

of this challenge. Only in this way can socialists and social democrats undertake collective responsibility to ensure that globalisation becomes an instrument of development, peace and democracy.

Socialist International Women urgently calls on the trade union movement, both at national and international levels to actively work for the protection of the rights of those victimised by migrant, informal and flexible work. The eradication of child labour should also be among the movement's priorities.

SIW calls on states to ratify the UN Convention on the Rights of Migrant Women Workers and their Families and to fulfill their commitments as enshrined in the documents of UN conferences such as the Fourth World Conference on Women, the World Summit on Social Development, the International Conference on Population and Development and the Conference on Human Rights. SIW calls for collective political action at different levels: supranational, national, local etc

- a) to adopt gender-sensitive policies and programmes of economic and social development at national and international level
- b) to balance inequality, injustice and insecurity produced by neo-liberal policies, reinforcing social rights and fighting against social exclusion;
- c) to redefine the international system of accounts to take into consideration women's work, environmental protection and other social factors which do not now affect the gross national product and economic measures.
- d) to develop new and wider public policies to ensure conditions of equity, equal opportunities and social cohesion;
- e) to consolidate democracy and women's equal participation in decision-making using quotas which have proved to be an effective means of promoting equality;
- f) to regulate transnational corporations to ensure the protection of labour rights and human rights, including explicitly women's rights;
- g) to pursue international co-ordination of national economic policies in order to create new jobs and to uphold and protect workers' rights;
- h) to promote growth and employment, whilst enhancing sustainable development and the protection of the environment;
- i) to design, implement and monitor effective legislation, codes, social security regulations, so as to ensure worldwide minimum standards of pay, working hours, labour rights and to end child labour;
- j) to promote economic policies to improve the employment and income of women in the formal and informal sectors and to ensure equal pay for equal work;
- k) to give women full and equal access to economic resources, to credit and the right to own land and to inherit;
- l) to restructure and target the allocation of public expenditure to promote women's economic opportunities to education, training, the sciences and new technologies;
- m) to ensure that structural adjustment programmes do not lead to a reduction in education, training or health programmes and are based on advancing gender equality and the recognition of women's economic contribution;
- n) to provide free and compulsory education for children;
- o) to give women full and equal access to education and training;
- p) to stimulate and assist fertility management programmes in order that women can secure their reproductive rights;
- q) to promote and develop the means by which women communicate and share information throughout the world, and within countries, in particular in impoverished countries.

Only solidarity amongst women will ensure that globalisation of the economy will promote social rights, conflict prevention and economic and social justice.

Girls at work: making wrappers for firecrackers

DSWP



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FILIPINO WOMEN AND THE CHANGING WORLD OF WORK

Elizabeth Angsioco

'Because women's work is never done or underpaid or unpaid or boring or repetitious or we are the first to get sacked ...' These were words written years ago by Joyce Stevens on why women are involved in the women's movement. Lines that remain as valid now as they were then. Penned long before we even heard of GATT, Structural Adjustment Programs, neo-liberalism and trade liberalisation but directly speak of the effects of such complex, technical words and terminologies on women - as if knowing then what women's lot will be decades after. These new 'in' words for technocrat and activist alike are vague and hard to understand. We do not, however, need to understand all the technicalities to know that these terminologies actually determine the life we live, the food we eat, the brand of clothes we wear, the work we do. Yes, the work we do, whether we sell vegetables or newspapers, work as a contractual employee through an agency, sew baby clothes in our own homes, or spend our whole day doing housework and caring for children. Doing women's work, with little or no pay at all.

Neo-liberalism: the context

To put into context discussions on women and changes in the world of work, we have to attempt to briefly define and analyse neo-liberalism. Neo-liberalism is basically a more nuanced form of the old liberal or classical form of capitalism, but this time much more extended at international level, aided by the rapid advancement in technology, especially in communications and transportation.

Neo-liberalism or neo-liberal capitalism advocates a return to an extreme understanding of free enterprise that sees society, both domestic and international, primarily as a market, where everyone is both a producer and a consumer, and the free operation of market forces (untrammeled by government regulation) will promote, as though by a hidden hand, the common good. Where consumers have access to the best products at the cheapest prices, and the more efficient producers gain the most profits.

Neo-liberalism as a structural problem worldwide

Neo-liberalism poses a grave problem to the whole of humankind, particularly to the unindustrialised or still industrialising nations where vast numbers of poor peoples suffer worsening poverty and marginalisation.

The main slogans of neo-liberalism are 'free trade' and 'complementarity'. It has no real regard for the sovereignty of underdeveloped countries. Woe to the poor masses of the world who can neither produce nor consume the commodities of the new international order and who are victimised by the 'economic adjustments' instituted in their countries to fit into the neo-liberal structures being constructed for the whole world.

What neo-liberalism actually does is exert economic and other pressures to ensure that the only industries set up in poor countries are those which do not threaten the economic and technological supremacy of the developed capitalist countries. Even the

implementation of free trade is a very qualified one. The most powerful countries are promoting the formation of regional free trade zones to become common markets within each block, controlled by the developed capitalist countries therein. Internally, 'among the underdeveloped countries, there will be fierce competition for the crumbs from the dominant countries, with more and more economic and political concessions offered to attract investment from the dominant developed capitalist countries.

The end result is a tragic one. For the neo-liberal nations, there will be an inequitable complementation with the patron powers enriching themselves all the more, while the client states compete against each other. For those who do not belong to the system, misery awaits them, for they will be subjected to an economic boycott.

Neo-liberalism unquestionably affects the work patterns of peoples in both the developed and developing countries. It cannot, however, be assumed that its effects are more or less the same depending only on the economic status of one's country. From the outset it should be emphasised that women in developing countries like the Philippines are most badly affected by neo-liberalism.

Filipino women and work

The existing concept of 'work' needs re-examination. Generally, work is narrowly defined as 'employment' as used in the Philippine National Statistics Office's determination of the labour force participation rate. In 1994, its data indicated that the labour force participation rate of women was 36.5 per cent: this means that for every 100 females of working age in that year, only 36 were considered economically active.

In real terms, more than half of the women of working age were not considered economically active since they are classified as housewives who are, based on NSO definition 'non-working'. This despite the fact that gender analysis carried out by the Democratic Socialist Women of the Philippines of about 650 women from the different regions of the country indicate that the average daily working hours of these women range from 16-18 hours compared to men's eight to ten hours. Yet these women are considered 'non-working'. In the so-called 'productive' sphere, women's labour remains at the margins, in the 'reproductive' sphere, it is invisible.

Women and employment

A lot has already been written on the status of women in employment and the consensus is that like their male comrades, women workers suffer from problems attributed to their class. However, by virtue of their sex, women are subjected to specific forms of exploitation, discrimination and marginalisation not experienced by men.

National Statistics Office data reveal that in 1993, women composed about two-thirds (eight million) the total number of men (14.2 million) workers. As expected, women's unemployment rate was much higher. One also has to consider the types of employment women are engaged in. In 1991, only one per cent of all administrative, executive and managerial level workers were women. Further, studies indicate that women are largely found in unskilled and semi-skilled jobs, leading to the conclusion that there are more women as we go down the pyramid of employment.

In addition to these, women are subjected to:

- job segregation which limits women to 'feminine' jobs;
- discrimination in hiring and firing, promotion and training;
- a wage gap where on average, a woman receives 47 centavos (.01 USD) for every peso (.038 USD) a man earns;
- multiple burdens because women remain in charge of house and family work; and
- sexual harassment despite the existing law against it.

Women and trade unions

Trade unions, considered as vanguards of workers' rights need to be examined also. To date, it is estimated that only about 20 per cent of all the employed are unionised and only about 20 per cent of these unions have collective bargaining agreements. Moreover, the trade union movement is very much divided along ideological or

political lines. We cannot, therefore, speak of a strong unified trade union movement in the country

Figures for 1991 from the Bureau of Women and Young Workers show a 35 per cent female membership of unions with only 16.4 per cent women among union presidents. The trade union movement is definitely patriarchal, not only in representation but more so in its attitudes.

Given the women-specific problems mentioned above, it is reasonable that women workers should benefit more from the unions. However, such is not the case since trade union women also have problems within the movement itself some of which are:

- male domination of leadership positions;
- strong prejudices against women who are generally considered weak and unable to handle negotiations and conflict situations;
- perceptions that women's issues are not union issues;
- severe inadequacy of programmes for women; and
- sexual harassment by unionists themselves.

No wonder the great majority of women workers shy away from trade unions.

Changes in the world of work: migration and flexible and informal working

The onset of neo-liberal economic policies in the Philippines has brought about dangerous changes or trends in the world of work. Despite government pronouncements of significant economic growth (pegged at 5.7 per cent for 1995), poverty levels still stand at 70 per cent of our estimated 68 million people. Even if true, such growth only benefits a small group of people belonging to the rich and upper middle class.

Feminisation of migration

The biggest contributors to this much-bragged-about growth are our migrant workers now numbering more than six million. More than 50 per cent of these workers are women, mostly deployed in service-oriented jobs such as domestic, hotel and restaurant work, entertainment and nursing.

Brought about by the uneven development of countries, the demand for cheap labour, especially for work that is no longer considered 'important', and the severe lack of

Few of these girls from a poor fishing village go to school



gainful employment in the country, migration based on Philippine experience has taken the face of a woman. This phenomenon is not without grave consequences for a lot of those who have taken the 'risk'.

As evidenced by countless reported cases, Filipina migrant workers suffer from a range of problems, from illegal recruitment to violation of contracts, from homesickness to culture shock, from inhumane working conditions and treatment to sexual harassment and exploitation, physical violence, even rape and murder. Maricris Sioson, Flor Contemplacion, Delia Maga, Sarah Balabagoan, these are just some names that will remind us of our women's oppression in foreign lands. In search of a better life for their loved ones - they had to give much more, at times even their very lives.

Labour flexibility

Migration is coupled with the rapid growth of the informal sector as well as labour flexibility, which is defined as flexibility in the deployment of human resources, in working practices, and in wages. It gives prominence to non-regular, non-conventional forms of employment and serves as an alternative to the standard practice of regular and formal employment.

There is a widespread practice of big corporations taking on contractual employees (many of whom are women) for specific jobs through agencies. This enables companies to terminate contracts before the end of six months and so avoid taking on the workers as 'regulars' or permanent employees and providing them with benefits mandated by law.

Flexibilisation has a built-in bias for capitalists and is grossly disadvantageous to the workers. It makes no concessions to employment security, better income and job stability. This leads to the further marginalisation of workers, making their working conditions more precarious and vulnerable (with no specific terms of employment, lower wages and benefits and poor opportunities for skills development and advancement).

Informalisation of women's labour

Informal work refers to employment in the so-called underground economy, such as backyard farming or small-scale food processing; the service sector in domestic work in private homes and prostitution; and the sub-contracting scheme. Those involved in the underground economy are often children under 15 years old. Those who work as domestic helps are usually girls who have to stop schooling and leave home because of poverty. A number even sell their bodies to foreign paedophiles.

Most informal employment is done through sub-contracting. This scheme of contracting jobs to small shops and home-based workers (now estimated to number at least seven million) is now an established pattern in industries making toys, garments, shoes, leatherware, and furniture, especially those oriented to the export market.

Home-based work is a widespread phenomenon in the Philippines, occurring in both urban and rural settings. With no overhead costs, no worker's benefits or social security contributions, foreign companies rake in huge profits. The homeworkers, mostly married women and girls, are the worst off in this scheme. Their wages are far below the minimum prescribed by law; their employment is irregular; their working conditions leave much to be desired and often result in occupation-related illnesses. Most of them are not even aware of their rights as workers and, because they are scattered and isolated from each other, organising them is more difficult.

Child labour and its feminisation

These trends of migration, of flexible and informal employment are highly exploitative of the most marginalised in our society - women and children. Directly related to these is the phenomenon of child labour that victimises about seven million Filipino children aged five to seventeen years old.

The more sinister trend, however, is the feminisation of child labour which is becoming increasingly evident. Analysis of available data on child labour will show

that while both boys and girls are involved, girls dominate and are found in more types of jobs than boys. Boys dominate quarrying, mining, seaweed production and fishing, but girls are also found in mining, specifically gold panning, in fishing - selling the men's catch, and in seaweed production especially in the harvesting.

Home-based handicraft production involving twine-making, basketry, weaving, shellcraft and mat embroidery are dominated by girls. This is equally true in the service sector, particularly in domestic work, garments, leather and firecracker manufacturing. Data will show that 73 per cent of child homeworkers are girls. One only needs to observe street children selling flowers, cigarettes and confectionery to realise that a large number of them are girls.

The worst form of girl-child labour, however, is in prostitution, where they become easy prey to foreign paedophiles subjected not only to sexual exploitation but also to physical violence, rape and sometimes murder.

The patriarchal character of Philippine society coupled with poverty largely shape and reinforce the realities of girl-child labourers. The gender division of labour dictates the type of work that women, men, girls and boys do. The fact that society expects girls to assist their mothers in housekeeping and childcare (more than the boys) aggravates the situation. Generally, therefore, girls are more burdened with work and have less time for other activities than boys.

Child labour not only robs children of their rights and their childhood, it also robs us of our future.

The challenges ahead ..

.. for the women's movement,

To start with, women are already in a disadvantaged position even without these changes in the world of work and neo-liberal policies worsen the situation. The challenge is enormous. The women's movement must look at these issues and should lead the debate. There is an urgent need to reveal the fact that neo-liberalism and the ensuing trends in the world of work affect women differently and more negatively than men. While neo-liberalism remains largely unquestioned except by progressive forces, the limited debates hardly include women and women's issues despite the fact that women and girls bear the heaviest burdens.

No other group can best articulate and bring to the fore the trends of the feminisation of migration, flexible and informal employment and child labour than the women's movement itself. The challenge is to enrich the debate while the issues are gaining momentum and not simply react later to arguments, which are often gender blind. The best time is now.

.. for the trade union movement

If the Philippine trade unions hope to stay relevant, there is a need to take stock of themselves and re-examine their visions, objectives and activities. The tremendous growth in number of flexible, informal, migrant and child-workers challenges the very nature and composition of trade unions in the country. Focusing their organising efforts on formal workers no longer suffices. Being wrapped-up in age-old traditional trade union concepts increasingly alienates them from a very significant number of workers who, in the long run, might determine the fate of unionism in the Philippines.

The large numbers of women in emerging workers' categories present another facet of the challenge. The movement can no longer ignore specific problems faced by them if the unions want to harness their support. After all, women can and will enrich the movement with their different approaches and ways of looking at issues.

The challenge is also on our partners in the international labour movement. There is a need to keep an open mind in supporting approaches different from their own. Workers' contexts are different in different countries, especially among developed and developing ones.

.. for governments

States definitely play a vital role. While analysts say that neo-liberalism significantly weakens governments (especially those of developing countries), it is still the government's primary function to look after the well-being of its people. The challenge is for states to have the political will to put the interests of the masses above those of a few groups or individuals.

Particularly, the Philippine government must look into the plight of its workers who form the backbone of the country's economy. It should address their needs through policies, laws, programmes and particularly the generation of gainful employment. Studies point to the severe scarcity of employment opportunities as the primary reason why women leave the country. Imagine how many lives could have been saved if these women did not end up as migrant workers.

Neo-liberalism puts the emphasis on the competitiveness of labour. Thus, there is a need to focus on increasing our workers' skills. Adequate training, backed-up by the necessary technology will mean better opportunities for our workers. We hope for the day when Filipinos will no longer be the world's number one domestic helpers and our girls will no longer have to sell their bodies.

The government boasts about economic growth. It must ensure that such growth benefits the masses and adds to the people's well-being through effective delivery of adequate social services.

.. for NGOs and people's organisations

The popular movements led by NGOs and people's organisations should continue organising and consolidating communities to facilitate collective action on these issues. More in-depth and comprehensive research must also be done to form the basis of such actions.

Networking among advocacy groups at local, regional, and international level needs to be strengthened to focus on the problems and to put pressure on governments, international bodies and big corporations to act adequately on the issues.

In all efforts, it is important that the specific problems and needs of women and girls be identified and responded to effectively. Obviously, this requires a comprehensive approach that will in the long term eliminate the evils of informal, flexible, migrant and child labour.

Social democracy: the alternative

Social democrats face much of the challenge. Neo-liberalism is a political issue as much as it is economic. Since its menace is felt worldwide, the alternative should also be worldwide in scope. Given the present international political configuration, no other group than the social democrats can offer an alternative.

Clearly, the globalisation of social democracy is the alternative to neo-liberalism:

- focusing on people's rights rather than markets;
- making democracy a way of life, even in economics;
- distributing the world's resources based on justice;
- adhering to a development framework consistent with ecological balance; and
- achieving equality between the sexes, not just in rhetoric.

The common good being more important than individual selfish interests, we face the greatest challenge. Work must be done at national, regional and international level with the Socialist International and Socialist International Women taking the lead. The goal is to strengthen solidarity and unity in outlook, while respecting differences in approach in specific situations.

At a national level, we have to face the challenge with the support of our family in the International. The job ahead is tremendous. But one thing is certain, women will be at the forefront with their male comrades. As socialist feminists, all issues are women's issues. There is no other way.

The dream is that someday, the words written by Joyce Stevens will no longer be true. As the theme of SIW's XIV Conference in Stockholm in 1989 declared: 'The future we want is possible.'

Elizabeth Angsioco is the National Chairperson of the Democratic Socialist Women of the Philippines; President of Support Service Institute for Women Inc and Chairperson of the Foreign Affairs Commission of the Philippines Democratic Socialist Party.

ALBANIA

Opposition unites as government crisis worsens

Skender Gjinushi, chair of the Social Democratic Party, PSD, the Albanian member of the Socialist International, announced in February that his party is seeking to renew and strengthen a coalition of parties to challenge the government of President Sali Berisha. The Berisha government was shaken by nationwide rioting in January following the collapse of pyramid investment schemes which left thousands of savers ruined.

'We have joined together

now because we all agree that Albania is in crisis. Any delay could bring the country into catastrophe', he commented in Tirana.

The SDP forms part of the Forum for Democracy which gathers together a broad spectrum of parties, including the former communist Party of Labour, now known as the Socialist Party. The Forum is chaired by members of the neutral human rights group, the Former Persecuted Prisoners Association.

President Berisha leads the conservative Democratic Party which claimed 122 of the 140 seats in parliament after elections in May 1996 which other parties said were fraudulent.

Protests in Albania

Popperfoto/Reuter



ARMENIA

ARF in talks with prime minister

Leaders of the ARF Socialist Party of Armenia, an observer party of the International, met the country's prime minister Armen Sarkissian on 13 December. In

November he replaced Hrant Bagratian who had been in office since 1993. The party delegation, made up of Rouben Hakobian, Hrav Karapetian and Gagik Mktchian, congratulated the new leader and said that his new programme corresponded to the platform of the ARF.

ALGERIA

Laws to restrict political parties

55

New laws which restrict the recognition and functioning of democratic political parties, including the Socialist Forces Front, FFS, the SI member party which is led by Hocine Aït Ahmed are set to be introduced in Algeria. These were announced after the constitutional referendum held by the government of President Liamine Zéroual on 28 November 1996. Opposition parties, including the FFS, described the proposals as formalising dictatorship. The FFS had called for a 'no' vote in the referendum (see 2-3/96, page 79). SI President Pierre Mauroy called for international protests against the proposed laws.

Early in 1997 the violence reached a crescendo. In the course of one weekend in January more than 20 people were killed and at least fifty injured in a car bomb in Algiers, 36 were murdered in a village and a bomb exploded near a girls' school. President Zéroual has promised to 'exterminate' Islamic groups thought to be responsible.

Replying to a question about his attitude to the call by Hocine Aït Ahmed for the international community to break the silence on Algeria, Lionel Jospin, first secretary of the French Socialist Party, declared in an interview with the Paris daily newspaper Libération, 'I believe that the international community should be woken up. It would be useful if the French government started consultation on a European level. France must lift the taboo and not remain silent nor give the impression of giving unconditional support to the Algerian authorities'.

SOCIALIST NOTEBOOK

AUSTRALIA

56 State poll

The Australian Labor Party gained an increased share of the poll in elections held in Western Australia on 14 December - the first time this had happened in a decade. The conservative Liberal-National coalition was nevertheless returned to power for a further four years in the state.

AUSTRIA

New chancellor

On 28 January Viktor Klima (see People, page 44) of the Social Democratic Party of Austria, SPOe, took over as chancellor from Franz Vranitzky who resigned on 18 January. He had been in the post since June 1986.

Among Vranitzky's last actions in government was the privatisation of the Creditanstalt with the sale of the government's majority stake to Bank Austria, a move which was bitterly resisted by the conservative Popular Party, OeVP, the junior member of the ruling coalition. As he left office he said that he was particularly proud of having led Austria into the European Union. The outgoing chancellor, who had been a banker and former basketball professional, said he regretted not devoting more attention to the extreme right-wing Freedom Party, lead by Görg Haider who puts forward a xenophobic platform. 'Perhaps the Social Democrats were a bit too late and did not do enough to unmask his strategy of demonising human beings or organisations'.

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

Election date fixed

Bosnia and Herzegovina is to hold municipal elections in the first half of July, it was announced at the end of January. Nato has decided to maintain a force of at least 30,000 troops in the country during 1997.

BULGARIA

Government in crisis

Petar Stoyanov, leader of the conservative Union of Democratic Forces, on 19 January began a five-year term as president of Bulgaria after winning the 3 November elections. Strongly supported in the cities, he won more than 70 per cent of the vote in the capital Sofia. Shortly after the voting George Pirinski, the foreign minister, resigned from the government headed by Prime Minister Zhan Videnov of the formerly communist Socialist Party.

In December the country was halted by a strike of 800,000 workers protesting against the economic chaos in the country. Videnov himself quit on 22 December and this was followed in early January by fierce demonstrations against the government in Sofia with loud calls for new elections. Nikolai Dobrev, another Socialist, was chosen as prime minister on 6 January amid popular pressure that new general elections, due at the end of 1998, should be held before the end of 1997.

CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

Premier replaced

The Patriotic Front for Progress, FPP, an observer party of the SI, has joined other opposition forces in rejecting an invitation to join a government of national unity under the former ambassador to France, Jean-Paul Ngouandé. He was superseded at the end of January by Michel Gbezera-Bria who was named premier by President Félix-Ange Patassé. Gbezera-Bria took office after an international mediation commission had finally put an end to months of mutiny by the armed forces. Under the agreement promoted by the presidents of Gabon, Mali, Chad and Burkina Faso, new efforts will be made to form an all-party government, mutineers will be amnestied, the president will relax some of his grip on the armed forces and the political and secret police will be reformed.



FPP Leader
Abel Goumba

SOCIALIST NOTEBOOK

CYPRUS

Diplomatic efforts continue

Intense diplomatic efforts (see 1-2/96, page 81) to move towards permanent settlement of the Cyprus problem continued in the closing weeks of 1996 as EU and US ministers and officials visited the island. Nevertheless tension rose in January after the Nicosia government announced its intention to buy Russian missiles.

The European Court of Human Rights ruled in December that Turkey had violated the rights of a Greek Cypriot who lost access to her property after 1974.

Poul Nyrup Rasmussen

CZECH REPUBLIC

Senate elections

The Czech Social Democratic Party, CSSD, won 26 of the 81 seats in the Senate after the second round of voting on 23 November. The Civic Democratic Party of Premier Vaclav Klaus took 32 seats while its coalition partners, the Christian Democratic Union and the Civic Democratic Alliance, took 13 and seven respectively.

DENMARK

Coalition changes

The Centre Democrats decided in December 1996 to quit the minority coalition led by Prime Minister Poul Nyrup Rasmussen's Social Democratic Party. He continues in office with the Radical Liberal Party. The two parties hold 70 of the 179 seats in parliament. The five Centre Democrats will however continue to vote with the government.



EL SALVADOR

PD in pact with Christian Democrats

The Democratic Party, PD, of El Salvador, an observer party of the SI, has signed an electoral pact with the Christian Democrats under which it will present common candidates in the general elections of 16 March. PD International Secretary Joaquín Villalobos, a former guerrilla leader of the Farabundo Martí Front for National Liberation, FMLN, and a founder of the party in 1995, explained that the idea was to break the intense polarisation existing between left and right in the country despite the ending of the civil war in 1992.

'Latin America needs a left which has a chance of power and which is not content with the role of a pressure group', he said.

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ESTONIA

Government changes

The Reform Party quit the minority government of Tiit Vähi who continues to govern with the Coalition Party and the Rural Union which together have 41 of the 101 seats in parliament in Tallinn.

EQUATORIAL GUINEA

CPDS leader in exile

Celestino Bakale, international secretary of the Convergence for Social Democracy, CPDS, of Equatorial Guinea, a consultative party of the International, sought refuge in Spain in December having fled the country to Cameroon after being detained and ill-treated by police of the government of Teodoro Obiang.

'Democracy is making no progress, we are going backwards', Bakale declared. From the opposition ranks in Madrid, the Spanish Socialist Workers' Party, PSOE, criticised the conservative government of José María Aznar for not doing enough to support human rights and effective democracy in that country.

SOCIALIST NOTEBOOK

FRANCE

PS convention

The French Socialist Party held a national convention on economic policy at Noisy-le-Grand on 14 and 15 December and ratified the policy document already approved by party members. The document favours European Monetary Union but criticises the way it is being prepared.

In November the Party fixed a target of 30 per cent of women candidates in the 1998 parliamentary elections. On 20 January it concluded an electoral pact with the Radical Socialist Party and the Greens under which it will not put up candidates in some 80 constituencies.

GABON

Legislative elections

In the legislative elections held in Gabon on 15 and 29 December 1996, the governing Gabonese Democratic Party, PDG, of President Omar Bongo was returned to power, having obtained 82 of the 115 parliamentary seats. The Gabonese Progress Party, PGP, led by Agondjo Okawe, a consultative party of the Socialist International, took eight seats, while six went to the National Rally of Woodcutters, three to the Circle of Liberal Reformers and two to the Gabonese Socialist Union. Seven other parties took one seat each and seven seats went to independent candidates.

GREAT BRITAIN

Labour manifesto

In November 1996 the membership of the British Labour Party approved overwhelmingly the election manifesto produced



GREECE

Government committed to stability in Mediterranean

Costas Simitis (see Profile, page 16), prime minister of Greece and leader of PASOK, the Greek member of the Socialist International, stressed his government's commitment to stability in the eastern Mediterranean as reports came in of tension between Greece and Turkey over Cyprus. 'There is no reason to believe we are facing a great crisis', he said on 11 January.

GUATEMALA

Peace accord

More than four decades of violence in Guatemala came to an end on 29 December when representatives of the Guatemalan National Revolutionary Union, URNG, and President Alvaro Arzú signed a peace agreement. The violence dated back to the overthrow of the constitutional president, Jacobo Arbenz, in a military coup d'état in 1954. The peace agreement was strongly supported by the Social Democratic Party, PSD, a member of the International. Among the guests at the ceremony which took place in Guatemala City were Prime Minister Göran Persson of Sweden and Boutros Boutros-Ghali, the outgoing secretary general of the UN.

Labour leader
Tony Blair

Rigoberta
Menchú
with URNG
leaders



SOCIALIST NOTEBOOK

HUNGARY

MSzDP congress

László Kapolyi was re-elected president of the Hungarian Social Democratic Party, MSzDP, at its 41st congress held in Budapest on 23-24 November.

IRAN

Dissenters unite with PDKI

On 9 January a group which had functioned since 1988 under the name of Kurdish Democratic Party of Iran - Revolutionary Leadership agreed with the Democratic Party of Iranian Kurdistan, PDKI, which became an observer party of the Socialist International at the XX Congress in New York, on a single unified line. A joint statement said that this line would be pursued under the slogan 'Democracy for Iran, Autonomy for Kurdistan'.

The PDKI reported in January continuing harassment of Iranian Kurdish refugees in Iraq by forces controlled by the Iranian government.

ISRAEL

Hebron agreement, Israeli government approves new settlements

Widespread international concern has been voiced after the government of Binyamin Netanyahu decided on 18 November to push ahead with the construction of housing for Israelis in East Jerusalem. Israeli and Palestinian negotiators agreed on 6 January on the terms under which Israeli troops would cease to be deployed in much of the city of Hebron (see Territories under Palestinian Authority, page 61).

After talks between the Israel Labour Party and the ruling Likud Party the draft of a common position for a permanent settlement with the Palestinians was published in January.

The sixth congress of the Israel Labour Party will convene on 13-14 May.

ITALY

D'Alema heads Bicamerale

After initiatives by the centre-left government of Prime Minister Romano Prodi, agreement has been reached with the opposition on the establishment of a commission of both houses of parliament to study and suggest changes to the way Italy is governed. The bicamerale, as it is known, is chaired by Massimo D'Alema, leader of the Democratic Party of the Left, PDS, and will report at mid-year.

IVORY COAST

Sangaré freed

Abou Dramane Sangaré, secretary general of the Ivory Coast Popular Front, FPI, a member party of the SI, was freed from prison at the new year. Sangaré, who is also editor of the daily newspaper La Voie, had been jailed for more than a year with two colleagues after criticising President Henri Konan Bédié.

JAPAN

SDP declines to join government

The Social Democratic Party of Japan, SDP, in November backed Ryutaro Hashimoto for a new term as prime minister. The SDP and the New Harbinger Party

announced that they would not be taking seats in a cabinet all of whose members are from Hashimoto's Liberal Democrat Party but they offered case-by-case cooperation in parliament.

LEBANON

New government

Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri named a new cabinet on 8 November which is expected to place great emphasis on the reconstruction of the country. A recent UN survey estimated that one million of Lebanon's estimated population of 3.1 million lived in poverty. Meanwhile the firing of rockets and artillery across the Lebanon-Israel border resumed in December after several months of comparative quiet. In the new government, Walid Jumblatt, leader of the Progressive Socialist Party, PSP, retains his post of minister for refugees.

LITHUANIA

Parliamentary elections

The Lithuanian Social Democratic Party, LSDP, a member of the SI, gained 8.5 per cent of the vote cast and won 12 seats of the 141 in the Seimas or parliament in the elections held on 20 October and 10 November. The Lithuanian Homeland Union, a conservative nationalist party, won 49.6 per cent and 70 seats. The Christian Democrats came second with 11.3 per cent (16 seats) and the Centre Union fourth with 9.2 (13 seats). The then governing Lithuanian Democratic Labour party saw its vote cut from 51.8 per cent to 8.5 per cent and its representation from 73 to 12 seats.

SOCIALIST NOTEBOOK

FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA

Local polls

In local elections held on 17 November and 1 December in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the Social Democratic Union of Macedonia, SDUM, the SI's new observer member, reaffirmed its position as the country's strongest political force. SDUM candidates won 53 mayoralties with 28 going to the opposition coalition of VMRO, the Democratic Party and MAAK-Conservative Party.

MAURITIUS

Municipal elections

The ruling coalition of the Mauritius Labour Party and the Mauritius Militant Movement, NADM, which has joined the Labour Party in the Socialist International) won five mayoralties in the municipal elections held on 16 November.



MALTA

EU application frozen

The newly elected Labour government in Malta is freezing its application for membership of the European Union. George Vella, the deputy prime minister, commented, 'We don't want to turn our back on Europe but we want to carry on together without incurring any disadvantages'.

MEXICO

Parties gear up for elections

Luis Ayala, SI secretary general, visited Mexico City in January for talks with the SI's two parties, the governing Institutional Revolutionary Party, PRI, and the opposition Party of Democratic Revolution, PRD, which are preparing for parliamentary elections in 1997 to the 500-seat Chamber of Deputies and polls for six state governorships, the mayoralty of Mexico City and a quarter of the seats in the Senate. He had discussions with Andrés Manuel López, president of the PRD, and Humberto Roque, president of the PRI.

MOLDOVA

New president

Petru Lucinschi, president of the Moldovan parliament and the candidate supported by the Social Democratic Party of Moldova, the new SI observer party, won the second round of presidential elections held on 1 December. He defeated the incumbent president, Mircea Snegur, by 54.07 per cent to 45.93 per cent of the votes.

The victorious candidate pledged to solve the problem caused by the Trans-Dniestr, a region which declared its

independence from Moldova but which has not been recognised by any other government. Lucinschi opened discussions offering Trans-Dniestr autonomy in exchange for peace.

MONTENEGRO

Election irregularities

The Social Democratic Party of Montenegro, SDPM, the new observer party of the SI, expressed deep concern at the irregularities during the 3 November elections for the Federal Yugoslav Assembly, the parliament of Montenegro and municipal councils. It reported that police had been helping the campaign of the ruling Serbian Socialist Party, headed by President Slobodan Milosevic, and its Montenegrin ally the Democratic Party of Socialists, DPS. Voters were threatened with loss of their jobs if they did not support the DPS, the media were biased in favour of the DPS and the names of dead voters continued on the electoral lists.

NEW ZEALAND

Coalition government formed

A coalition of the National Party and the New Zealand First Party assumed the government on 10 December with Jim Bolger, leader of the National Party, continuing in office as prime minister. Helen Clark, leader of the New Zealand Labour Party and a former deputy prime minister, who had been discussing a Labour-NZF coalition in the weeks following the 12 October election, accused Winston Peters, the NZF leader, of 'betrayal'. Peters, who had campaigned on the theme that the National Party was unfit to govern, was named deputy prime minister and treasurer by Prime Minister Bolger.

Navin Ramgoolam, prime minister of Mauritius

SOCIALIST NOTEBOOK

NICARAGUA

Alemán in office

The official results of the presidential election of 20 October 1996 (see 2-3/96, page 85) gave victory to Arnoldo Alemán, backed by the right-wing Liberal Alliance, with 51 per cent of the votes cast against 37.7 per cent for Daniel Ortega, candidate of the FSLN, the SI member party. The FSLN nevertheless remains the largest single force in parliament with 37 of the 93 seats.

On 11 November the FSLN, together with a number of other parties, protested at the conduct of the poll and called for a new poll in the departments of Managua and Matagalpa. The protests were rejected by the Supreme Electoral Council.

In January Alemán agreed to talks with Ortega during which a commission was set up to examine the questions of poverty and property. Many supporters of the former Somoza dictatorship have hoped that the Alemán government would restore their large landholdings and other property confiscated during the Sandinista government in the 1980s.

NIGER

PNDS boycotts elections

The Party for Democracy and Socialism of Niger, PNDS, the new consultative party of the SI, joined other opposition parties in boycotting parliamentary elections held on 23 November. The elections gave victory to the National Union of Independents for Democratic Renewal, UNIRD, of President Ibrahim Maïnassara Baré. Baré, then a colonel, now a general, seized power in a military coup in January 1996 against a government in which the PNDS

was a participant.

In January Baré arrested Mahamadou Issoufou, president of the PNDS and former president of the National Assembly, and two other leading opposition figures in Niamey, the capital, after demonstrations against the government's abuse of its control of the media.

At its Council in Rome in January the SI strongly condemned the arrests of people 'whose only fault has been to organise a legal peaceful demonstration' (see page 61).

NORTHERN IRELAND

Hume in peace process initiative

In November 1996 John Hume, leader of the Social Democratic and Labour Party of Northern Ireland, SDLP, made new proposals to the government of the United Kingdom intended to revive the peace process in Northern Ireland. They were received coolly by Prime Minister John Major and there was no relaxation of tension in the territory.



PAKISTAN

Elections called for February

General elections were called in Pakistan for 3 February after President Farooq Leghari dismissed Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto, leader of the Pakistan People's Party, on 5 November. On 29 January the Supreme Court rejected her challenge to the legality of the president's action.

to President Jacques Chirac, Yasser Arafat, president of the Authority and leader of Fatah, the SI observer party, called for help from Europe in the task of achieving a lasting settlement of the disputes between Palestinians and Israelis.

Later that month Arafat entered Hebron for the first time since 1965 to a welcome from 60,000 people after Israeli troops withdrew from some of their positions in the largely Palestinian city. Addressing Israelis continuing to live in the city under Israeli military protection, Arafat said, 'We don't want confrontation... We want a just peace'.

On 2 February at the World Economic Forum at the Swiss resort of Davos, Arafat said that confiscations of land, economic blockade and the new settlements by Israel had resulted in 65 per cent of Palestinians living in poverty.

TERRITORIES UNDER PALESTINIAN AUTHORITY

Arafat in Hebron

Official agencies meeting in Paris on 20 November pledged aid of US\$845 million to the Palestinian Authority. On 10 January, on a visit

SOCIALIST NOTEBOOK

PERU

62 Apristas call for dialogue in hostage crisis

The Peruvian Aprista Party, the International's Peruvian member, has condemned the taking of hostages by the Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement, MRTA, at the residence of the Japanese ambassador to Peru as 'in conflict with the basic principles of all civilised society'. A message from the Party's secretary general, Luis Alva Castro, on 18 December expressed deep sympathy with the hostages and their families and called on the government to avoid the shedding of blood and to continue dialogue.

PORTUGAL

Economic pact

António Guterres, prime minister of Portugal and leader of the Socialist Party, PS, in January agreed an economic pact with the trade unions aimed at creating 100,000 jobs by 1999. The unions have agreed on a 3.5 per cent wage increase every year for the next three years in exchange for government commitments covering employment, social security, tax reform and education.

ROMANIA

SI parties in government

The two consultative parties of the Socialist International in Romania, the Democratic Party, PD, and the Social Democratic Party of Romania, PSDR, who campaigned together as the Social Democratic Union, USD, for the elections of 3 November have joined a coalition government with the Hungarian Democratic Union of Romania. The USD won

53 of the 343 seats in the Chamber of Deputies and 23 of the 143 seats in the Senate. The Party of Social Democracy led by the incumbent president, Ion Iliescu, took 91 seats in the Chamber and 41 in the Senate. The opposition Romanian Democratic Convention took 122 seats in the Chamber and 53 in the Senate.

In the first round of the presidential election Petre Roman, leader of the Democratic Party and candidate of the USD, took third place with 20.54 per cent of the votes behind Iliescu and Emil Constantinescu, leader of the CDR.

The USD subsequently signed a coalition agreement with the CDR and the second round of voting on 17 November gave victory to Constantinescu. With the support of the USD he won 54.4 per cent of the votes, nearly nine points ahead of Iliescu, and took office on 29 November. The USD has a number of ministries in a cabinet headed by Prime Minister Victor Ciorbea (see People, page 44). The government is committed to decentralising the state, privatising the main economic units, eliminating monopolies and stimulating competition, cutting taxes and providing care for the less favoured members of society.

SLOVENIA

General elections

General elections were held in Slovenia on 10 November and the ruling Liberal Democracy of Slovenia gained 27.01 per cent of votes and 25 parliamentary seats, while the rightist Slovene People's Party, SLS, took 19.38 per cent and 19 seats, the Social Democratic Party, SDS, 16.13 per cent and 16 seats, the Slovene Christian Democrats, SKD, 9.62 per cent and 10 seats, the United List of Social Democrats, ZL, 9.03 per cent and nine seats, the Democratic Party of Pensioners 4.32 per cent and five

seats, and the Slovene National Party, SNS, 3.22 per cent and four seats.

The country was still without a government in February after the National Assembly failed to endorse the proposals of prime minister designate Janez Drnovsek in a vote which was tied 45-45.

SWEDEN

Cabinet changes

Göran Persson, the Swedish prime minister and leader of the Social Democratic Party, SAP, made some changes to his cabinet in January, switching Tage Peterson from the defence ministry to a post without portfolio in the prime minister's office and appointing Björn von Sydow to defence from the trade ministry, while Leif Pagrotsky became trade minister.

In January the government won parliamentary support for the phasing out of nuclear power. The first reactor is to close before the 1998 elections.

TUNISIA

Constitutional changes announced

The Tunisian constitution is to be amended in 1997, President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, leader of the Democratic Constitutional Assembly, RCD, announced on 28 December. The new rules would lower the present 5 per cent threshold for parliamentary representation to favour the election of more opposition candidates.

Mohamed Mouada and Khomaies Chammari of the opposition Movement of Socialist Democrats, MDS, imprisoned on espionage charges, were released on humanitarian grounds at the New Year.

LAST WORD



Statue of Willy Brandt at the Social Democratic Party of Germany's new centre in Berlin, Willy Brandt House.

'The purpose of this Act is to prohibit and bring to an end racial discrimination by any person, group of persons, public authorities, public and private national and local institutions and organisations in the civil, political, economic, social and cultural spheres, inter alia in employment, education, housing and the provision of goods, facilities and services.'

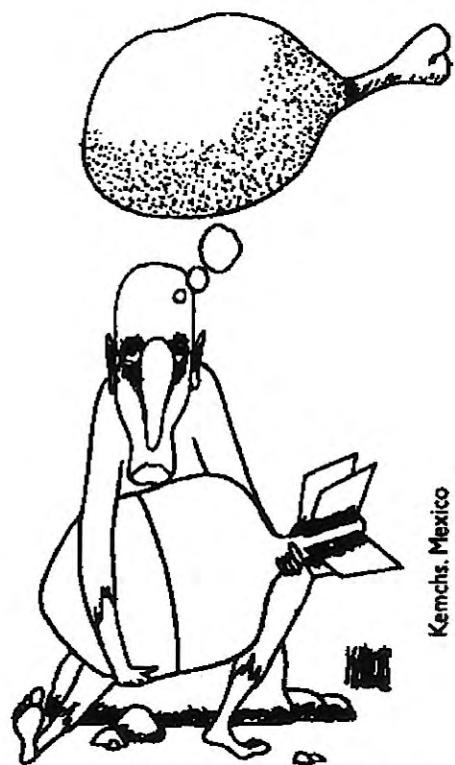
'Racial discrimination shall mean any distinction, exclusion, restriction, preference or omission based on race, colour, descent, nationality or ethnic origin which has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing, directly or indirectly, the recognition, equal enjoyment or exercise of human rights and fundamental freedoms recognised in international law.'

From the Model National Legislation for the Guidance of Governments in the Enactment of Further Legislation against Racial Discrimination published by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights.

'In the heady days of the "Green Revolution", foreign development workers devised a scheme to plant high-yielding rice in west Africa. The chosen variety has an unusually short stalk.'

'Time went by, but the size of the harvests failed to increase. Then they found out that it was not the men, but the women, who did the harvesting. The women went into the fields with babies strapped to their backs, and harvesting the rice had become almost impossible for them because the new strain was so close to the ground.'

Recalled by an official of the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation at the recent World Food Summit.



Military expenditure: a heavy burden for the people of poor countries.

From a recent report on the arms trade by Afri (Action from Ireland).

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1997 European year
against racism