

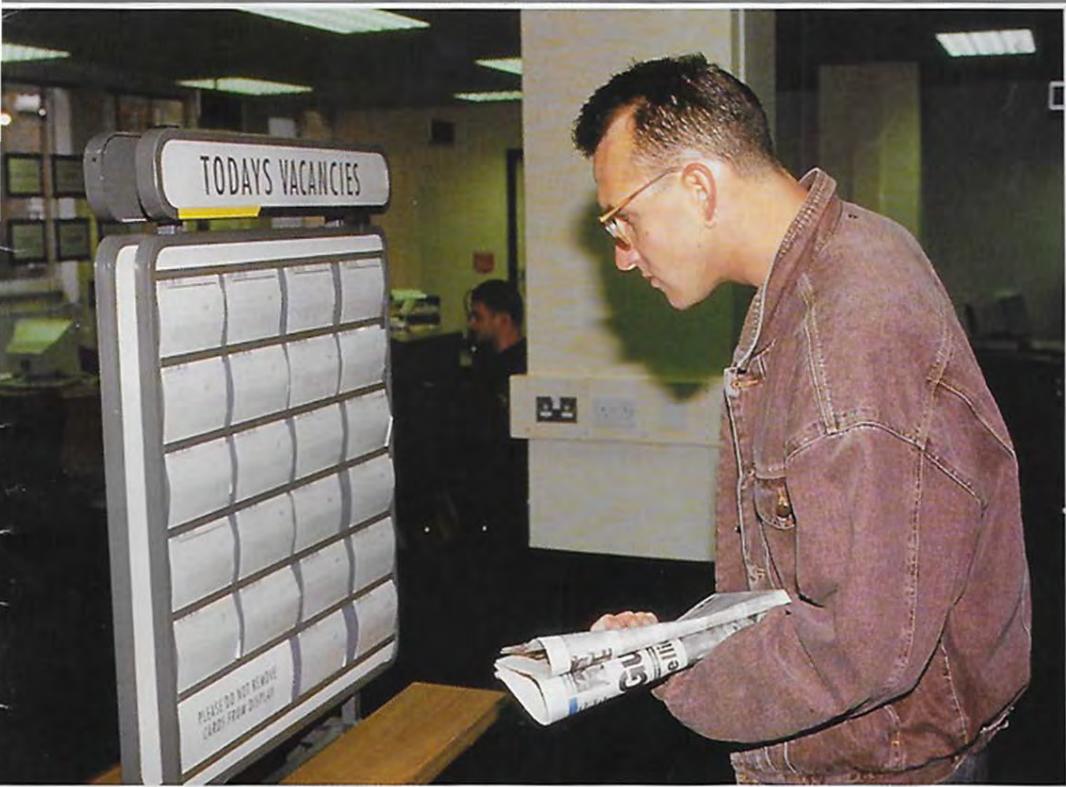


Issue 1/1995

The Journal of the
Socialist International

Socialist Affairs

AND WOMEN & POLITICS



**Employment:
a priority**

Maritime House
Old Town
Clapham
London SW4 OJW
United Kingdom

Telephone (44 171) 627 4449
Telefax (44 171) 720 4448
or (44 171) 498 1293
Cables INTERSOCON LONDON SW4

Publisher and editor
Luis Ayala

Editorial consultant
Hugh O'Shaughnessy

WOMEN & POLITICS
Publisher and editor
Marlene Haas

Subscriptions
Socialist Affairs Subscriptions
Regency Fulfilment Services Ltd
120-126 Lavender Avenue
Mitcham,
Surrey, CR4 3HP

Telephone (44 181) 646 5389
Fax (44 181) 648 4873

Annual subscription rates
(4 issues)
United Kingdom £12 sterling
Other countries £15

Design
A.S.A.P. London

Colour origination
Reflex, London

Printing
Stanhope Press

**PRINTED ON RECYCLED AND
ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY
PAPER**

Signed articles represent the views
of the authors only, not necessarily
those of Socialist Affairs, the
Socialist International or Socialist
International Women

© 1995 Socialist International

All rights reserved. No part of this
publication may be reproduced, stored
in a retrieval system or transmitted in
any form, or by any means, electronic,
mechanical, photocopying, recording
or otherwise, without the prior written
permission of the copyright owner.

ISSN 0049-0946

Cover picture
Rex Features

3 EDITORIAL

4 A new Europe, a reshaped union

Rudolf Scharping examines Socialists' shared aims in the European Union.

7 Managing conflict in Africa

Pedro Pires reviews the objectives and the options.

11 PROFILE

Paavo Lipponen, the new prime minister of Finland.

12 Towards a political economy for people

Juan Somavia reflects on the conclusions of the Social Summit.

16 Working for a world without nuclear arms

Frank Barnaby sets out an agenda for abolishing atomic weapons.

20 PARLIAMENTARY DIARY

Maxine Henry-Wilson looks back to her early days in the senate of Jamaica.

21 Nervous tyranny in Equatorial Guinea

Santiago Obama writes of prospects for democracy in his country.

25 BOOKS

Ellen Bird considers a new biography of Emile Vandervelde.

Hugh O'Shaughnessy reviews an account of early socialism in the French Caribbean and an assessment of the Latin American Left after the cold war.

28 About the SI

30 SI NEWS

- SI Council to meet in Cape Town • Africa Committee in Cape Verde
- Asia-Pacific Committee in Manila • Middle East Committee in Tel Aviv, Gaza and Amman
- Conference of the political Internationals on human rights
- PEOPLE, including obituary of Harold Wilson

43 WOMEN AND POLITICS

Women's employment in central and eastern Europe

Dr Alena Nesporova analyses the impact of the transition period on women.

International Women's Day at the Social Summit

Inge Søgaard reports from Copenhagen.

Gertrude Mongella looks ahead to the Beijing Conference

The secretary-general of the Fourth World Conference on Women interviewed.

The desperate plight of women refugees

Melita H Sunjic describes refugee life and the UNHCR response.

53 SOCIALIST NOTEBOOK

- Albania • Algeria • Argentina • Aruba • Austria • Belgium • Brazil • Bulgaria
- Cyprus • Czech Republic • El Salvador • Estonia • Fiji • Finland • France • Germany
- Great Britain • Greece • Guatemala • Haiti • Iceland • Ireland • Israel • Italy • Latvia
- Lithuania • Malaysia • Northern Ireland • Norway • Peru • Philippines • Portugal
- Slovenia • Spain • Tunisia • Turkey

63 THE LAST WORD

THE CHOICE OF CAPE TOWN

3

The choice of venue for Socialist International Council meetings is often symbolic.

From Tokyo to Budapest, it has demonstrated in recent years our desire to continue the process of globalisation begun by Willy Brandt.

The holding of our next Council meeting in Cape Town, South Africa, is part of this process. The International wishes to pay tribute to the South African people, their exemplary struggle against apartheid and their success in securing a democratic and peaceful transition.

At the same time, the International wants to pursue its cooperation with Nelson Mandela, who honoured us with his presence at our meeting in Lisbon, and with South Africa, where last year we held a meeting of our Africa Committee.

What is more, it is a choice of Africa as a continent. Unlike liberals and conservatives, we do not consider Africa a lost continent. We think southern Africa can play an active role in the development of a continent which deserves even more of our attention. We are convinced that there is a greater need than ever to combine political democracy with economic development. This is the only way to secure peace and stability. The International will play its role to the full.



Pierre Mauroy

A NEW EUROPE, A RESHAPED UNION

For democratic socialism, the founding of the Party of European Socialists, PES, in November 1992 in The Hague was a historic event. It expressed the political will of the European member parties – of which there are now 21 – to act on the basis of a common political programme.

European integration is a fact of life which must be reflected in new political ways and means. The time has passed for political power to be the exclusive domain of sovereign states, and the time has come for national political parties to pool their resources on the European level and beyond. The exercise of power within the European Union requires democratic legitimacy as well as political accountability. For this we need political groups in the European Parliament and political parties acting at European level.

European parties should provide legitimacy and accountability beyond the scope of national parties. While the three European parties which are being established are still in an early phase of development, the Treaty of Maastricht already recognises political parties at European level as 'important factors for integration within the Union, contributing to a European awareness and expressing the political will of citizens of the Union'.

*Rudolf Scharping,
leader of the Social
Democratic Party of Germany
and president of the Party of
European Socialists, examines
Socialists' shared aims in the
European Union.*



*The Union's eastern frontier -
before enlargement*

The PES will not be judged by the purity of its statutes or internal organisation, but by its ability to shape the European political agenda. Making the PES into a 'spider in the web' of European institutions is a priority for the coming years. We already have a close working relationship with our parliamentary group in the European Parliament and with social democratic and socialist members of the European Commission. Shaping the European political agenda also implies linking the PES more closely to the ministers in the European Council.

Over the last years political cohesion within our ranks has increased considerably, leading to a common approach to the European Union and its major projects. The time has come for us, as the first European political party, to take the initiative in uniting our continent. While the political groupings of the Centre-Right and Right are divided by internal struggles between federalists and nationalists, the PES has a shared vision of a democratic, social and ecologically sustainable Europe.

Thanks to those courageous people who brought down the Iron Curtain, which was the cruel result of fascism and stalinism, we now have a historic opportunity to overcome the division of Europe. The return of central and eastern European countries to the Europe of enlightenment and democracy will require considerable effort and investment from both sides.

European social democrats and socialists must ensure that the enlargement of the European Union to the east, and its ongoing enlargement to the south, are more than the expansion of a free trade block. New member states should be received into a Union of prosperity and welfare, of tolerance and solidarity between people and countries, a Union of democracy and transparency, a European Union promoting peace and global development.

The accession of central and eastern European countries to the European Union is a political goal of international importance. There is an understandable and justified demand to join in European prosperity and security. Since this demand for enlargement must be reconciled with the need to deepen the integration within the Union, new membership requires institutional re-arrangements and policy reforms to cope with limited financial means. Taking into account the ongoing transition period of enlargement to the south, the European Union is promoting and already implementing a multitude of political, economic and social links with central and eastern European countries. We are also well aware that Russia, to the east, and the Mediterranean countries, to the south, must be accommodated in this process of European integration.

We are beginning a period of about two years during which the structure of the Union and its institutions will once again be at the centre of the European political debate. The latest debate on the Maastricht Treaty has taught all political forces a bitter lesson about the importance of seeking popular support at all stages of the 1996 Intergovernmental Conference - this already demands our attention.

The Maastricht referenda in France and Denmark and the equally difficult accession referenda in Sweden and Norway indicated that European integration is far more than a diplomatic affair. Decision-making within closed circles can no longer assure public support for the European Community. Citizens will have to be convinced that, just a couple years after Maastricht, further investment in the Union and its institutions is necessary. More sharing of sovereignty, in order to make a European Union with even more member states more effective, decision-making by majority vote and the strengthening of the European Parliament with additional budgetary and legislative powers - all these necessary steps will only be achieved if more people, as well as governments, can be convinced of the merits of the European Union.

People expect many things from the Union: economic growth and financial prudence, social programmes and environmental policies, women's and workers' rights, the democratisation of decision-making, and more. While the conservative followers of Margaret Thatcher and the liberal followers of market trends have little to offer to meet these demands, democratic socialists are constantly working on integrated projects to address people's daily concerns. Their, and our, foremost concern is job security and unemployment, which demand joint action at local, regional, national and European level.

6

Putting more people to work is of the utmost importance for economic growth, social integration and political stability in the European Union. Knowing that over 90 per cent of all European investment and consumption is in domestic production, the potential of the European market economy deserves our full attention. We want national governments and the European Union to invest in people because education and training are the driving forces for economic and technological development, for increased employment, a sustainable environment and social rights.

Jacques Delors' White Paper on growth, competitiveness and employment combined financial, economic, social and environmental measures to fight unemployment. Professional training and flexibility in recruitment are as necessary as more investment, including further public commitment to European infrastructure. Furthermore, we need a gradual shift from the tax burden on labour to taxation of the use of resources that damage our natural environment. The PES is privileged that we can count on the continuing support of the former president of the EU Commission in our integrated approach to combating unemployment and achieving sustainable development in Europe. Since we know that common action is required, the PES parties reject the proposals of a hard core of EU member states which are trying to shape European integration in their own interests. Any selective approach to the European Union could undermine solidarity among European partners and would jeopardise the Intergovernmental Conference. Taking into account the sound, although too limited, criteria for establishing Monetary Union, further deepening and enlargement of the European Union will probably not move at the same pace in each country. However, this is only acceptable as long as all member states are involved in the decision-making process and timetables are established within a common institutional framework.

The Party of European Socialists is the largest political group in the European Parliament; its member parties are in government in ten of the fifteen EU member states, and in opposition - as in my own country, Germany - we have sufficient strength to influence government policy. The triumphalism of conservatives and right-wing liberals has disappeared. They were totally wrong to insist that the breakdown of communism would also be the end of democratic socialism. On the contrary, democratic socialism has maintained its attraction in Europe and beyond as well as its vigour in shaping the societies of the future.

The forthcoming Intergovernmental Conference will be an important occasion to prove that European socialists and social democrats are capable of shaping Europe's future.

We must focus much of our effort on this tremendous task. We know, however, that Europe is not an island and should not become a fortress against other regions. Therefore our European perspectives are closely linked to the legitimate expectations of us from the vast majority of the world's population, in Asia, North America, Latin America, and in our neighbouring continent, Africa. In this context, how could I forget the achievement of Willy Brandt in developing the Socialist International into a world-wide organisation, to which we all belong. ■



Impact

How many currencies in the Union?

*Pedro Pires,
former prime minister of
Cape Verde and president of
the PAICV, reviews the
objectives and the options.*



7

Trevor Page/Hutchison

MANAGING CONFLICT IN AFRICA

The building of development, progress and social justice in Africa depends on peace, security and stability.

Efforts by African states and institutions to guarantee peace, security, stability and inter-African cooperation will have to be combined with the global efforts of the UN and other international institutions to identify and systematically combat factors of international instability and insecurity, to establish peaceful, predictable and stable relations among states and to bolster international security and cooperation, within the framework of the United Nations Peace Agenda.

Peace and stability are indivisible. Insecurity and instability in one state can endanger security and stability throughout an entire region.

The African continent has been held back by numerous and varied conflicts. A variable, individualised approach needs to be taken when analysing these conflicts and attempting to identify the paths to their solution.

In the space of 50 years, 35 major military conflicts were recorded in Sub-Saharan Africa. They caused the death of almost ten million people, turned seven million into refugees and displaced 16 million, not counting the tens of thousands of war wounded.

The origins of some of these conflicts lie in border disputes. Others have been unleashed by the expulsion or mistreatment of citizens from other states. In addition to open conflicts, covert conflicts have existed and still exist, provoked by acts of aggression or interference in the political affairs of other states for politico-ideological or ethnic reasons. Inter-state conflicts have been solved in most cases through bilateral negotiation, and the mediation or good offices of the Organisation of African Unity, African sub-regional agencies, African dignitaries, the United Nations and governments outside Africa. Certain conflicts have been settled through recourse to the International Court of Justice in the Hague (Guinea Bissau/Senegal, Libya/Chad, Mali/Burkina Faso).

No solution has yet been found to the territorial disputes between Nigeria and Cameroon over the Bakassi peninsula and between Egypt and Sudan over the Halaib area of the Red Sea. The question of Western Sahara deserves individual treatment.

Intra-state conflicts are more complicated. Some are essentially politico-military conflicts, which take the form of real civil wars. In such cases external African factors or factors outside the continent have played an important role in the development of the conflicts (Angola, Mozambique, Chad and Liberia). The ethnic factor, albeit present, plays a secondary role.

Others are essentially ethnic conflicts, brought about by the existence and actions of authoritarian, centralist governments which, with the support of one or several dominant ethnic groups or urban social sectors, and under the pretext of national unity, ignore socio-cultural, religious and linguistic differences and oppress minorities. Situations are recorded of the implementation of policies of authentic compulsory religious and cultural assimilation (Sudan).

There are also conflict situations which are triggered by the corruption, blocking or postponement of transitional democratic arrangements or by profound economic and social crisis.

The solution to such conflicts is basically political and requires respect for basic human rights; protection of the rights of ethnic, cultural, religious and linguistic minorities and the forging of an internal climate of debate and mutual tolerance among social and political forces. It also requires major reforms of political and administrative state structures and the promotion of equitable political participation by citizens. It may be necessary for government accords to be reached (the Government of National Unity in South Africa and the National Conference in Benin, among others).

What might be called endemic conflicts exist in Sudan, Liberia, Nigeria, Rwanda, Burundi, Zaire and Algeria. Such a classification may not be appropriate, however, since there have been conflicts in which the processes of resolution have taken several years. A concrete example is Angola, where positive results are only now starting to emerge after almost seven years of arduous negotiations during which there were several breakdowns in talks and set-backs: the Angolan Peace Agreements signed at Bicesse in 1991; the multi-party elections held on 29 and 30 September 1992 and the Lusaka Protocol signed in November 1994 and, despite all these, peace is just starting to take shape in 1995.

This example, which is a paradigm in terms of conflict-resolution diplomacy, gives us hope. Furthermore, faced with armed conflict, the massacre of populations and constant insecurity and instability, indifference and fatalism can only lead to the spread of violence and war.

The UN has undertaken, in accordance with the 1992 Peace Agenda, to strive for the prevention and resolution of conflicts, as well as to promote an international climate propitious to peace, stability and international cooperation. It proposes to carry out preventive diplomacy, promote or re-establish peace by peaceful means, and carry out peace-keeping operations after the cessation of conflicts. It also plans to encourage recourse to the International Court of Justice in The Hague and to regional organisations.

Preventive diplomacy promotes mutual confidence among states, the rapid availability of precise information, the creation of a network of rapid warning systems, and possibly the use of preventive deployment and the creation of demilitarised zones.

Nevertheless, there still remains a complete contradiction between the observance, on the one hand, of the principles of inviolability, sovereignty and territorial integrity and non-interference in the internal affairs of states - a cornerstone of the organisation - and, on the other hand, the duty to promote and protect basic human and minority rights.

The UN's contribution to the settlement of African conflicts should be considered positive, despite a number of failures. Today, the Organisation has at its disposal important experience in this field. Despite real constraints, it has managed to mobilise the essential financial, logistic and military means essential to its peace-keeping operations.

The Organisation of African Unity, for its part, has not turned a blind eye to the



Southern African prosperity

gravity of the situations created by conflicts. Its Council of Ministers, the Secretary General and ad hoc committees have acted as conflict-management institutions. But, for a number of reasons, the Mediation, Conciliation and Arbitration Committee is unable to fulfil its mandate.

The specific OAU institutions have contributed to the settlement of a significant number of inter-state conflicts. However, the OAU has been able to achieve little with respect to intra-state conflicts. Indeed, it has always been confronted with the dilemma of having to respect certain fundamental principles - the sovereign equality of states, inviolability of borders, non-interference in the internal affairs of states - while being unable to ensure fulfilment of other, equally fundamental rights - the respect for basic human rights and protection of the rights of minorities.

The OAU has carried out three peace-keeping operations (in Shaba, Chad and Rwanda). Faced with a mushrooming of conflicts and the evident inadequacy of its management tools, the Cairo OAU summit in 1993 created a Conflict-Prevention, Management and Settlement Mechanism and a Peace Fund.

I believe that recent political change has accentuated the trend towards the creation of pluralist democratic regimes and could promote security and stability within and among states. The consolidation of these trends requires a firm commitment on the part of all Africa's social forces. Sub-regional accords and organisations have also made useful contributions. We feel that they have the potential to help solve conflicts and consolidate peace, as well as to create real areas of peace and stability.

Their weak points are their limited financial base, the weakness of their national political institutions and the fragile balance of inter-state relations. As recognised in the Declaration creating the Conflict-Prevention, Management and Settlement Mechanism, the OAU has to seek the cooperation of the UN when joint military action is required, and that of specialist international institutions or those interested in the protection of human rights and minorities, as well as that of the Sub-regional African organisations. The Declaration concentrates on the use of preventive and anticipatory measures and concerted action to re-establish and consolidate peace.

The SI sees peace as a pre-condition for all our hopes, and considers it necessary to have global and regional systems which can simultaneously permit cooperation and the peaceful solution of conflicts throughout the whole world.

The SI includes the protection of minorities in its Declaration of Principles. It also calls for a peaceful settlement of all conflicts. And it recognises the need for balance between three frequently conflicting principles - sovereignty of nations, the autonomy and freedom of minorities and the basic rights of the individual.

For lasting peace in Africa we have to assume that a solution to all the conflicts, whether inter-state or intra-state, does exist. Mozambique and South Africa give grounds for such an assumption. We believe that Africa is not a lost continent. It is certainly undergoing a period of profound change, contradictions, unrest and instability. Despite this, it has already made significant progress in all spheres. It needs to fully assume its destiny and to trust in its own ability to overcome the crisis besetting it.

To achieve these objectives, Africa's political and social forces need to unite around: the promotion and defence of basic human rights, the promotion and protection of the rights of ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities, the creation of harmonious inter-ethnic relations and respect for the right to be different, the democratisation of African regimes and societies, a guarantee of equitable representation for ethnic groups at both central and local government level, the primacy of law, the forging of

10 relations of trust between neighbouring states and the promotion of relations based on economic and cultural cooperation, the establishment of good-neighbour and non-aggression accords among states, the promotion of exchanges among institutions in civilian societies, and the introduction into school curricula of subjects related to tolerance, respect for the right to be different, social solidarity and inter-dependence among peoples and countries and the promotion of a culture of democracy and pluralism.

In the light of the complex tasks ahead, a gradual, pragmatic approach is required. It should begin with the consolidation of areas of stability, and continue with the achievement of a solution to the least complicated cases and the containment, within acceptable limits, of more complex cases, so as to reduce their multiplier effects. Moreover, identifying factors and foci of instability is a collective undertaking, and forms another plank in the strategy for defending peace in Africa.

The entire process calls for tenacity and political will. ■

African unity: the OAU in session



Socialist Affairs
*looks at the life of Finland's prime
 minister*



PAAVO LIPPONEN

Finland's new prime minister, Paavo Lipponen, has seen one of his major objectives achieved. From the beginning of this year his country is a member of the European Union. The second one, the emergence of a 'citizen's society' in Finland, is his current priority as his Social Democratic Party takes over in Helsinki after four years of rule by the centre-right.

He has long been an advocate of Finland's rapprochement with the rest of Europe and after the dissolution of the USSR he argued for EU membership: 'An efficient market economy adhering in the context of the EU to the basic values of Nordic welfare states will produce a better society for the citizens of Finland. Today the Finns are at the top table in Europe, a part of the world's major economic system'. Though Lipponen has the reputation of being a federalist and a supporter of a strong European currency, he is keen that the country should keep its tactical options open at next year's inter-governmental conference of the Union by declaring neither for federalism nor for anti-federalism.

The victory of the Social Democratic Party over the centre-right came in the March elections, where the SDP vote rose more than 6 per cent from the 22 per cent they scored in 1991 and they gained 15 more seats in parliament to bring their total to 63, comfortably ahead of the Centre Party's 44. The victory also gave Lipponen the premiership. As the SDP victory emerged negotiation started with other parties, which culminated in the announcement in April of a rainbow coalition including conservatives, liberals from the Swedish community in Finland, two members of the Left Wing Alliance, a Green and an independent.

Lipponen set his immediate sights on three things: the maintenance of low interest rates, the reduction of government deficits and job creation.

In a recent interview he explained his more long-term objectives. 'Ours', he said, 'has been an economy of big companies, big coopera-

tives, big banks, big wholesale companies and, if you like, big government. There hasn't been a role for the citizen's society'.

His aim is to abolish some of the protection and subsidisation of the Finnish farmer and the forestry industry whose products are now fetching record prices on the international market. Government expenditure on such things has been in a large measure responsible for the fact that the government debt approaches 70 per cent of the gross domestic product.

Some of the savings, he says, must be channelled into retraining many of the 500,000 Finns who are unemployed.

In his early 50s, Lipponen has always been very close to the party he now leads. Born in 1941 in the northern town of Turtola, he chose journalism as a first career. He edited a student newspaper from 1963 to 1965, thereafter becoming a freelance reporter for the Finnish Broadcasting Company.

He then became an SDP functionary before branching out into a career as a parliamentarian. He was head of the party's research and international affairs. From 1979 to 1982 he was a senior adviser on foreign affairs to the then prime minister Mauno Koivisto. Though born in the north, he has sunk roots in the capital, becoming chair of the party's Helsinki district and later a member of the city council.

His first term in parliament lasted from 1983 to 1987, during which he served a spell as speaker, his second from 1991 onwards. He headed the Finnish Institute for International Affairs, where his specialisations were security policy in Northern Europe and Nordic cooperation. He has business experience, having served as managing director of Viestintä Teema and as chairman of the supervisory board of Outokumpu.

He has always found relaxation in water sports. Powerfully built and a strong swimmer, he made his name as an impressive competitor in water polo with silver medals to show for his performance. He is likely to be a strong swimmer in European waters.

TOWARDS A POLITICAL ECONOMY FOR PEOPLE

Far and above its historical significance as the largest meeting of heads of state ever assembled, the World Summit for Social Development held in March 1995 in Copenhagen has launched a process aimed at focusing on the fundamental concept of the security of people. The Summit's core documents, a Declaration and a Programme of Action elaborated over the course of two years through intensive dialogue between governments and among groups in civil society, embrace principles which, if translated into policy priorities, have the power to transform contemporary economics and politics alike.

The Summit recognises that ensuring the security of people as individuals, in families and in communities, is the foundation of social and political stability. In the same way, it acknowledges that in both rich and poor countries the wellbeing of people is jeopardised by increasing inequity amidst overall economic growth. Historically, the measures of true stability and progress have been correlated with the expansion of freedom and access for all people to the means necessary for their empowerment; at no point has stability and human security increased at a time of increasing social polarisation.

Thus, the Summit upholds equity as the operative principle of social development. Poverty is not accepted as a 'natural' outcome of the process of economic growth; rather, the Summit process upholds the eradication of the worst forms of poverty as among its chief priorities for action. This is the real agenda of the 21st century. Among the 10 'Commitments' set out in the Declaration, the Summit's poverty commitment is a clarion call, accompanied by concrete benchmarks for measuring progress at the local, national, regional and international level. By 1996 each country should have in place a National Plan for the Eradication of Poverty, based on an open assessment of its own prospects for development, in the light of the targets presented at the 1990 World Summit for Children, the 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development in Rio, and the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo, all of which were central to the Copenhagen agenda.

Fundamental to the very concept of equity is gender balance, which is central to the overall framework for social development advanced through the Summit process. From the beginning, the Summit's architects have sought to link the Copenhagen agenda with that of the Fourth World Conference on Women to be held in Beijing in September 1995. Key actors and groups in the global women's movement were integrally involved in drafting the Social Summit's core documents, which acknowledge that the feminisation of contemporary poverty, unemployment and social disintegration is a reality we cannot ignore. At the same time, women are among the most powerful agents of change in the world. The Summit thus embraces a vision of development in which men and women share equally the resources and decision-making power necessary to transform the patterns of contemporary social development, beginning with the eradication of poverty.

The Summit process has challenged all of us - in industrialised and developing countries, men and women alike - to grapple with new concepts of employment and a new understanding of basic human livelihoods. The dynamic relationship between

*Juan Somavía,
Chilean ambassador to the
UN and chair of the Preparatory
Committee of the World Summit
for Social Development reflects
on its conclusions.*



What prospects for the young?

employment, technical innovation and social change is at the same time destabilising and promising. 'Winning' and 'losing' jobs affects all of us, directly and indirectly, and apathy or indifference to the plight of fellow workers in an increasingly global economy is thus both economically shortsighted and ethically unacceptable. The creation of jobs is seen as the powerful objective of investment, fiscal and taxation policies, and as a big step out of poverty.

The ethics of the Summit's challenge are, in fact, its strongest feature. In deliberate contrast to the ascendant individualism which marks much of contemporary political discourse, the language of the Declaration and the Programme of Action is inclusive, seeking to affirm the intrinsic value of all human beings, as individuals and in dynamic relation to one another. Rather than equate a person's worth strictly with his or her individual economic activity, the Summit acknowledges the interdependence of all members of the human family, on many levels. Each person has a role to play in shaping caring and humane societies, beginning with the personal challenge to overcome our own moral indifference and perceived impotence in the face of problems, affecting ourselves and others, which seem insurmountable.

If the Social Summit's commitments are to become a reality, we need significant changes in some existing economic concepts. If we embrace a social vision in which each and every individual matters, one in which social development has an intrinsic worth which transcends the monetary measure of the individual, we then open the way for a deeper exploration of the way the economy works. In particular, we must explore anew how efficiency is defined, by whom, and to what ends. There are hidden subsidies in our present economic systems, if we stop to consider, for example, the work of women and the elderly within families and communities. Often unremunerated or at best underpaid, their labour in effect subsidises social progress. Similarly, work in the voluntary and non-profit sectors constitutes up to a fifth of the gross national product in many countries. The economic efficiency of both business and government would be significantly compromised in the absence of these activities. How do we factor in this reality?

Similarly, we must consider the economic rationale of our present taxation systems. What we choose to subsidise versus what we are willing to leave to the forces of the market speaks volumes about our basic political priorities. Throughout much of the

world, basic research and development, along with investments in physical capital, are in effect subsidised by hefty tax concessions. By contrast, the accumulated 'costs' of ensuring workers' rights, fair labour standards and decent wages are all counted in the cost of creating new jobs. Why not change our priorities around and, in the process, reverse our present tax incentive structure? The result would be more employment.

Admittedly, in countries rich and poor alike and to varying degrees, people face the reality of constraints on resources. None of us can truly avoid trying to balance our budgets, if for no other reason than to monitor the volume of resources available. (Notably in 1993 the combined annual budget deficit of all developed countries was \$1,000 billion, which had the effect of draining global capital markets and forcing up world interest rates, to the detriment of first and third world economies alike, and any in between). The Summit takes the issue of balancing national budgets a step further, however. It questions the manner in which they are currently balanced - and with it conventional wisdom. The aim of adjustment should be to ensure a sustainable basis for future economic growth through social inclusion, not exclusion.

The Summit thus strongly states that the process of global structural adjustment should not be undertaken at the expense of the weakest people in each society. We do not refer strictly to emergency economic adjustment programmes undertaken by developing countries, but also to the budget review process undertaken by governments and private sector firms in industrialised countries. The Summit forcefully makes the point that everyone should have access to markets, thereby enabling the marginalised to become part of the economic adjustment process, to be included in the resource pool, trained and empowered to participate in economic development, rather than progressively excluded. If this does not happen, the market will continue to be the dividing line between the haves and the have-nots everywhere.

In the same vein, we must ask ourselves how the process of global financial integration can be shaped to ensure both efficiency and equity. In this light, environmental taxation or cross-border levies on financial speculation can be viewed as tools for stabilising and harmonising manufacturing, commerce and finance in the global marketplace. Innovative pension and portfolio management with triple criteria - economic, environmental and social - is, in fact, one of the most timely issues to have been raised in the context of the Summit, and one with considerable financial appeal in private financial circles, in both North and South.

Already, private sector working groups have been established to explore the issue of financing social development through innovative portfolio management, involving development finance pioneers such as Mohammed Yunus of the Grameen Bank of Bangladesh, as well as executives in major US and European financial institutions. Indeed, decisions about where to invest our resources can be made both with a view to avoiding undesirable outcomes, and with a view toward promoting positive change.

Another initiative of the Summit is the proposal to establish facilities at community level to make available a variety of locally needed services at extremely low cost, through modern information and communication technologies. We must push beyond narrow analysis of investment solely in 'emerging' markets or regions toward investment in whole communities in both North and South.

The Summit process has fostered vital synergies in public and private sector research on the changing nature of global finance. It has shown that the United Nations, an institution founded to guarantee peace and fuller freedoms amidst conditions of expanding prosperity for all people, can and must work with the business community to explore the connection between social vulnerability and market risk. Making it good business to put private resources at the service of public needs is one of the greatest challenges of today.

In the long run, no single instrument can truly provide the solution to the problems raised in the Summit's ongoing dialogue - not the market, not the state, and not the community. Rather, a dynamic combination of all three forces is needed to ensure social development. Social stability, community participation and sustainable, equitable markets are linked.

Spearheading this work is largely the task of socially progressive people engaged in the political process worldwide - women and men willing to root their personal agendas in the common good, and willing to work in partnership with the people on

whose behalf they labour. Acknowledging and supporting the efforts of civil society has been one of the greatest objectives of the Summit process, and is one of the most significant challenges facing contemporary political parties.

In an era of mass communications and frequent travel, ideas and people alike move rapidly. Neither traditional sources of authority nor traditional sources of information are the sole arbiters of social change; rather, it is increasingly people themselves who offer the most effective and innovative analysis and solution to contemporary problems. Given the scope of global financial instability, pollution, narcotics trafficking, terrorism, and communicable diseases (to name some of the most pressing 'globalised' phenomena), the rationale for collaboration between active movements in civil society and revitalised political parties becomes all the more compelling.

People can and will seek to affect the circumstances of their own lives; the influence of popular movements centred around issues of gender, environment and human rights are testimony to this fact. As global factors increasingly come to bear on local realities, people will ask themselves and their representatives in government, 'What can be done?'. On the eve of the 21st century, it is the task of political parties to respond to these concerns not with isolationist slogans or parochial solutions, but with integrated analysis of problems and possibilities for change.

The challenge is to find the appropriate tools for this. Politics, by definition local, is ever more dependent on global factors. In this sense, then, the World Social Summit has been among the most political of recent UN meetings, for it has dealt directly with the issues on which elections are won and lost in both rich and poor countries. The Summit process offers a comprehensive framework for analysis of contemporary social and economic issues - an inclusive agenda for action, involving governments and civil society, and thereby a promising rubric for political organising. Political parties must use these tools as they frame their plans for work in the coming months and years. ■



Mike Theller/SIPA Press

Grameen Bank, supporting its customers

WORKING FOR A WORLD WITHOUT NUCLEAR ARMS

On 11 May 1995, at a conference at the United Nations in New York, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons was extended indefinitely without a vote. The conference president, Ambassador Kayantha Dhanapala of Sri Lanka, walked a tightrope to avoid a vote which would have shown a significant minority of parties unwilling to support an indefinite extension of the Treaty. The president was able to get a compromise and push through a decision on extension without a vote, by including it in a package with two other decisions.

One was a set of 'Principles and Objectives for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament', which is to serve as a guide to future disarmament negotiations. The other strengthens the Treaty's review process and is seen as committing the parties, particularly the nuclear-weapon parties, to a greater degree of accountability concerning the fulfilment of their obligations under the Treaty, mainly their commitment under Article VI to negotiate nuclear disarmament. Of the three decisions, only the one on unlimited extension is legally binding, although Ambassador Dhanapala called the other two 'politically binding'.

The Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), which came into force in 1970, stipulated that a conference should be held 25 years later to decide its future. This was the conference held from 17 April to 12 May in New York. One hundred and sixty of the 178 parties sent some 700 diplomats to the conference. As well as deciding for how long the NPT should be extended, the conference set out to review the operation of the Treaty and to report on whether 'the provisions of the Treaty were being realised'. This was the fifth such review. The NPT stipulates that review conferences are to be held every five years.

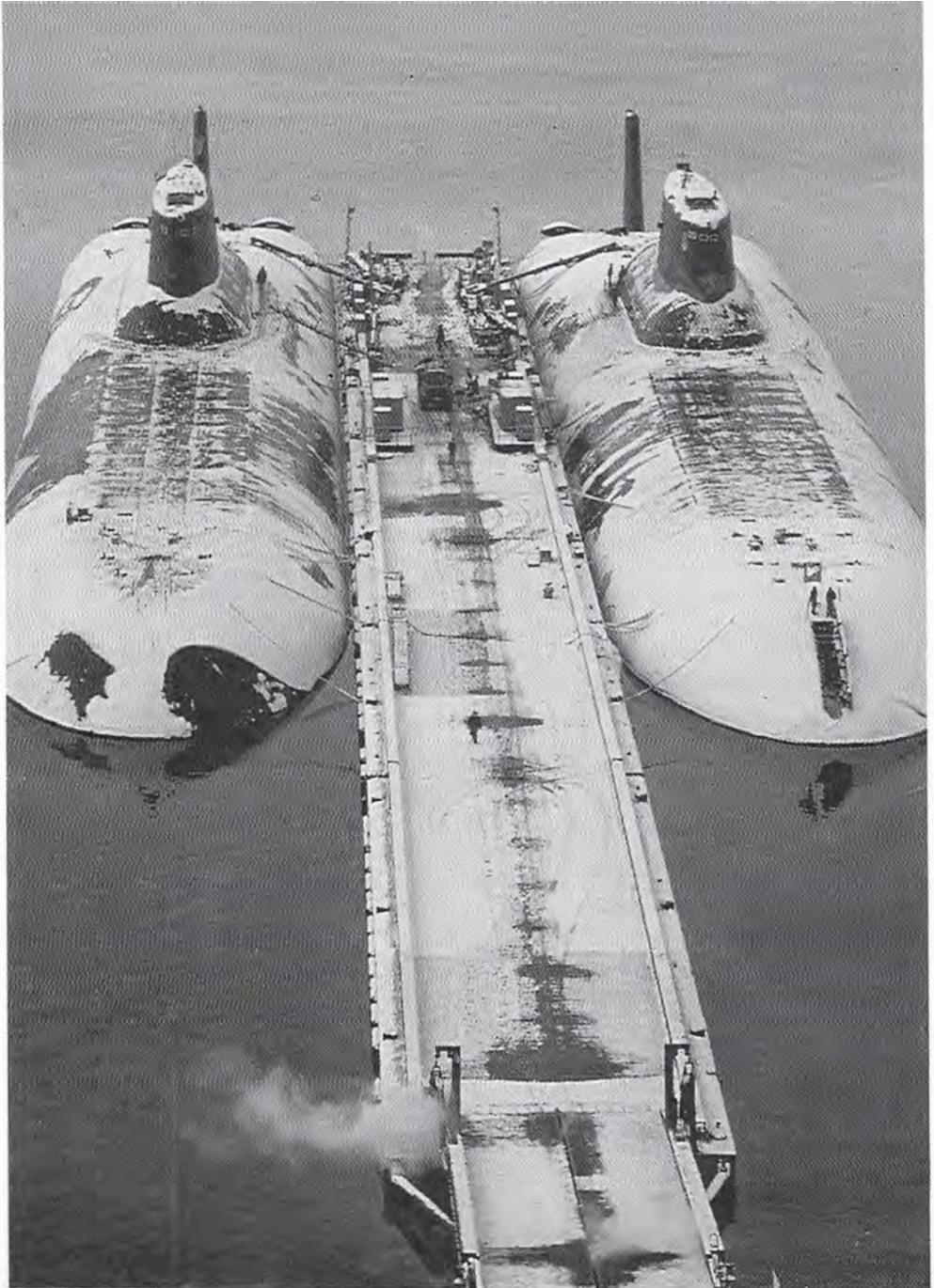
The purpose of the NPT is to limit the spread of nuclear arms. It allows the five states which had nuclear weapons in 1967 - the USA, the United Kingdom, China, France and the Soviet Union (now Russia) - to continue having them. But all the other parties are obliged not to acquire nuclear weapons.

Only ten countries have not joined the Treaty - Angola, Brazil, Chile, the Cook Islands, Cuba, India, Israel, Oman, Pakistan and the United Arab Emirates. But the fact that three of these countries, India, Israel and Pakistan, have nuclear weapons seriously weakens the NPT. And the suspicion that some parties to the NPT, including Iran, Iraq and perhaps North Korea, have ambitions to acquire nuclear weapons and are using their membership of the Treaty to acquire the technology to fabricate nuclear weapons further weakens it.

Under the terms of the NPT, the delegates at the New York conference could decide to extend the Treaty for a fixed period, or for fixed periods, or to prolong it indefinitely. All the nuclear-weapon parties and their allies argued strongly for an indefinite and unconditional extension. They were opposed initially by a group of about 20 Third World countries, who argued against indefinite extension.

They did so because they believed that an indefinite extension would remove all pressure on the nuclear-weapon parties to negotiate nuclear disarmament and would permanently legalise the possession of nuclear weapons and maintain for all time the division of the world into countries which have nuclear weapons and those which do not. The month-long Extension and Review Conference therefore saw some bitter debates.

*Frank Barnaby,
former director of the
Stockholm International Peace
Research Institute, sets out an
agenda for abolishing atomic
weapons.*



Nuclear force...

Considerable pressure was brought to bear on some Third World countries to change their minds and support indefinite and unconditional extension. Before the conference, US envoys toured the capitals of many developing countries, promoting the indefinite and unconditional extension of the NPT and pressing governments to support US policy. The British and French also applied pressure where they could, but did so somewhat less assiduously than the Americans.

In the last few days of the conference, President Clinton himself wrote messages to several heads of government, those of Mexico and Egypt among others, telling them that the United States very much wanted the NPT extended indefinitely and unconditionally and hoped that they would cooperate. The White House is generally believed to have used economic leverage to persuade Mexico, for example, to vote for indefinite and unconditional extension. Before the conference, Mexico was one of the countries strongly arguing against this.

Egypt also argued strongly before the conference against indefinite and unconditional extension, on the grounds that a Treaty which obliged Arab parties not to acquire nuclear weapons should not be made permanent until Israel had given up its substantial nuclear-weapon force. But in the end Egypt was unable even to have Israel named in the final documents.

There were dramatic moments during the conference. The head of the Venezuelan delegation, Adolfo Taylhardat, resigned when the Venezuelan government instructed him to support the US by backing an indefinite extension of the NPT, after arguing for a long time in favour of a limited and conditional extension.

18 The role played by South Africa at the conference surprised some observers. South Africa's decision to support the Western powers and back indefinite extension and to propose during the conference's general debate a set of measures designed to make indefinite extension more palatable to non-nuclear-weapon states caused a split in the group of non-aligned countries opposing indefinite extension. The South African set of measures became the basis for the 'Principles and Objectives' included in the conference decision.

These state that 'universal adherence to the Treaty... is an urgent priority'. They call for the completion of the negotiations for a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty 'no later than 1996' and the 'immediate commencement and early conclusion of negotiations on a... convention banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons'. The creation of new nuclear-weapon-free zones, 'internationally legally binding' security assurances 'to assure non-nuclear-weapon states party to the Treaty against the use of threat of use of nuclear weapons', stronger international safeguards and cooperation on the 'peaceful uses of nuclear energy' are other measures called for.



... precautions in Switzerland

The decision to strengthen the NPT's review process was intended to put pressure on the nuclear-weapon states to negotiate nuclear disarmament, by giving the review process some substance. The practice of holding review conferences every five years will continue. Previous review conferences have been preceded by preparatory committees, but in future the parties are committed to making substantive recommendations at these meetings.

Beginning in 1997, 'the preparatory committee should hold, normally for a duration of ten working days, a meeting in each of the three years prior to the review conference... to consider principles, objectives and ways in order to promote the full implementation of the Treaty, as well as its universality, and to make recommendations thereon to the review conference'. Whether or not pressure can be put on the nuclear-weapon powers at the review conference remains to be seen.

The decision states that the conference 'decides that, as a majority exists among states party to the NPT for its indefinite extension in accordance with its article X.2, the Treaty shall continue in force indefinitely'. It is noteworthy that the word 'unconditional' does not appear.

The NPT itself has no sanctions against violations. The only action that can be taken against a party which violates its obligations under the Treaty by, for example, developing nuclear weapons clandestinely, is to report the violator to the United Nations Security Council. The Security Council may then apply diplomatic and economic - and presumably even military - sanctions against the violator. But the Security Council is most unlikely to take any action if the NPT has significantly less than global support.

Although the delegates were persuaded to adopt the decision without a vote, the prospect of the nuclear-weapon parties being allowed to keep their nuclear weapons indefinitely without a protest was too much for some delegates. More than a dozen countries made speeches criticising the decision after it was made.

After the conference decision, US Ambassador Madeleine Albright said, 'by demonstrating our determination to ensure indefinite extension, others realised that the course of wisdom was to negotiate in good faith on the accompanying documents and then agree unanimously to extend the Treaty'. She went on, 'we successfully avoided language that ties the future of the NPT to a specific timetable for particular arms control and disarmament objectives'. A 'specific timetable' was, of course, just what many delegates had hoped to obtain.

The world described by the NPT, in which five declared nuclear-weapon parties are allowed to keep their nuclear weapons indefinitely while all the other parties are obligated not to acquire them, is inherently unstable and is, to say the least, unlikely to last. Unless we move to a nuclear-weapon-free world, as the NPT itself envisages, nuclear weapons will proliferate, with deadly long-term dangers.

The realisation of this fact of international life is why many, former US Secretary of Defence Robert McNamara among them, are beginning to advocate a return to a world without nuclear weapons. Our goal should be the negotiation of a Convention to Abolish Nuclear Weapons. With the existing conventions abolishing chemical and biological weapons, we might then have a world free of weapons of mass destruction. a far safer place than it is now. ■

POMP AND CEREMONY

*The senator and general secretary
of the People's National Party looks
back to her early days in the
parliament of Jamaica.*

20

The parliamentary system that Jamaica has adopted is a bicameral one, with an elected House of Representatives which has 60 members and a nominated Senate with 21. Thirteen of the senators are nominated by the prime minister and eight by the leader of the opposition. The cabinet ministers and their deputies – known as the political directorate – are appointed from both the House of Representatives and the Senate, with not more than four, according to the constitution, coming from the Senate. In addition to being general secretary of the ruling PNP I am a Senator and hold the two cabinet posts filled from the upper house.

The judiciary is separate from parliament, a system designed to encourage neutrality and the fostering of the democratic process.

As in Britain, there are two distinct but interrelated components of government. Parliamentarians and senators make up the 'Westminster' component, while the 'Whitehall' part of the model is made up of the civil servants. They are separated in theory from the formulation of policy, in order to ensure neutrality.

Since the attainment of universal adult suffrage in Jamaica in 1938 the number of women in parliament has been very low. In the case of the Senate, where women have been nominated they have largely performed ceremonial functions and have generally not spoken on what could be described as 'hard' subjects.

I was first nominated to the Senate in 1980 after my party, the People's National Party, PNP, had suffered what could be described as an ignominious electoral defeat. I myself had played a pivotal role in the organisation of the PNP in those elections and had therefore been openly identified with the defeat.

I approached my appointment, my first in parliament, with some ambivalence. I welcomed an opportunity to be part of the legislature. At the same time being on the opposition side at an uncomfortable period in the party's history was not so welcome. Despite this, I accepted the challenge.

Maxine Henry-Wilson

Taking the oath of office was itself an event. Much pomp and ceremony did not necessarily acknowledge the significance of the act on the part either of the oath takers or those who administered the oath.

The first thing that struck me was how few females we were in the Chamber. If my memory serves me right there were only five of us. And there was little that bound us together. We took our positions on strict party lines rather than operating from a gender perspective.

The second thing to strike me was the esoteric nature of many of the actions and activities in the Chamber. These accorded with traditions imported from Westminster. For example the prayer still asks for God to give long life and good health to the Queen and makes no reference at all to our head of government. The very dress – headgear and all – of the president reflects our parliamentary inheritance.

The procedures in parliament have to be learned – nothing is self-evident or based on mundane and normal understanding of the terms used. A cursory glance at the order paper confirms this. Why is the item 'public business' the one under which legislation before the House is taken? Why must each piece of legislation be 'read' three times before it can be passed? Why do we need the Mace, the symbol of the House's authority, to be in a different position to facilitate committee business at times when the House is not in 'full sitting'? All this seemed a mystery to me.

What was more discouraging was the appearance of great comfort and panache with which some seemed to master the Standing Orders and the procedures. Much of the discussion seemed arcane, superficial and not informed by empirical data or assessment. Scoring political points appeared to be the major motivation.

Since those early days I have become a life-long friend of one of the female Senators in another party. We even confer on gender matters which we believe can be improved through mutual consultation.

*Santiago Obama,
leader of the Convergence for
Social Democracy, writes of
prospects for democracy
in his country.*

NERVOUS TYRANNY IN EQUATORIAL GUINEA

In March 1993 the government of Equatorial Guinea and the political parties signed a National Pact designed to ensure fair conditions for the holding of elections later that year. The poll was indeed held at the end of November 1993, but it was a parody of democracy, and popular frustration and disappointment were widespread.

The régime of General Obiang Nguema was obliged to unleash a wave of repression in order to counter the euphoria and hope that the signing of the pact had initially inspired. The opposition had to be intimidated and the general population frightened if the regime was to have a chance of winning the vote. So it turned out, and a number of citizens died at the hands of the state security forces in the period before the election.

When the vote was taken the régime ignored the recommendations of the United Nations and friendly countries and offers of dialogue made by the opposition; as a result the voting was boycotted by the forces opposed to Obiang and was regarded internationally as a farce.

In such circumstances, the régime reacted by inflicting reprisals on the population. Students were attacked and mistreated and the consul-general of Spain was expelled. This prompted the cutting-off of much foreign aid which, together with international reaction to the fraudulent elections, made the situation in Equatorial Guinea economically precarious. The consortium of aid-givers was convened at Malabo in June 1994. The first part of last year passed in apparent calm in the cities of Malabo and Bata. In the interior of the country, however, threats, intimidation, arbitrary arrests and financial extortion continued uninterrupted.

In the second half of last year the régime went back on the undertakings it had given to the aid-givers. Repression resumed and lives were lost.

Last year ended in a climate of political uncertainty, with the stalling of the democratic process, accompanied by a breakdown in the fabric of society as the régime stifled opposition in an attempt to perpetuate itself in power. The government is

planning to win the 1996 elections by fraud and is trying meanwhile to persuade foreign donors to resume aid and to shore up its image in the eyes of its own people and those of the outside world.

Meanwhile the situation of human rights in Equatorial Guinea is worryingly grave, with the population totally defenceless before the government's arbitrary conduct. Those who violate human rights are promoted, honoured and decorated by President Obiang.

It is instructive to note that in the last three years of political transition the government has not carried out one investigation of the many human rights violations which have been denounced by the people of Equatorial Guinea and the international community. Not even the deaths which have occurred

Equatorial Guinea is a republic of some 250,000 people which consists of the islands of Bioko (the former Fernando Poo, whose capital is Malabo) and Annobon, and that part of the African continent known as Río Muni (capital Bata). Its principal exports are cocoa and timber.

For centuries a colony of Portugal, and later Spain, it declared its independence in 1968 under the presidency of Francisco Macías Nguema who appointed himself president for life in 1972.

He was overthrown in a coup d'état in 1979 by his nephew Teodoro Obiang Nguema who is still in power.



Fear in Equatorial cities...

at the hands of the security forces or in prisons or police stations have been looked into. Nor have those responsible for the grossest violations been given even the slightest sanction.

Consequently the repressive apparatus of the regime is intact, its morale high, and it is ready at any moment to commit the cruellest acts when ordered to do so.

A population and housing census has been carried out despite the boycott called by the Joint Opposition Platform. President Obiang himself went on radio and television to say that the children of parents who refused to take part in the census would have no right to health services or education. Various killings and torturings, including the summary trial and shooting of Juan Mongomo on 16 December last year, point to the fact that the situation of human rights in Equatorial Guinea is grave indeed. The danger is that it will get worse if the régime feels it has any sort of support.

The government is making enormous efforts to create a climate of apparent 'calm and peace' in the capital, Malabo, and to a lesser extent in the city of Bata. Political parties are harassed and denied access to the media (the state-owned Equatorial Guinea Radio and Television is the only national communications medium). Opposition parties are denied permission to hold public meetings. Their members are prevented from leaving the country and their passports and travel documents confiscated, while those not openly identified with the government are dismissed from the civil service, from companies where the state has a shareholding and from aid projects.

The situation outside Malabo and Bata shows no signs of improvement. The offices of the political parties in the Joint Opposition Platform are kept shut on the orders of government representatives, while physical ill-treatment, death threats, extortion, the exile and banishment of opposition figures are the currency of daily life.

The government has totally ignored the recommendations of the UN Human Rights Delegation.

The economic and social situation of our country is that of a state in bankruptcy, with galloping destruction of the scant infrastructure we inherited from the past. In 15 years of power the Obiang régime has been unable to create any new infrastructure or encourage any productive activity. This has led to a degeneration in the social fabric and the loss of ethical and moral values. As in the times of Macías, there has been a massive exodus abroad of young people, a state of affairs which will not change while Obiang and his family cling to power. His incompetence, the corruption at all levels of government and the absolute unreliability of the legal system headed by the President have made foreign investment impossible while aiding pirate companies connected with the mafia, drug dealers and money-laundering. Such companies

exploit the country's natural resources pitilessly without any benefit to the state.

Obiang does not seem to worry, looking to the exploitation of oil as a way of freeing himself of international pressures and prolonging his rule.

Last year's donors' conference called for three developments: greater respect for human rights, the reform of electoral legislation and the establishment of an electoral register with the aid of the opposition parties and foreign donors.

In fact the government honoured none of the undertakings it made. No reliable electoral register is available and the municipal elections promised last year never took place. The House of Representatives of the People (whose speaker and deputy-speaker were illegally dismissed by General Obiang because of their support for the laws favouring a democratic opening) at the end of last year approved timid modifications to some legislation, including an electoral law which was not published.

Meanwhile the political parties of the Joint Opposition Platform are denied media access to the 75 per cent of the population which lives in the countryside. The opposition's only access is via Spanish radio transmissions to Equatorial Guinea or, expensively, over the telephone.

Exceptionally, the Constituent Conference of the Convergence for Social Democracy, CPDS, held very successfully in Bata at the end of November, functioned as a school for democracy.

The aim of the régime is to undermine the opposition, discredit it in the eyes of the population, and thereby prevent the emergence of any political alternative. The apparent calm in the two main cities is exploited internationally as the government seeks to resume its bilateral links, particularly with Spain.

... little peace in the countryside



The reduction of the number of parties in the Joint Opposition Platform, from 11 before the elections of 1993 to six today, is tendentiously presented as a sign of weakness. For our part we believe that the opposition is stronger for having left behind figures whose incapacity made the Platform's action more difficult. One of the weak points of the Platform has in fact been its lack of funds which, if it continues, will limit its effectiveness.

The Platform has agreed to form a joint list for the municipal elections - if they take place - and to present a joint candidate in the 1996 presidential elections. This is the only way to achieve the democratisation of the country peacefully.

The past three years have shown that there is no way Obiang can evolve, and no way that Equatorial Guinea can evolve with him in power. Sixteen years of his rule have brought the country low, with a foreign debt estimated at an incredible 139 per cent of the Gross National Product.

The continual violations of human rights and the dire economic situation have robbed Obiang even of the 10 per cent popular support he once enjoyed. He would get only 5 per cent today, with half his ministers voting against him.

The situation of the régime is desperate. It is afraid to hold municipal elections lest it lose them. The promised oil wealth has not arrived and the régime is counting on improving its international relations, particularly with Spain and the US.

It would be illusory to believe that if Obiang obtained another seven years in power in the 1996 elections the country would be magically transformed into a democracy. To help Obiang, with aid or assistance, to hold fraudulent elections would be a grave historical error with terrible consequences for the people of Equatorial Guinea.

It is reasonable to predict a new round of terror. This should encourage international bodies to monitor the situation on the ground. The régime may well act to block elections, given the increasing popularity of the opposition.

The international community must oblige Obiang to respect human rights and to hold fair elections and abide by their results. ■

Ellen Bird reviews...

Between reform and revolution, the democratic socialism of Emile Vandervelde

by Janet Polasky

Berg Publishers,
Oxford/Washington DC, 1995,
ISBN 1 85973 033

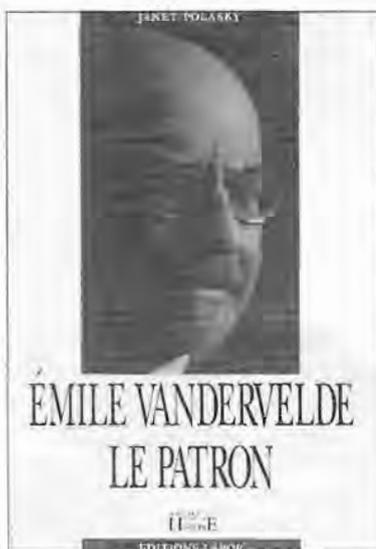
Published in French translation as
Emile Vandervelde, Le Patron,
Editions Labor, Brussels, 1995,
ISBN 2 - 8040 - 1035 - X

Janet Polasky's new biography of Emile Vandervelde, Belgian socialist leader and president of the Second International, will surely come to be viewed as an important contribution to the history of democratic socialism.

A detailed and authoritative account of a political life, it is also, by intention, something more: 'In my book Vandervelde's struggles for universal manhood suffrage, for the release of the indigenous peoples of the Congo from Leopold's rule, for the building of comradeship and hence peace in Europe, for an Allied victory in the First World War, for the democratisation of the Russian Revolution, and for the rebuilding of war-torn Belgium and the maintenance of peace through diplomacy in inter-war Europe serve as a lens through which to view more clearly the history of democratic socialism'.

As Philippe Moureaux remarks in his preface to the French-language edition, 'Emile Vandervelde was a politician out of the common. He made his mark on

Belgian political life and international relations for more than half a century. From 1885 until 1938, the year of his death, he was ceaselessly active, a symbolic figure in the creation and development of socialism in Belgium and a forceful presence from the Second International to his resolute defence, at the end of his life, of the Spanish Republic'.



Vandervelde's is the story of an outstanding intellectual and a man very much of his time. Born in 1866 to a liberal bourgeois family, he entered university at 15, to study first law and social sciences to doctoral level, then biology, physiology and psychiatry. Steeped in an intellectual environment, and as deeply influenced by Darwin as by Proudhon and Marx, the young student soon learned too of the conditions suffered by Belgian industrial workers, who in 1886 held a general strike. He was actively involved in the Belgian Workers' Party from its foundation in 1885, helping to organise the first group of socialist students.

His career developed with stunning precocity. The first of his many books on social and political themes was published in 1887. In 1894 - already a most influential figure in his party - he became the youngest member of Belgium's parliament, where he was to play a prominent role in the struggles for workers' rights, for universal male suffrage and against the colonialist excesses of the Belgian monarchy.

But even before this, Emile Vandervelde had acceded to high office: in 1890 he was elected president of the Bureau of the Second International, a post he was to hold for 25 years, and the book contains a fascinating account of the International's procedures and preoccupations during those years - enriched by Polasky's original research in many European archives.

The life goes on to encompass ministerial office in Belgium, the great political debates of Belgium and of much of Europe in the first four decades of the twentieth century - decades of vast social and economic change, as well as devastating wars.

Janet Polasky, who is professor of history at the University of New Hampshire, USA, has produced a work of great erudition, but eminently accessible to the general reader keen to know more of the history and influences of our international movement. The book's best recommendation is surely the accolades with which it has been received in Vandervelde's own country. A French translation has already been published in Brussels.

Hugh O'Shaughnessy

Le socialisme et les colonies: le cas des Antilles

by Denis Lefebvre
preface by Georges Louisor

Paris, Bruno Leprince
ISBN 2-909634-02-7

It is often a little embarrassing to read the historical documents of the political party to which one belongs. As we read them we think, how on the one hand could one's ideological forebears in the nineteenth century have put up for one moment with the absence of votes for women? How on the other could they have been so idealistic as to think that political action could in a short time be capable of changing human nature?

In reviewing the archives of political parties it is always necessary to maintain a sense of historical context and not expect the socialists of a century ago to be sensitive to events, moods and attitudes that they could have had no idea of.

In his book Denis Lefebvre maintains this sense as he traces the rise of a socialist movement in the islands of the French Antilles around the beginning of this century, a movement which was at the same time fully indigenous and closely linked to metropolitan France. With admirable fairness he looks at its development from the point of view of politicians in Guadeloupe and Martinique and from the perspective of Paris. In a section which will be of particular interest to those interested in today's Socialist International, he includes the debates which took

place in the Second International, the forerunner of today's organisation, whose principal members included parties rooted in the culture of European colonial powers, France, Britain and the Netherlands.

Throughout his study he sets facts in the context of European politics where, even in the ranks of much of the left, colonialism was seen as a fact of life which



could be reformed but not rapidly abolished. Thus the resolution adopted at the August 1907 congress of the International held in Stuttgart stated, 'capitalist colonial policy, by its very essence, necessarily leads to servitude, to forced labour and the destruction of the indigenous peoples of the colonial domain', but went on to demand not the immediate end of colonialism but 'reforms to improve the lot of the indigenes, watchfulness for the maintenance of their rights and the prevention of all servitude, and work, by all possible means, for the education of these peoples for independence'.

Lefebvre is interesting as he

points out the absence of any strong movement favouring the complete separation of the islands from metropolitan France.

This reviewer would have welcomed some discussion of the situation in Cayenne and of late-19th-century attitudes to Haiti, but that would have demanded a much longer volume.

In less than a hundred pages this book is a masterpiece of intelligent compression. It puts the points with academic rigour, yet with a telling brevity not always to be found in academic work. It is a small volume which will find its place in the history of the development of the modern Caribbean and of the evolution of the thought of the Socialist International.

Utopia Unarmed: the Latin American Left after the Cold War

by Jorge G. Castañeda

New York, Vintage, 1994,
ISBN 0-679-75141-6

With the imprisonment of the leader of the Shining Path organisation in Peru the curtain came down on a long and bloody episode in the history of armed revolution in Latin America. As events in other countries show, it is too early to say that violent uprising has had its day in the region. But the move towards constitutional régimes in many capitals, from Santiago to Asunción and from Montevideo to Brasília, shows that the road of armed struggle is being seen as much less of an option than it was a decade or two ago - if indeed it is being seen as an option at all by any significant political organisation.

Jorge Castañeda is a Mexican scholar who has the great advantages of close acquaintance with many of the leading figures of the region's political life and familiarity with political thought in Europe and the United States. Born and brought up in Mexico City, he got a degree from Princeton before taking his doctorate at the University of Paris. He has worked at the Carnegie Institute for International Peace in Washington and has taught at Princeton and the University of California at Berkeley. Carrying those academic and cultural credentials, he has produced a fascinating book on the present and the future of Latin America. It is tinged in equal measure with realism and hope.

The realistic Castañeda emerges in the introduction when he says, 'Despite 20 years of aggregate economic growth (from 1960 to 1980) and a decade of democracy (1980 to 1990), Latin America today is not much better off overall than in the late 1950s. In absolute terms, undeniable progress has been made in many fields, but the region has fallen further behind the industrialised world, its social and economic disparities are greater than before, and, at least in the short term, the hope for effective solutions to its problems is as dim as ever'.

He has little time for the attraction to violence nurtured by some of the Latin American left - or for its often fragile loyalty to democratic forms.

Castañeda devotes much very valuable time to ramming home the lesson that societies will never be able to improve themselves unless the state is able to finance itself decently. And that means more effective taxation and much greater probity in the

management of public funds. Yet he pours cold water on the mere strengthening of the market and on free trade, which has been so vociferously championed as a panacea in recent years.

In a typically frank paragraph, he remarks, 'The last act of non-military hegemony by the United States may well be its effort to cling to the vestiges of



trade and ideological domination in the same region where it took its first steps as a world power: Latin America. Its insistence on signing free-trade pacts up and down the hemisphere synthesises its downsized ambition: selling a dysfunctional [ideological] paradigm and damaged [trade goods], the latter thanks to the former, to clients that have apparently no choice but to buy'.

Such intrusion will bring the region no relief, however. He sees some hope for change bolstered by the realisation on the part of some of the Latin American business community that the Reaganite free-market model is not turning out to their advan-

tage as they lose their domestic markets to foreign competitors and see the social inequalities brought by Reaganism turning vast areas of their cities into war zones.

He neatly punctures the present neo-liberal free-trade shibboleth by reminding his readers that Britain in the nineteenth century and the United States after the Second World War became free traders because they were the world's most efficient manufacturers; they did not become efficient by free trade - indeed they reached their economic strength behind tariff barriers. He could have added Japan to the list of such countries.

The hope for the region he sees in a strengthening of the democratic socialist presence, with particular attention being given to the German model, but with Japanese practices also being examined for their likely relevance.

Castañeda's book deserves a wide readership within the democratic socialist family, and not just that part of it which lives in Latin America.

ABOUT THE SOCIALIST INTERNATIONAL

The Socialist International

Maritime House
Old Town
Clapham
London SW4 OJW
United Kingdom

Telephone
(44 171) 627 4449

Telefax
(44 171) 720 4448/498 1293

Cables
INTESOCON LONDON SW4

The Socialist International is the worldwide organisation of socialist, social democratic and labour parties. It is the oldest and largest international political association, currently comprising 110 parties and organisations from all continents.

The Socialist International, whose origins go back to 1864, 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 the Federal Republic of Germany, was president of the Socialist International from 1976 to 1992.

The most recent congress of the Socialist International, in Berlin in September 1992, elected Pierre Mauroy, former prime minister of France, as president. Luis Ayala (Chile) was elected secretary general at the Stockholm congress in June 1989, and was re-elected by the Berlin congress.

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 regularly, as well as special conferences on particular topics or issues.

Committees, councils and study groups have been established for work on peace, security and disarmament, economic policy, development and the environment, human rights, Central and Eastern Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, the Mediterranean, the Middle East, Africa, the Asia-Pacific region, indigenous people, and finance and administration. These committees or study groups have specific programmes of work and meet regularly. The Socialist International also frequently sends missions or delegations to various countries or regions of the world.

The Socialist International, as a non-governmental organisation, collaborates with the United Nations, and works internationally with many other organisations.

Full member parties

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
 Social Democratic Radical Party of Chile, PRSD
 National Liberation Party, PLN, Costa Rica
 Movement for a New Antilles, MAN, Curaçao
 EDEK Socialist Party of Cyprus
 Czech Social Democratic Party, CSSD, Czech Republic
 Social Democratic Party, Denmark
 Dominican Revolutionary Party, PRD, Dominican Republic
 Democratic Left Party, PID, Ecuador
 National Democratic Party, NDP, Egypt
 National Revolutionary Movement, MNR, El Salvador
 Estonian Social Democratic Party, ESDP
 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 of Guatemala, PSD
 Revolutionary Progressive Nationalist Party of Haiti, PANPRA
 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
 People's National Party, PNP, Jamaica
 Social Democratic Party of Japan, SDPJ
 Latvian Social Democratic Workers' Party, LSDSP
 Progressive Socialist Party, PSP, Lebanon
 Lithuanian Social Democratic Party, LSDP
 Luxembourg Socialist Workers' Party, LSAP/POSL
 Democratic Action Party, DAP, Malaysia
 Malta Labour Party
 Mauritius Labour Party
 Socialist Union of Popular Forces, USFP, Morocco
 Labour Party, PvdA, Netherlands
 New Zealand Labour Party
 Social Democratic and Labour Party, SDLP, Northern Ireland
 Norwegian Labour Party, DNA
 Revolutionary Febrerista Party, PRF, Paraguay
 Socialist Party, PS, Portugal
 Puerto Rican Independence Party, PIP
 San Marino Socialist Party, PSS
 Socialist Party of Senegal, PS
 Social Democratic Party of Slovakia, Slovak Republic
 Spanish Socialist Workers' Party, PSOE
 Swedish Social Democratic Party, SAP
 Social Democratic Party of Switzerland
 Constitutional Democratic Assembly, RCD, Tunisia
 Social Democratic People's Party, Turkey
 Democratic Socialists of America, DSA, USA
 Social Democrats USA, SDUSA
 Democratic Action, AD, Venezuela

Consultative parties

Social Democratic Party of Albania, PSD
 Socialist Forces Front, FFS, Algeria
 African Independence Party of Cape Verde, PAICV
 Party for Democracy, PPD, Chile
 Socialist Party of Chile, PS
 Liberal Party, PL, Colombia
 Fiji Labour Party
 SIUMUT, Greenland
 Working People's Alliance, WPA, Guyana
 Party of the National Congress of Democratic Movements, KONAKOM, Haiti
 Ivory Coast Popular Front, FPI
 Party for National Unity, VITM, Madagascar
 Mongolian Social Democratic Party, MSDP
 Nepali Congress Party
 Pakistan People's Party, PPP
 Peruvian Aprista Party, PAP
 Philippines Democratic Socialist Party, PDSP
 Polish Socialist Party, PPS*
 Romanian Social Democratic Party, PSDR*
 St Kitts-Nevis Labour Party
 St Lucia Labour Party, SLP
 St Vincent and the Grenadines Labour Party, SVGLP
 Popular Unity Movement, MUP, Tunisia
 Party for People's Government, PGP, Uruguay
 People's Electoral Movement, MEP, Venezuela

* members of SUCEE

Observer parties

Democratic Union of Progressive Forces, UDFP, Benin
 Movement for Democracy and Social Progress, MDPS, Benin
 Patriotic Front for Progress, FPP, Central African Republic
 M-19 Democratic Alliance, Colombia
 Hungarian Social Democratic Party, MSZDP
 Hungarian Socialist Party MSzP
 Sandinista National Liberation Front, FSLN, Nicaragua
 Social Democratic Party of Slovenia, SDSS

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
 Party of European Socialists, PES
 International Federation of the Socialist and Democratic Press, IFSDP
 International Union of Socialist Democratic Teachers, IUSDT
 Jewish Labour Bund, JLB
 Labour Sports International, CSIT
 Group of the Party of European Socialists, European Parliament
 Socialist Union of Central and Eastern Europe, SUCEE
 World Labour Zionist Movement, WLZM



SOCIALIST INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL IN CAPE TOWN

*The Council of the Socialist International will meet in
Cape Town on 10 and 11 July.*

Democracy, development and peace in Africa will be the main theme on the agenda.

This, the most significant SI meeting ever to have been convened in South Africa, will underline both our support for President Mandela's government in its work to build a new South Africa and our commitment to the struggle of political forces all over Africa for the shared aims and values represented by the Socialist International.

The Council meeting in Cape Town will be chaired by SI President Pierre Mauroy. Discussions will be centred on

the theme of Democracy, Development and Peace in Africa: Building democracy - Securing economic development - Advancing Social Justice. The Council will draw on the work of the SI Africa Committee which met most recently in Praia, the capital of Cape Verde, on 27-28 May.

The Council will also discuss the International's work in Latin America and the Caribbean, in Asia and the Pacific, in the Middle East, in Central and

Eastern Europe and in the Mediterranean, as well as in the field of human rights, and will decide on initiatives to build on the first Socialist International Conference of Mayors, held earlier this year in Bologna.

Many party leaders from all continents, and particularly from Africa, are expected to attend. Leaders of SI parties and of the African National Congress will introduce the debate, which will be open to delegates and guests.

AFRICA COMMITTEE IN CAPE VERDE

The Socialist International Africa Committee held its latest meeting on 27 - 28 May in Praia, capital of Cape Verde, where it continued its examination of the democratisation process and the tasks of social democracy in Africa, as well as discussing the development of a common platform for tackling economic and social issues in the region and the challenge of securing peace in Africa.

The meeting in Praia, hosted by the African Independence Party of Cape Verde, PAICV, was attended by delegates from SI member parties in Africa, from a number of other SI parties and

fraternal organisations, and guests from Angola, Equatorial Guinea, Kenya, Mali, Niger, South Africa, and the Polisario Front. It was chaired by Jacques Baudin, representing the Socialist Party of Senegal and José Lamego, representing the Socialist Party of Portugal. The venue was the national parliament and proceedings opened in the presence of members of the various political parties in Cape Verde and of the diplomatic corps, as well as other prominent national figures.

Opening the meeting, the general secretary of the PAICV, Aristides Lima, described the

main themes on the SI Committee's agenda as the key questions facing his continent.

On the subject of democratisation, he said, 'We all know that for democracy to flower and bear fruit it is not enough to hold regular elections. Other basic conditions are needed'. There must be broad consensus on the regulation of the democratic contest; elections must be organised by fair electoral laws and the vote itself must be free and fair. Equally, there must be a healthy relationship between government and opposition, based on mutual tolerance and respect, on the rejection of



violence as a political tool and on appropriate legal status and protection for the opposition. Finally, he stressed, respect for minorities was a cornerstone of modern democracies.

He went on to speak about the importance of a free press and a high standard of news reporting, and of a strong parliament. In many young democracies, he said, neither of these was yet a reality.

These priorities were endorsed by many contributors to the ensuing discussion and by the resolution which the meeting adopted on the conditions for democratisation. The important role of international election observers was also underlined.

The resolution welcomed the holding of pluralistic elections in many African countries since 1990 and the significant democratic advances in certain countries, but pointed out that in some cases pluralism was of a rather formal character and the

former powers were resisting democratic culture. 'This situation', it stated, 'means that Socialist International member parties and forces close to them should be committed to resolute action so that a democratic political opening with an acceptance of alternation of power becomes the rule on the African continent'.

Discussion also focused on the struggle against poverty in Africa and the development of alternative policies where social wellbeing and progress need not be sacrificed to fiscal discipline. The committee had before it a background paper on these issues prepared by the host party, as well as the paper submitted to the last meeting in Abidjan by the German SPD and the Netherlands Labour Party, both of which developed in some detail the SI's critique of prevailing international economic policy as it affects the African continent and made

concrete proposals for fairer trade and sustainable economic and social development.

Another background paper, presented by the president of the PAICV and former prime minister of Cape Verde, Pedro Pires, dealt with conflicts and conflict management in Africa and set out comprehensive strategies for peacekeeping and peacemaking. (Pedro Pires writes on Conflict and Conflict-Management, page 7).

The committee also adopted resolutions on the continuing crises in several countries where peace and democracy have yet to be achieved: Burundi, Rwanda, Zaire, Western Sahara, Equatorial Guinea, Angola, Kenya and Somalia.

Whilst all the speakers agreed that the problems facing Africa today were grave, great hope was drawn and practical guidelines deduced from the real democratic progress in some countries of the region, from the peace at last in sight in intractable conflicts such as that in Angola, and from the course of peaceful, democratic development now set in South Africa.

The SI secretary general, Luis Ayala, closing the discussions, reviewed the recent meetings of the SI Africa Committee, devoted to the analysis and development of the International's platform for the continent. As a result of this work, he said, the committee was well equipped to approach the forthcoming SI Council meeting in Cape Town, where the agenda would focus on those same key issues discussed in Praia - democracy, development and peace in Africa. In Cape Town, he said, 'African parties are going to bring their message to the SI Council, so that the voice of Africa can be heard throughout our global family'.

Aristides
Lima



Latifa Perry



ASIA-PACIFIC COMMITTEE IN MANILA

Manila, capital of the Philippines, was the venue for a meeting of the Socialist International Committee for Asia and the Pacific on 11 and 12 February, hosted by the Philippines Democratic Socialist Party, PDSP. Delegates of SI member parties in the region were joined by others from Europe, by representatives of Socialist International Women, the International Union of Socialist Youth and the Party of European Socialists Group in the European Parliament, and by a number of guests from Asia-Pacific countries. The committee's agenda focused on the progress of democracy in the region, on strengthening social democracy in Asia and the Pacific, and on priorities for the International's work in this part of the world.

After a dinner hosted by President Fidel Ramos on the evening of 10 February, delegates were welcomed the following morning by Norberto Gonzales,

chair of the PDSP, to this first SI meeting in the Philippines. The SI secretary general, Luis Ayala, who took the chair at the opening, pointed out that the International was no stranger to the country, however, having supported the aspirations of the Filipino people for democracy over many years and been present at the first democratic elections, before welcoming the PDSP as a member in 1992.

Reviewing the committee's preoccupations since its establishment at the end of 1993 in Kathmandu, the secretary general highlighted the gains for democracy in the Asia-Pacific region, but also the democratic deficit in many countries and the link between economic development and social and democratic development. 'Economic growth', he said, 'must be accompanied by a fair distribution of wealth... by policies that promote employment. There must be social justice, and there must be

a strong message of solidarity. We social democrats are the movement which carries that commitment for solidarity within society. Development assistance must be accompanied by improved market access for exports from developing countries'. He also laid emphasis on the SI's commitment to defending, promoting and consolidating human rights, which must be regarded as indivisible, and to the establishment of new structures for peace and security.

Norberto Gonzales spoke of the forthcoming elections in the Philippines, where the PDSP would be standing a number of candidates for the first time and gaining valuable electoral experience in advance of the general elections due in 1998.

Taranath Rana Bhat of the Nepali Congress Party outlined the recent political developments in Nepal, where the Congress Party had gone into opposition after a narrow

electoral defeat. He described some of the problems facing a country where, so soon after the restoration of democracy in 1991, most of the people were uneducated, unskilled and living in extreme poverty.

According to Perumal Patto of the Democratic Action Party, DAP, Malaysia, 'What we have today in Malaysia, after 38 years of independence, is a highly mutilated and maimed democracy'. Impressive statistics of economic growth stood in contrast with political and human rights abuses. He urged other SI parties to exert international pressure on Malaysia for further democratisation, which would no doubt assist even greater economic achievements.

Kamal Azfar of the Pakistan People's Party, PPP, described

some of his party's political priorities since the election in 1993 of a national government led by Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto, the PPP's leader, and of PPP-led governments in three of Pakistan's four provinces. These included reducing inflation and unemployment, promoting population control, increasing literacy and providing greater opportunities for education, and a greater devolution of power to local levels.

The development of this, the SI's newest regional committee, was warmly welcomed by Maryan Street, president of the New Zealand Labour Party, who went on to talk about the impending introduction in New Zealand of a new electoral system of proportional representation, which her party saw as an opportunity to clarify

exactly what they stood for, to re-state their social democratic principles, their identification with working people, and their place within an international movement for democratic socialism.

The present strength of the Australian Labor Party, after its fifth successive election victory and the disarray of the conservative opposition were stressed by Terry Cameron, representing the ALP. In a country with a strong democracy and strong economic growth, the main problem - and thus a political priority - for the party and the Labor government was unemployment, he said. He affirmed his party's roots in the labour movement and desire for good contacts and cooperation with SI parties in the region.

Losolyn Byambajargal of the Mongolian Social Democratic Party, MSDP, referred to the ongoing political and institutional reforms in Mongolia since the end of the one-party system in 1990 and the struggle of the MSDP to make its voice heard in this process.

The committee went on to adopt a declaration which acknowledged the steady advancement of democracy in Asia and the Pacific but noted with grave concern that, while in many countries of the region there were longstanding and deeply rooted democratic institutions and practices, in others democracy, human rights and fundamental freedoms were still absent and women, in particular, remained marginalised and subordinated.

It stressed that democracy was not just the periodic celebration of elections, but an ongoing and continuous process in which political institutions were strengthened, human rights respected, democratic

**Makoto
Tanabe,
committee
chair**



constitutions defended, people's organisations, trade unions and peasant associations empowered, women's position strengthened, and people's active participation in all levels of decision-making institutionalised.

The declaration condemned the continuing violation of human and political rights in Bhutan, Burma, East Timor and Tibet. It expressed alarm at militarisation in some countries of the region, which posed a threat to peace and democracy. Support was affirmed for the ministerial-level talks between the Bhutanese and Nepali governments on humane repatriation of 100,000 Bhutanese refugees from Nepal to Bhutan. Congratulations were extended to Mrs Chandrika Kumaratunga, the recently elected president of Sri Lanka, on her election victory and her action towards ending the civil war.

The committee reiterated its commitment to the principle of peaceful settlement of international conflicts, as stated in particular in the 1992 ASEAN Declaration of Manila on the South China Sea. It welcomed, finally, the efforts for intra-regional cooperation and understanding within such fora as ASEAN and APEC.

Among guests at the meeting were Chairman Win Khet and other representatives of the National League for Democracy of Burma. Win Khet reported that democratic forces in Burma had been quite successful in preventing the military SLORC regime from gaining international legitimacy, but that the regime was still clinging ruthlessly to power and rejecting any political solution to the country's problems. He appealed for the maximum international solidarity and the committee adopted a resolution urging



wider action by the international community to exert political and economic pressure for peace and democratisation in Burma and resolved to send a high-level mission to Burma in the near future.

The committee also agreed that a planned SI mission to Fiji should take place soon. It established two working groups, the first on election campaigning, to be chaired by Terry Cameron, and the second, to be chaired by Norberto Gonzales, to study developments in Asian countries under communist rule and to formulate proposals for SI policies towards those countries. A seminar on election campaigning will be held in the Asia-Pacific region during 1995, while the next meeting of the Asia-Pacific Committee, to be held later this year, will include in its agenda questions of regional security.

During the Manila meeting, the committee elected Makoto Tanabe as its chair and Maryan Street and Kamal Azfar as vice-chairs. Tanabe briefly outlined his priorities for the committee:

'There are areas where we need to continue our efforts to build

peace. It is our duty to continue doing so.

'We have friends engaged in a long struggle for democracy. We need to spread the importance of democracy even to those nations with antiquated institutions which disregard human rights.

'The discrepancies in lifestyle within developing economies run counter to the aspiration of countries for modernisation.

'Peace, democracy and economic progress must be promoted together.

'There are not a few countries in the region where there are not yet members of the Socialist International or friends of our organisation, like China, North Korea and Vietnam. We need to make friends in these countries and through them create structures for the social democratic movement.

'We need to form a new solidarity. We should not emphasise our differences, but rather focus on our common principles and unified goals. We need to establish practical objectives within a unified movement.'

Win Khet



SIMEC IN TEL AVIV, GAZA AND AMMAN

The Socialist International Middle East Committee, SIMEC, achieved a long-term goal recently when it met on 10 March in Tel Aviv, on 11 March in Gaza City and on 12 March in Amman. The meeting's significance was reflected in the participation of the region's leading political figures, including Yitzhak Rabin, Shimon Peres, Yasser Arafat and Crown Prince El-Hassan of Jordan. It was an opportunity for representatives of SI member parties to see and hear at first hand the latest situation in the peace

process which our committee and the whole International follows with close concern.

The committee is chaired by Hans-Jürgen Wischnewski, Social Democratic Party of Germany, SPD, and brought together for these meetings delegates of about 25 member parties and organisations of the International, from Europe, the Middle East and Africa, as well as guests from the Palestine Liberation Organisation and from Jordan. In Tel Aviv, the hosts were the Israel Labour Party and MAPAM. Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and

Foreign Minister Shimon Peres addressed the committee, as did Yair Tzaban, the minister for absorption, MAPAM Leader Chanan Eres and Nissim Zvili, the general secretary of the Labour Party. In Gaza City Chairman Yasser Arafat and Ministers Nabil Shaath and Saeb Erekat of the Palestinian Authority were among the speakers, and in Amman the SI delegates were addressed by HRH the Crown Prince.

The leaders of all the host parties expressed great satisfaction at the holding of these meetings and all that

this implied. There was warm appreciation for the efforts of the committee and its chairman, the International as a whole and many SI member parties in supporting the cause of peace in the Middle East over many years, summed up by Nabil Shaath, who said: 'I look always at the SI and the socialist parties, the labour parties in the world as a natural ally and a vision for a future Palestine. Democracy and justice and a fair distribution of income and a progressive view of the role of women, environment and the future of people are elements which are integral in the hopes of anybody struggling for the right of his people for equality, for representation, for democracy, for freedom'.

Information was exchanged on many aspects of the peace process, with the committee providing, as always, an open forum for dialogue between all parties. All the speakers agreed that, despite the difficulties and obstacles, the process begun with the Madrid Peace Conference, the Oslo agreements and the Declaration of Principles must continue.

The recent peace treaty between Israel and Jordan was strongly welcomed as a final and comprehensive peace which was already bearing fruit in terms of practical initiatives for cooperation beneficial to both countries.

The discussions put the Middle East and the recent progress towards ending the region's conflicts firmly in the context of the changing international scenario in the last few years: changing power structures, globalisation of economic relations, rapid technological progress and the cultural transformation experienced everywhere as a result.

'The present government of Israel', Yitzhak Rabin told the meeting, 'departed from the policies of the previous governments, using the unique coincidence of events that made it possible to have the Madrid Peace Conference. There is no doubt that the change in the international scene, the collapse of the Soviet empire, the bankruptcy of communism, the disintegration of what used to be the USSR, the end of the cold war on the one hand, and the firm position that the United States took during the crisis in the Gulf, created new realities'.

'As long as we have a majority of one', he added, 'I will continue the process'.

Both Israeli and Palestinian

speakers stressed that, paradoxically, whilst international influence on life in the Middle East was greater than ever before, the strategic interest of the great powers in the region was greatly reduced, and international aid could not be taken for granted as it once was.

Nevertheless, peace between Israel and the Palestinians would not become a reality, all agreed, without the promised international economic aid to the Palestinian Authority.

Recent terrorist attacks in Israel were without doubt holding up the peace process, the Israeli leaders told the SI meeting. Public opinion in Israel would not accept increased insecurity as the



*Shimon Peres
(left) with
Crown Prince
El-Hassan*

price of peace and Palestinian autonomy.

On that subject Shimon Peres commented that 'more than a religious connotation, fundamentalism has an economic route. I think fundamentalism stems from poverty, disillusion, dissatisfaction, want. Whoever wants to fight fundamentalism cannot do it with rifles... What we have to do is attack the real business that creates fundamentalism. Basically it is poverty'. Like the Palestinian speakers, he stressed that there would only be a halt to violence and terror when ordinary people saw real gains

from peace.

The Palestinian ministers described the devastated infrastructure, social dislocation and hardship in the West Bank and Gaza, where a whole generation had grown up with the traumas of recent years. Delays in the delivery of aid and in beginning reconstruction had been widely publicised, but they brought news of concrete progress, with European assistance, in construction, investment for job creation, and all aspects of preparing for the elections. Saeb Erekat, the minister responsible, spoke in particular of the important

role played by the European Union in the election preparations, providing expert assistance and resources which he stressed were crucial for establishing the democratic legitimacy of the Palestinian Authority.

Reflecting these priorities, the SI committee decided to hold its next meeting in Brussels and to focus on the question of European and other international assistance for the peace process. The committee also hopes to meet again in the Middle East before too long, and with the participation of Syrian representatives.

*(l to r)
Chanan
Eres, Hans-
Jürgen
Wischnewski,
Yasser
Arafat,
Luis Ayala
and Nissim
Zvili*



Latifa Perry

CONFERENCE ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND DEMOCRACY

A joint conference of the political Internationals was held in Ottawa on 24 and 25 April, under the auspices of the International Centre for Human Rights and Democratic Development. The theme was 'Human Rights and Democracy: an International Agenda'.

This initiative was a follow-up to the work of the round table on human rights organised by the Socialist International, the Liberal International and the Christian Democrat International and the subsequent common statement presented at the United Nations World Conference on Human Rights in 1993.

The SI, the LI and the International Democrat Union were represented at the Ottawa Conference. The main topics on their agenda were the promotion of human rights in democratic and non-democratic countries; free and fair elections; the role of the UN in promoting human rights and democratic development; and the link between democracy, human rights and development. They also heard the views of some experts and representatives of important non-governmental organisations active in the field of human rights.

The SI delegation, drawn from members of our Committee on Human Rights, SICOHR, was headed by Peter Jankowitsch, Austria, who chairs that committee, and included SI Secretary General Luis Ayala, Svend Robinson (Canada), Isabel Allende (Chile), Renée Fregosi (France), Jean-Claude Bajoux (Haiti), Gyula Hegyi (Hungary), Daphna Sharfman (Israel), Simone Gbagbo (Ivory Coast), Gerrit Jan van Oven (Netherlands), Elizabeth

Angsioco (Philippines) and Leopoldo Torres (Spain).

Speaking at the opening plenary session, Peter Jankowitsch paid tribute to Canada's role in the forefront of the fight for human rights and fundamental freedoms.

He stressed that the defence and promotion of fundamental freedoms and human rights had always been one of the important mandates and missions of the Socialist International, mentioning momentous battles such as those against the remnants of fascism in Europe, against apartheid in South Africa, against dictatorship in Latin America, and against communist dictatorship in central and eastern Europe, and the work of SI leaders like Willy Brandt, Olof Palme and Bruno Kreisky to promote peace and self-determination in the Middle East.

He pointed also to some of the urgent items on today's human rights agenda, which had been addressed by the SI Committee on Human Rights: the rights of women, of children, and of minorities, and the struggle against racism, xenophobia and other manifestations of far-right extremism.

'We belong', he said, 'to those who have carried to the Vienna Conference on Human Rights and other fora the idea of the indivisibility and the universality of human rights and fundamental freedoms. No longer can fundamental freedoms and human rights be considered a luxury article for some of the most advanced societies of our world. We, therefore, do not accept the argument that the great divides of today run along cultures and cultural traditions.

The dividing lines still run between freedom and oppression, between tyranny and liberty', adding that 'any inventory of human rights violations of today is also a list of the great centres of instability and insecurity in the world'.

He called for 'new and more compelling procedures' to address human rights issues: 'We must strive to build a real international legal order crowned perhaps by an International Court of Human Rights... we must provide the institutions of the United Nations not only with the budgetary means but also with the legal authority to supplement their already existing moral or political authority.'

Finally, he urged the creation of new alliances with those very active non-governmental organisations which had helped to put human rights high on the political agenda, and called for such organisations to be heard in the deliberations of the UN and of regional institutions.

Among the keynote speakers during the two days of intensive discussions were Canada's prime minister, Jean Chrétien, and minister of foreign affairs, André Ouellet; Edward Broadbent, president of the ICHRDD; and Pierre Sané, general secretary of Amnesty International, as well as the president of the Liberal International, Sir David Steel (Great Britain) and Senator Robert Hill (Australia), vice-chairman of the International Democrat Union.

The conference concluded with the adoption of a statement by the three political Internationals, which is printed on the following page.

**JOINT STATEMENT OF THE SOCIALIST INTERNATIONAL,
THE LIBERAL INTERNATIONAL AND THE INTERNATIONAL
DEMOCRAT UNION ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND DEMOCRACY**

This is the 50th anniversary of the United Nations. While noting our important philosophical differences on other matters and noting the joint statement made by three of the political Internationals in Vienna in June 1993, we wish to affirm our steadfast and unanimous commitment to democracy, to the universal and indivisible nature of human rights, and to the vital link between democracy, development and rights. Democracy is both a form of government and a type of society. Representative political institutions cannot flourish in a society where human rights are not an integral part of everyday life. And human rights, grounded on the equal claim to dignity of all human beings, can be best protected by governments chosen through free and fair elections.

We strongly reaffirm our support for the principles enshrined in the International Bill of Human Rights and urge all countries that have not ratified the International Covenant on Social, Economic and Cultural Rights and the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights to do so. We further recognise the importance of promoting women's rights as human rights and affirm that cultural and traditional practices cannot be invoked to deny women their internationally recognised human rights. While acknowledging the importance of economic development, a lack of economic development cannot be invoked to justify the abridgement of human rights. Human rights, democracy and development ought to be seen as complementary processes.

Underlying our view of democracy is our strong commitment to civil society, that vast range of private and public endeavours which exist apart from the state. Democratic civil societies are characterised by a wide range of political, civil, social, economic and cultural rights and an atmosphere of tolerance. Taking part in public affairs and government is a basic human right. By exercising their full range of rights, citizens are able to freely choose their own governments. Competitive political parties are the principal means by which citizens may directly shape the nature of their state institutions and determine their public policy priorities.

During the conference we were particularly preoccupied by the following

issues and make these recommendations:

1. Noting that impunity from prosecution constitutes an important obstacle to the full recognition of human rights in many countries where massive violations of human rights have occurred and the inadequacy of ad hoc arrangements, we urge states to finally take a decision on the establishment of a permanent international criminal court to bring those who have violated international human rights or humanitarian law to justice. The cycle of violence must be broken and the rule of law must be established. Democracy cannot be built on impunity.

2. Recognising that there is no automatic positive relationship between trade and human rights, or economic growth and democratisation, we call upon democratic governments to vigorously pursue both trade and human rights, and to understand that democratic practices and development ought to be integral parts of the same process.

3. Noting the progress made at the Vienna World Conference on Human Rights in bringing women's rights into the mainstream of United Nations activities, and applauding the role played by women's groups and other non-governmental organisations at recent UN conferences, we deplore the decision of the Chinese government to restrict the access of NGOs to the Fourth World Conference on Women by moving the NGO Forum to a location that will make communication with the government conference extremely difficult and by denying access to some human rights groups.

4. Looking towards the G7 Summit to be held in Halifax in June that will be exploring reforms to the international financial institutions, we call upon heads of government to show leadership by encouraging greater transparency of the international financial institutions, whose commitment to good governance should include clear and precise human rights impact assessments as part of development and structural adjustment programmes.

5. Appalled by the rise of violence, racism, anti-Semitism and extremist political parties in both developed and developing countries, we urge governments and political parties everywhere to promote a climate of

tolerance and moderation and to condemn extremism in all its forms.

6. Noting the continuing gap between the recognition and realisation of human rights and further noting that only 82 countries have ratified the Optional Protocol to the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, we urge members of the United Nations to ratify existing individual complaint mechanisms for human rights treaties and to consider adding protocols to the International Covenant on Social, Economic and Cultural Rights and to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women.

7. Horrified by extraordinarily high levels of civilian casualties in contemporary wars and by the destruction wrought by conventional arms, we call upon the United Nations to strengthen the UN Register of Conventional Arms so as to work towards a more effective international regulation of the arms trade and to ban land mines.

8. Recognising that human rights workers often risk their lives to defend internationally recognised human rights, we reiterate our call for the rapid adoption of a Declaration on the Protection of Human Rights Defenders, and commit ourselves to do whatever is in our power to ensure that human rights activists enjoy the rights to freedom of expression, assembly and association.

9. Noting the inadequacy of UN human rights mechanisms, we add our voices to those calling for reform of the UN institutions to make them more effective, representative and accountable for the twenty-first century.

As political Internationals with a common commitment to human rights and democracy, we undertake to cooperate with each other by sharing information on human rights matters, by collaborating on missions to observe human rights and elections and by working towards the adoption of common standards for free and fair elections.

We express our appreciation to the International Centre for Human Rights and Democratic Development for initiating this meeting and to the many human rights non-governmental organisations who shared their experiences and insights with us during this conference.

PEOPLE



At its congress in Barcelona in March, the Party of European Socialists elected **Rudolf Scharping**, above, leader of the Social Democratic Party of Germany, SPD, as its new president.

Hugo Batalla, general secretary of the Party for People's Government, PGP, took office on 1 March as vice-president of Uruguay.

At its congress in February the Philippines Democratic Socialist Party, PDSP, elected a new general secretary, **Efrén Villasenor**, as well as a new head of its foreign affairs commission, **Elizabeth Angsioco**.

The New Zealand Labour Party has a new general secretary, **Rob Allen**.

In July the Socialist International will lose one of its longest-standing activists, **Hans-Eberhard Dingels**, who is retiring after more than 30 years as international secretary of the Social Democratic Party of Germany. Our picture shows Hans-Eberhard, below right, beside the SI's then president, Bruno Pitterman, at a Bureau meeting in London in 1964.



Jean-François Vallin, above, of the French Socialist Party, PS, is the new general secretary.

Jorge Sampaio, mayor of Lisbon and a former leader of the Portuguese Socialist Party, PS, announced on 7 February that he would be a candidate for the presidency of Portugal at the next election, due to be held early in 1996.



Harold Wilson, for seven years British prime minister, died on 24 May. Born in Huddersfield, Yorkshire, in 1916, the son of an industrial chemist and his wife, he grew up amid financial uncertainty.

His early and brilliant academic promise made him a lecturer in economics at Oxford University when he was 21 and he later became an assistant to Sir William Beveridge, one of the intellectual authors of the welfare state. In 1943 he was appointed director of economics and statistics at the ministry of power.

He was elected to the House of Commons on his first attempt in 1945 and was given a junior ministerial post in the government of Clement Attlee, whose victory over Winston Churchill's Conservative Party was the most important development in British post-war politics. Two years later he became the youngest British cabinet minister of the century when Attlee

appointed him president of the board of trade, or minister of commerce.

He was elected leader of the Labour Party and therefore leader of the opposition in 1963 following the death of Hugh Gaitskell. The next year he won the general election which ended thirteen years of Conservative rule and put Labour in government. He called a new election two years later and was able comfortably to increase Labour's slim majority.

The Conservative Party returned to power in 1970 under Edward Heath. Four years later Wilson returned for what was to be his last term in office. In 1975 he called a referendum on Britain's relations with the European Economic Community; the result approved British membership. He resigned in 1976 and was succeeded by James Callaghan.

Before his accession to the premiership, Wilson was seen as a standard-bearer of the Left, ideologically close to the

Welsh radical Aneurin Bevan, yet his actions in office at times provoked criticism from the Left. These included his support for the US military activity in Vietnam - though he never sent British troops to support the US forces in that country - and his unwillingness to put down the revolt of pro-apartheid whites under Ian Smith in Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) by force of British arms. He was proud that during his government Britain went through a year without losing one soldier on active service.

To the end he preserved an image of a man of the people, having been the first English premier to come from a relatively humble background. He was particularly proud of having established the Open University where, with help from television, those who had not had the possibility of studying full-time for a degree were able to do so in their spare time, thus opening up higher education to poorer people.

Tony Blair, current Labour leader, said, 'He was passionately committed to overseas development, first as a founder of War on Want and in government creating the ministry for overseas development... For someone like me who was very young, Harold Wilson and the Beatles more or less symbolised the 1960s'.

He is buried on the Scilly Isles, off the south-western point of England, where he had a house for forty years.

Harold Wilson with Olof Palme





**Publisher and Editor
Marlène Haas**

WOMEN & POLITICS

Journal of Socialist International Women

43

WOMEN'S EMPLOYMENT IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

Dr. Alena Nesporova

Introduction

The economic and social transformation that the former communist countries are currently undergoing is supported by the vast majority of the population. However, the first successes in this process are still accompanied by hardship for large social groups. Particularly hard hit in comparison with the pre-transition period are economically non-active persons, as well as workers with less bargaining power and families with many children, despite the efforts of governments in the region to try at least partially to compensate for their greater degree of social vulnerability.

It is also true, however, that the deteriorating economic and social position of such groups is partly caused by their lack of experience in asserting their rights by democratic means in the newly emerging democracies. This is something which must rapidly be learned: how to group together and to develop politically effective organisations; how to reach an understanding of the problems from which the group is suffering; how to formulate the main goals to be achieved and to elaborate a clear strategy; what means to use to convince the public and decision-makers about the justice of their goals and to gain their support; how to prepare a concrete programme of action and to work well together for its successful implementation. Women constitute one such disadvantaged group.

Factor's affecting women's employment in the transition period

Political takeovers in 1989 and 1990 changed the situation in the labour markets of central and eastern Europe completely: excessive demand for labour rapidly turned into a supply surplus. Employment began to fall as a consequence of economic recession and the attempts of struggling enterprises to reduce labour costs. Open unemployment appeared for the first time for more than 40 years.

These developments had been expected. However, many analysts assumed that employment reductions in overcrowded sectors like agriculture or industry would be largely absorbed by technologically advanced industries and by services. Most unemployment should thus be of a structural character. In their opinion, the very high participation rate of the working age population could also be partially reduced by increasing the comparatively low retirement age, by the voluntary (and temporary) withdrawal of many women with children from the labour market, or by their switch to part-time employment. In any case, open unemployment was likely to affect women much more than men as employers replaced them by men even in traditionally 'female' industries.

The industries most hard hit by the economic recession included the textile and garment industries, footwear and leather, the manufacture of electrical and optical equipment, and agriculture, all of them employing primarily female workers. On the other hand, many kinds of services undergoing rapid development offered jobs for women. A smooth transition from declining sectors to expanding services was, however, hindered by skill mismatches and the retraining necessary for the acquisition of new skills.

All the countries of central and eastern Europe urgently needed to rationalise their social expenditure in order to prevent large budget deficits. This expenditure concerned among other things the provision of free or low-cost child care. Furthermore, many enterprises were

44
forced to reduce the scope of services provided to their employees, beginning either to charge for them or to transfer them to a new owner (who would also require payment). To make matters worse, real wages have also deteriorated: many women simply cannot afford to pay increased fees and so opt to stay at home. As a consequence of this, the number of children in enterprise-run child care facilities may decline significantly, rendering it no longer feasible for either the enterprise or the community to maintain them, and so they are closed down. This adversely affects those women who would like to work but who cannot do so because of the unavailability of child care facilities at a reasonable distance from their home or workplace (private child care is very expensive). Women are thus trapped in a vicious circle.

In the past, women in the region of central and eastern Europe enjoyed certain privileges and their range was extended over time with the aim of mitigating emerging tensions in the labour market and society. These privileges comprised fully paid maternity leave for up to six months, partially paid extended maternity (later parental) leave for up to two or three years after childbirth, and return to their previous job was guaranteed by legislation. Night work and work under harmful conditions were forbidden for women; pregnant women and women with small children could not be sent on business trips—women with children aged up to 10 or 15 could not be required to go on such trips. Single mothers with children of pre-school or school age could not be made redundant. When a child was sick the mother could stay at home until the child's recovery, her absence being covered by health insurance.

Under the new labour market conditions characteristic of the transition to a market economy demanding greater flexibility and mobility on the part of the labour force, many of these privileges are sure to be regarded as too restrictive by employers because they increase the cost of female labour. As a result, discrimination against women is likely to increase; this process has in fact already begun. At the same time, in the process of adjusting labour legislation and labour relations to a market system, the governments of the region are reducing these privileges, in some cases too much (for example, in the Czech Republic pregnant women are now permitted to do night work). However, these changes are contributing to the greater insecurity of women in the work force.

It was assumed that the privatisation process would adversely affect women's employment for the reasons given above, that in a period of mass unemployment employers were likely to prefer men to women for most jobs. In reality, however, privatisation has had both a negative and a positive influence on women's employment.

Privatisation tends to reduce labour hoarding in enterprises and to stimulate the reallocation of labour: new private owners cannot rely on state subsidies and so have to adjust the structure and technology of production to market conditions. In the first phase of transformation, economic recession hit light industry particularly badly with a negative impact on women's employment, while enterprises in heavy industry and in military supply could still count on state support. Later, however, the need to reduce the state budget deficit deprived enterprises of these subsidies and forced them to release male workers as well. At the same time, light industry had started to recover. Because of strong competition it was able to offer only modest wages and so was unattractive to male job seekers.

Similar tendencies are observable in services—while new services for producers are well paid and attractive for men, small entrepreneurs providing other types of services cannot afford to give better wages and so rely on female labour. In many cases, the tax burden and market competition are so hard that they force entrepreneurs to recruit 'black' workers or workers on civil contracts thereby reducing social security costs, while leaving workers vulnerable in the case of illness and accident.

Privatisation may also change the human resources policy of enterprises in some countries. New private entrepreneurs and managers often prefer men for higher, better-paid positions requiring managerial or organisation skills, independence and a higher education. It is partly the privileges retained by women from the communist period which make female labour—at least this is the perception—less reliable, less productive and more costly. Partly it is also a consequence of prejudices against women to the effect that they are unable to supervise large teams of employees and workers or to manage enterprises or production units successfully, either because of their lack of aptitude or due to family responsibilities. By contrast, women are preferred for labour intensive, low-paid jobs because they are supposed to be more manageable, more willing to do monotonous, intensive work and to work for less pay.

The newly emerging small private sector has also begun to exercise a significant influence on women's employment. Most small businesses are run by men, not only because women are traditionally less confident in starting up their own firms, but also because they are faced with discrimination, in connection with bank loans, treatment by the state administration, etc. In family firms women often serve as bookkeepers or help family members without any official status, a role which can leave them in a precarious situation if the firm –or their family –should fail.

In comparison with the situation formerly prevailing, new forms of discrimination against women can be observed in recruitment, employment, career advancement, dismissal and remuneration. In recruitment, employers prefer younger to older workers; if women are preferred it is frequently pretty young girls for presentation purposes. Moreover, in many cases employers offer only short-term contracts, civil contracts or casual work to young women. Older women and women with small children have, as a rule, a hard time getting a job at all. On the other hand, women seem to be more active in seeking work, utilising all the forms of job placement assistance provided by labour offices. This is often misused by employers who force them to accept low-paid jobs under precarious employment conditions.

Women in employment are facing new forms of job segregation. While traditional industrial segregation by gender seems on the decrease –men are replacing women in trade, communications and some other services to some extent –better positions now tend to be occupied by men regardless of economic sector. This can easily be seen from the sharp decrease in the number of women occupying the posts of minister, deputy minister or member of parliament in comparison with previous years. Consequently, the career advancement of women has also slowed down.

Women are also often the first to go in case of redundancies because of the traditional perception of men as breadwinners and their greater resistance to the firing practices of managers; the prejudices of employers also should not be overlooked.

This tendency, however, has also begun to change the behaviour and attitudes of women. Young women now postpone or even give up marriage and children in an effort to build a career. As a result, the first signs of a change in the labour market position of young women are already visible. At present, this transformation largely concerns foreign firms and joint ventures, while domestic enterprises continue to maintain old ways of thinking. Another consequence, however, is that the rates of marriage and birth have dramatically declined, as they have in Western industrialised countries. Furthermore, the gap between the two roles of women, at work and at home, is widening as society presents them with a stark choice: they must devote their time and effort either to their work and career or to the family. Part-time jobs are still very scarce, and new private employers expect voluntary overtime and greater productivity. The state tends to be passive in the promotion of women's employment and in facilitating the combination of work and family responsibilities. It is even possible to observe the opposite tendency in labour market policy –attempts to mitigate labour market tensions to the detriment of women by pushing them out of the labour force. This could at best only be a short-term solution to the problem; any attempt to use it over the long term would reveal it as the false economy for society it really is.

Some ideas on the future employment prospects of women and policies likely to affect them positively

The labour market situation of women will in near future depend largely upon economic development. The four central European economies in transition, and also Slovenia, have already reached a phase of economic recovery likely to generate new jobs and moderate tensions in the labour market. With the exception of the Czech Republic, the national labour force in these countries has been sharply reduced due to the recession and will now probably grow again. In south-eastern Europe, economic depression has generally come to a halt and no further deterioration in unemployment is expected. After a certain amount of economic stabilisation, there will be a rapid revitalisation of their national economies, positively influencing labour markets. As new jobs will be generated mainly in services and in those manufacturing sectors with lower value added and lower wages, the general employment situation of women should improve.

Most of the new jobs for women, will, however, be undemanding and low-paid. Furthermore, employment conditions will remain relatively unfavourable –employers will often require long working hours and intensive work on the basis of short-term contracts

with minimum security. They will also oppose unionisation in order to prevent organised industrial action aimed at improving working conditions. Particularly for women with children, such conditions will not be acceptable and many will not be able to enter the market at all.

The situation in the former Soviet countries will be much worse. These countries are still in the phase of employment slump and increasing unemployment, particularly affecting more vulnerable social groups, including women. Older women with a higher education, who are retrained for new professions only with difficulty, will face serious problems in finding a new job—they will be forced either to accept low-skilled work or to remain jobless. Women with children will also be affected because of their much lower flexibility.

In these circumstances, the state should assist women in improving their employment prospects and mitigating discrimination against them. However, without well-organised pressure to implement effective changes in the relevant legislation and in economic and employment policies, these positive changes are unlikely to be realised. The first step should therefore be a strengthening of the women's movement with clear, attractive and, at the same time, reasonable goals. Such organisations would then be powerful enough to acquire adequate representation in state executive and legislative bodies and so to assert the rightful demands of women.

Although the constitutions of all central and eastern European countries ensure equal rights for all regardless of social group, race, gender, etc., in reality more vulnerable social groups have no effective means to protect their rights. It might therefore be expedient to introduce specific anti-discriminatory legislation.

The employment prospects of any social group are better the more competitive it is in the labour market. In the case of women this entails the enhancement of the level and quality of their education and training in accordance with the needs of employers. In order to bring this about, educational institutions should seek to be better informed about what skills are needed in the labour market and about labour market trends, and they should be able to adjust their curricula according to changes in the skills required. Women should receive appropriate vocational guidance and should also be prepared to undergo retraining where necessary; educational and labour market institutions should also design appropriate retraining courses for women according to the actual situation in the labour market.

Besides training and retraining, other employment promoting programmes should be launched to improve the employment prospects of women. In addition to traditional programmes such as job creation schemes, subsidised employment (especially for more vulnerable groups of women—those with disabilities, mothers of small children, older women, school leavers, etc.), and public works schemes, labour market institutions should implement programmes promoting self-employment for women. A programme promoting part-time work for women who, due to family responsibilities, are unable to work full-time but wish to remain economically active and not allow their qualifications to go to waste, would also be beneficial.

The employment of women should be facilitated by a newly-designed system of child care. Enterprises should not be forced to run child care facilities as in the past if this is not in line with their human resource policies. It is to be recommended that governments continue their policy of supporting pre-school institutions in order to enable women to work. At the same time, new, more effective forms of child care should be sought, such as 'micro-nurseries' (when one woman takes care of other children besides her own), etc. This can also be stimulated in combination with programmes promoting women's self-employment.

I have only had time to present some general ideas concerning policies likely to promote equal opportunities for women in the labour market and society. Their development and successful implementation under the circumstances specific to each individual country in transition very much depend upon the existence of comprehensive and reliable statistical information on the labour market situation in general and the situation of women in particular. When such information becomes available in a well presented form and supplemented by reasonable arguments for women's employment and the promotion of equal opportunities, it can only positively influence the behaviour and attitudes of employers and gain the support of the trade unions, other influential political and non-governmental institutions and the public. The strategy that should be adopted in pursuit of this endeavour should be one of the main topics of discussion at the Beijing World Women's Conference, and at follow-up meetings and activities of women in their home countries.

Dr. Alena Nesporova is senior adviser on labour market policies to the Central and Eastern European Team of the ILO based in Budapest.

Left to right,
Hillary Clinton,
Merete Hansen,
Boutros Boutros-Ghali

Keid Navntoft



INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY AT THE SOCIAL SUMMIT

Inge Søgaaard

On 8 March 1995, International Women's Day, a moving ceremony took place at the World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen: in the presence of UN Secretary-General, Boutros Boutros-Ghali and First Lady Hillary Clinton, 91 year-old Merete Hansen was invited to address delegates to commemorate the founding of International Women's Day in Copenhagen in 1910. This took place at the 2nd International Socialist Women's Congress at which Merete Hansen, then aged six, was present with her parents, leading Danish socialists, Nina and Gustav Bang. She remembers clearly her parents' pleasure at the political success and festive atmosphere of the meeting.

Also participating in the 1910 congress were 99 women from 17 countries, amongst others Clara Zetkin from Germany and Alexandra Kollontaj from Russia. Clara Zetkin's proposal to establish an international women's day to honour the movement for women's rights and freedom and to help achieve universal suffrage for women was adopted. The other main themes of the conference were international cooperation amongst socialist women, votes for women and women's night-time working. Nina Bang played a central role in the congress as the organiser from the host country.

Nina Bang was born into a middle-class family in 1866. She studied history at Copenhagen University as one of a handful of women students. There she met Gustav Bang, whom she married in 1895. Together they worked successfully to promote socialism throughout the country and campaigned to improve the living conditions of working class people. Nina Bang's political thinking was based on the class struggle rather than one of equality of the sexes but she was naturally very active in the women's movement, fighting for women's rights. Merete Hansen remembers her mother standing out as a role model for Danish women in the first decades of this century.

In 1913 she was elected a member of Copenhagen City Council, where she served until 1917. Then in 1924 she was appointed the first woman minister in Denmark and also in the world, becoming Minister for Education in the first social-democratic led government in Denmark.

Merete Hansen's presence at the Social Summit, in the midst of the hectic business of a major UN conference, was a source of great pride and joy for socialist women, symbolising recognition of the cause of women's rights throughout the world.

*Inge Søgaaard is the Equal Rights
Consultant of the Commission for
Equality of the Danish Social
Democratic Party*

GERTRUDE MONGELLA LOOKS AHEAD TO THE BEIJING CONFERENCE

What do you consider to be the most important question to be addressed at Beijing?

The most important question in Beijing is that of action and follow-up. The issues we are discussing are not new to all of us, the critical issues, the obstacles to women. The Beijing conference must be able to mobilise the commitment of governments, NGOs and society to take action. We need commitment, as well as a mechanism for implementation. Because after we say "Okay, women suffer the most, and the mass media should know that", who is going to do something about it? What are the mechanisms? Do we have the resources in place to implement the platform of action? Because if we don't, then how are we going to build the resources? These are some of the questions that need to be addressed beyond just having the event of a conference that identifies the problems but does not give the solutions.

Do you think the Nairobi conference was effective in terms of the follow-up?

Yes. The evaluation done in 1990, which actually resulted in the decision to convene the Fourth World Conference, clearly shows that the 1990s was a slow period of implementation. So, this time, we have to be on top of the situation so we can speed up the implementation. A lot of work has been done since Nairobi: we have seen an increase in governments' attempts to establish women's ministries.

There are eleven critical areas of concern identified for Beijing. If you were to choose what you consider the single most pressing one, which would this be?

Actually, that's dangerous because if you look at those issues carefully, as well as the draft platform, you will see the inter-relationship of these different areas of concern. Take media as an example. Having a strong media is not enough—you have to get into the whole question of education. If the majority of women remain illiterate, they will never be able to appreciate the message carried in the newspapers. So, you may have a very strong tool but no one to use it. Because of the inter-relationship between all these issues, if you combine these issues in your activities to eliminate more than one critical area of concern at a time, so much the better.

What are the results of the regional platforms of action from the five continents?

All the regional platforms have been important in helping the secretariat see the reflections of the different regions. The stress differs from region to region and the regional platforms show us that diversity. Take for example, education: the stress in the developing countries is on basic education and literacy, but in the more developed regions, they have reached a stage where they look at how technology and scientific development bear on the education of women. One thing we have discovered is that the problems of women are similar: all the regions have problems related to the eleven identified areas of concern. The difference is in how they look at these problems. I think we are not going to have a single solution. The problem of a rural woman is different from that of the urban dweller. So you have to apply the principle to fit the environment you're in. What concerns women in Canada is not the same as the concerns of women in the Cook Islands. While the woman in Kenya is looking for water to wash the dishes, our sister in Canada is looking for a dishwasher.



UN Photo 188850/E. Schneider

Gertrude Mongella

But which continent is the most affected? Africa or..?

No! If you stereotype regions, you might see that the most developed regions must be doing better. But take Japan, which is the most economically powerful country, but where women have very low status in society. Now, how do you explain that? Some people think that Muslim countries are more oppressive to women. But if you take the statistics of elected women leaders, they are highest in Muslim countries. What explanation do you have? If you take women as the only factor, what makes a country like Tanzania have the same level of political representation of women (about ten per cent) as Canada? We must look at the facts rather than the stereotypes and the mass media must also help to bring these out. The assumptions that have divided the world between South and North can only be used as categories to help us know where we belong. But otherwise we have to use that diversity and see how we can use it to create the strength of women to fight for equality.

What do you envisage your role to be after the Beijing conference?

That will depend on the decision of the UN—how the UN wants to see the follow-up process. As an individual, I am prepared in whatever capacity, whether within my own government or the UN or anywhere, to sit down as a teacher and say “The platform is the curriculum”. I want to break down the platform into a syllabus, into a lesson plan, and finally arrive at the implementation of it. I think most of the time we don't bother after a conference to see that this is translated into definite courses of action. We've only started at getting a document. Maybe, after Beijing, we will need to sit down and break this down to the last point of implementation.

Much has been written and said about the UN's commitment to improving the status of women. From your personal view, how good an example is the UN in terms of promoting equality?

It's not the best example. It's far from being the best example because the UN is made up of governments—these same governments which have marginalised women, which have never solved the problems we are discussing in the UN. The UN is just a reflection of governments. But one good thing about the UN is that it has mobilised these same governments to discuss these issues four times. If the UN did not create such fora, would we be able to meet and discuss these issues? Everybody will be struggling in her own country or region. But in 1975, 1980, 1985 and now in 1995, the UN has created an opportunity for people to come together to discuss one agenda—women. But the UN itself has very few women in decision-making positions. I think less than 20 per cent. So we are pushing to make sure that the UN reflects on itself, that it is committed to looking for resources for the programmes designed for the advancement of women. A conducive working situation for women must also be created. All the things we are saying to governments do apply to the UN.

Apart from NGOs, is there any other way by which you can check and balance the representation of women in the various governments?

I think that depends on each country. In Nairobi, I led the Tanzanian delegation: those who came from government and those who came from the NGO Forum worked together. There is nothing wrong with government and NGOs working together. Some people say NGOs want to have autonomy... that's up to them. But women should avoid having a rift. The moment you create rifts among yourselves, you lose the strength to struggle. We can say the government has its own way of working and the NGOs have theirs, but that does not give an excuse for a split.

How do you envisage the position of women in the 21st century?

That will depend on what we women want. I have always said that women who expect too much must be invited to Beijing. I think it's time to change things. Political power, even among men, is a struggle. Men don't invite each other into power. Have you ever seen one president inviting another to be president? They don't do that. Do you expect men to come and just invite us to get into parliament? We must learn that to get into decision-making, we must learn to struggle.

Gertrude Mongella of Tanzania is the Secretary-General of the Fourth World Conference on Women, to be held in Beijing in September 1995. Here we reproduce an interview published by Isis International.



Fetching water at a refugee centre in Baku, Azerbaijan

UNHCR/A. Hollman

THE DESPERATE PLIGHT OF WOMEN REFUGEES

Melita H. Sunjic

The number of refugees in the world has exploded within the last decade. Only ten years ago there were eleven million refugees. Today we have 23 million refugees and another estimated 26 million displaced persons. Refugees are people who have been forced to leave their country whereas displaced persons are people who have had to leave their home region but have stayed within the borders of their home country.

Seventy-five to 80 per cent of any given refugee group are women and children. This means that worldwide there are approximately 40 million women and children who have been forced to leave their homes, very often with nothing more than the clothes they were wearing.

Refugee women face particular hardships in all stages of flight, up to the eventual solution of their situation. A particular concern for a refugee woman is her own physical protection and that of her family. Often she finds herself in potentially exploitative situations, entirely dependent on others for the basic necessities of life.

To illustrate what it is like to live the life of a refugee woman, I am going to tell you two typical stories of flight: one of a Vietnamese woman, let us call her Tu. In 1991, Tu is 22 years old and lives together with her husband and child and parents in a country with a shaky political situation. The family has a yearly income of 150 US Dollars, not enough for all to survive. The family decides to split. Tu and her three year old child are to leave the country by boat. There is not enough money to pay for all of them to make the journey and her husband hopes to follow her after some time. Together with forty other 'boat people' Tu enters a shaky and overcrowded boat heading for a better future. The trip takes several days and brings Tu into most embarrassing situations. She has no privacy at all. Everything is done in front of everybody else, urinating for instance.

Tu is lucky, her boat does not sink and after days in the blistering sun they make it to Hong Kong. There Tu is taken to a detention camp. Together with twenty people that are completely unknown to her, she has to live in a little tent. For the first time in her life she has not got the protection of a family structure. She does not know what is going to happen to her. In the camps gangs of single male refugees terrorise the inmates. Tu is suspected of hiding gold and rings and the others come and search her. In all ends up in gang rape, while everybody else is watching and while Tu is holding her child.

Tu comes from a society where a woman is not even allowed to talk to unknown

male persons. Through this rape she has lost face. But Tu is brave. She does not want this to happen to other women and goes to the Hong Kong police who are supposed to guarantee that the rules are obeyed in the camp. They keep her waiting for 24 hours at the police station. When a policeman asks her finally what she wants she cannot explain it because no interpreter has been provided and Tu does not speak Chinese.

After months of waiting, the resettlement to third countries starts. But Tu and her child do not meet the eligibility criteria. She does not speak foreign languages, she has no professional skills, she cannot claim political persecution in her home country and she is not even able to pretend it to be so because she does not know what the resettlement officers want to hear.

How does it end up? She is sent back home, where she arrives traumatised, exhausted, dishonoured and pregnant. Tu's husband does not accept her back and after all she has gone through, she is far worse off than before her flight.

Now I will tell you the story of a European refugee. Vera is 40 years old, a medical doctor from Sarajevo. Somehow she managed to get out of the besieged Bosnian capital and made it to Austria. She speaks English and Russian but no German. Vera has a son and a daughter, 12 and 14 years of age. At the beginning, Vera is happy to be in a refugee camp, although she has only a small room for herself and her children. The kids start school and do well. Vera believes that the war will be over soon and she will return to Sarajevo. Her husband stayed in Bosnia and she does not know whether or not he is still alive.

After six months in the refugee camp she cannot stand it any longer. She has nothing to do, but wait for the days to pass. The only stories she hears are stories of war, rape and death. After six months she cannot stand this situation any more. She finds accommodation: a small shabby single room without a bathroom, but this is all she can afford.

Vera starts working as a cleaning woman and attends a German course. Meanwhile she hears that her husband is dead and she tries to get used to the idea of staying in Austria. She would like to resume her job as a medical doctor. To have her diploma recognised she would have to repeat more than ten difficult exams. Although her knowledge of German has improved by now, it is far from sufficient for passing these exams. But in a single room with two teenage kids and a job that exhausts her every day, she will never manage. At least she is working as a nurse in a hospital now, but her self-confidence has gone. She knows that this is just as far as she will ever get.

The problems Tu and Vera faced are very typical of women refugees. Their physical security is at risk both during their flight and after they have found refuge. Abduction and rape may occur. Women separated from husbands and brothers in the chaos of flight or widowed during war are especially susceptible to physical abuse and rape. It is sometimes not possible for all family members to leave a country together. Even when they can they may be separated en route.

In some countries, lack of assistance has forced some refugee women into prostitution. It is unaccompanied single women and girls as well as female heads of households, who are at particularly high risk of such exploitation.

Flight and refugee life bring with them a change in the social and cultural environment and very often a change in traditional family structures and the role of women. Even where the family has stayed together this fact may result in violence against women within their own family.

As far as health and welfare are concerned, refugee women and their children often face similar problems as people in developing countries, but many of them are compounded by the refugee experience.

In addition to physical health problems some refugee and displaced women suffer mental health problems. Becoming a refugee involves many dislocations and abrupt changes in life. As a minimum, women face emotional problems and difficulties in adjusting to the lack of family and community support. More serious mental health problems arise from torture and sexual abuse. Depression and post traumatic stress disorder often follow such experiences.

Let us have a look at the special problems female refugees face with legal procedures. The UN Convention regarding the status of refugees defines a refugee as a person who has a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion,



Sri Lankan returnees make a living raising poultry

UNHCR/H. J. Davies

nationality, membership of a particular social group or political tendency. When a woman claims refugee status because she fears harsh and inhuman treatment for having transgressed her society's laws or customs regarding the role of women, she may face difficulties in being granted asylum in many countries.

The persecution of women often takes the form of sexual assault. Victims of such torture may be reluctant to tell the whole truth, particularly to a male interviewer and thus fail to be granted asylum.

A further legal problem affecting refugee women is the actual status they are granted by a country of asylum. In most countries, family members who are accompanying a recognised refugee are granted the same status. In many cases often the wife and children do not accompany the asylum-seeker in flight, but plan to follow him once he has been recognised as a refugee. Only then they might discover that the country of asylum does not allow later family reunification.

When a woman is just accompanying her asylum-seeking husband she may face problems if the family breaks up and she loses her status for remaining in the country of asylum.

What is the UNHCR doing? Four years ago, the UNHCR initiated a process which aimed at ensuring that the specific protection and assistance needs of refugee women are understood at all stages of our involvement. This process integrates a series of activities, including a clear policy framework, operational guidelines, strategic placement of specialised staff, gender training programmes for our own staff, for NGOs and authorities, legal advocacy and cooperation with other UN organisations and NGOs.

To this end the UNHCR has developed gender training called POP (People Oriented Planning). In addition, the UNHCR is actively encouraging the recognition of gender-based persecution as a contributing factor for granting refugee status.

At international level the UNHCR is cooperating with all bodies concerned. The UNHCR has been actively contributing to the Preparatory Meetings for the Fourth World Conference on Women in September 1995 in Beijing.

Forty million women and children have been forced to leave their homes. They experience the hardships of refugee life. The UNHCR is the voice of these voiceless!

Melita H. Sunjic is the Public Information Officer and acts as the focal point for women at the UNHCR in Vienna.

SOCIALIST NOTEBOOK

ALBANIA

Social Democrats in opposition

The National Council of the Social Democratic Party of Albania, PSD, has confirmed the decision of the leadership to work outside the ruling coalition to which it belonged until the end of 1994 (see 4/94, page 59). Differences between the PSD and the majority Democratic Party came to a head at the end of last year over the draft constitution. The proposed constitution, some of whose articles were opposed by the PSD, was submitted to a referendum and was rejected by voters.

Rudy Croes
of the MEP

ALGERIA

Dialogue falters

The Socialist Forces Front, FFS, the consultative party of the Socialist International in Algeria, has continued to strongly advocate dialogue aimed at halting the three years of confrontation between the military regime of President Liamine Zeroual and the Islamists that has claimed tens of thousands of lives in that country.

Hocine Ait Ahmed, the FFS leader, called on the government to suspend moves to legalise private militias: 'The

Hocine Ait
Ahmed



situation bordering on civil war in the country demands that the state does not abandon its responsibility to itself assure the security of persons and property'.

In a statement at the beginning of April, issued at the end of a government offensive against the Islamists in which nearly 3,000 were killed, the FFS and the National Liberation Front, FLN, called for talks about the presidential elections scheduled for this year and the installation meanwhile of a government of transition.

Meetings subsequently took place on several occasions between the legal opposition parties and government representatives, but President Zeroual has reaffirmed that he will hold the elections.

ARGENTINA

Electoral gains for Left

President Carlos Menem of Argentina won a second term of office in the elections held on 14 May, securing 49.4 per cent of the votes cast. This was 4.4 per cent more than needed for victory in the first round of voting. His nearest rival, José Octavio Bordón, gained almost 30 per cent. Horacio Massaccesi of the Radical Civic Union, UCR, took 17 per cent, with the remaining 4 per cent going to other candidates. Under the revised constitution Menem, a Peronist, takes office for a term reduced from six to four years.

His supporters also control majorities in the upper and lower houses of Argentina's Congress.

Bordón's Frepaso coalition included the Popular Socialist Party, PSP, the Argentine member of the Socialist International. The PSP criticised Menem for having plunged the country into an economic, social and political crisis and for

having tolerated corruption at the highest levels of government.

Talking after the election, Bordón indicated that the cooperation among the members of the Frepaso coalition would continue. 'Despite what has happened they won't divide us. We know we represent seven million Argentines', he said.

ARUBA



MEP condemns government

The opposition People's Electoral Movement, MEP, of Aruba has protested at the conduct of the coalition government which came to power on 1 September 1994. The government, it says, has violated human rights on the island, one of the Netherlands Antilles. It accuses the administration in particular of dismissing a number of senior civil servants and of rejecting calls for public sessions of the parliament.

SOCIALIST NOTEBOOK

AUSTRIA

54 *Government reshuffle*

The coalition government headed by Chancellor Franz Vranitzky, leader of the Social Democratic Party of Austria, SPOe, underwent major ministerial changes in April. The new Social Democratic ministers are Andreas Staribacher (Finance), Caspar Einem (Interior), Franz Hums (Social Affairs) and Helga Konrad (Women's Affairs).

Meanwhile Wolfgang Schuessel, a former economy minister, was elected by the SPOe's coalition partner, the Austrian People's Party, OeVP, as its new leader and joined the cabinet as vice-chancellor and foreign minister.

Vranitzky referred to the reshuffle as a 'rejuvenation by a generation'.

BELGIUM

Socialists retain support in elections

Confounding opinion polls and media speculation to the contrary, the ruling Socialist-Christian Democrat coalition maintained its position in the Belgian elections held on 21 May, seven months earlier than originally planned. Under new constitutional arrangements the national Chamber of Deputies has 150 seats instead of the previous 212. Direct elections were also held for the first time to the assemblies for French-speaking Wallonia, Flemish-speaking Flanders and Brussels.

The Flemish-speaking Socialist Party, SP, won 12.6 per cent of votes for the national Chamber of Deputies, slightly more than in the 1991 election, and has 20 seats (28 before the election). The French-speaking Socialist Party, PS, won 12 per cent, a

slight decrease on their 1991 result, and has 21 instead of its previous 35 seats. Their two Christian Democrat partners together won 24.9 per cent, gaining 41 seats instead of their previous 57.

Jean-Luc Dehaene, the Christian Democratic prime minister, after submitting his resignation to King Albert II, was asked to form a new government.

The two socialist parties were seen to have benefitted from threats by the right-wing Liberals and the employers' federation to seek cuts in labour costs and a reduction in pension provisions.

BRAZIL

PDT critical of government

Leonel Brizola, leader of the Brazilian Democratic Labour Party, PDT, and former governor of Rio de Janeiro, launched a strong attack in May on the government of President Fernando Henrique Cardoso which took office at the beginning of the year. He said



the president was heading an 'economic dictatorship' and declared himself ready to support action which would counter the president's policies and stop the privatisation of state companies.

BULGARIA

BSDP congress

The Bulgarian Social Democratic Party, BSDP, held its extraordinary 41st congress in Sofia in April. Discussions centred on analysis of the results of the December 1994 elections in which the party narrowly failed to command the minimum 4 per cent of votes needed to ensure parliamentary representation (see 4/94, page 60). The argument that the party should keep its independence from the former communist Bulgarian Socialist Party and seek a broader alliance of all social democrats won over that of a minority which called for a federation with the Socialists. The congress agreed to allow local organisations to establish coalitions in the local elections. Petar Dertliev was re-elected president.

CYPRUS

EDEK congress

The Socialist Party of Cyprus, EDEK, held its 7th congress in Nicosia on 18-19 February. Discussions focused on developments regarding the Cyprus problem, on prospects for accession to the European Union and on events in the Middle East and the Balkans.

The European Union has said that it is prepared to hold talks on the accession of the whole island late in 1996.

Leonel Brizola

SOCIALIST NOTEBOOK

CZECH REPUBLIC

CSSD congress

The Czech Social Democratic Party, CSSD, at its 27th congress in Bohumin on 21 - 23 April, re-elected Milos Zeman as party chair, with vice-chairs Petra Buzkova, Kveta Korinkova, Petr Mochovec and Vaclav Grulich. The new party programme will serve as the basis of the party's platform for the 1996 parliamentary elections.

Milos
Zeman



In a comment after the congress, Zeman said, 'We are the party that, by supporting real business, will create the conditions for permanent economic growth, for investments in infrastructure, for gradual entry to the European Union'.

EL SALVADOR

New party formed

The Salvadorean member of the Socialist International, the National Revolutionary Movement, MNR, formally merged on 28 March with the People's Expression of Renewal, ERP, and the National Resistance, RN, to form the Democratic Party. The president of the new party is Ana Guadalupe Martínez, who leads a 14-person National Leadership with vice-presidents Jorge Peña, Oscar Bonilla and José Luis

Quan. Gina Cordón is secretary.

The RN and the ERP quit the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front, FMLN, the former guerrilla grouping, on 14 December 1994. Both groups' memberships were drawn from former fighters. Commenting on their departure from the FMLN, Joaquín Villalobos, of the ERP, and one of the principal strategists of the armed movement, declared: 'In the future the dominant forces will be a centre-right, made up of modernising business sectors, in opposition to and in competition with a centre-left comprising social democrats, Christian democrats, and the more socially aware business sectors'.

The continuing effects of 12 years of violence between right and left, which was formally ended in a peace treaty signed in January 1992, were seen in El Salvador earlier this year. Thirteen parliamentary deputies were seized in January in San Salvador, the capital, by more than a thousand ex-combatants protesting against slowness in honouring commitments made to them under the treaty. In March some 50 former combatants, mostly disabled, were injured as police stopped a demonstration staged during a summit meeting of Central American presidents in the city.

ESTONIA

ESDP in opposition

Eiki Nestor was re-elected chair of the Estonian Social Democratic Party, ESDP, at the party congress held on 29 and 30 April. Ulo Laanja and Mihkel Pärnoja were elected vice-chairs and Lembit Luts as secretary general. The congress adopted new party statutes and restructured the leadership, as well as reviewing the results of the parliamentary elections on

5 March and the party's new role in opposition.

The ESDP is allied to the Estonian Rural Centre Party in the Moderate group, which gained 5.87 per cent of the March vote and six of the 101 seats in parliament, moving into opposition to the government formed by Prime Minister and Coalition Party Leader Tiit Vähi. The Coalition Party and its ally the Country People's Union took 32.2 per cent of votes and 41 seats, the Reform Party/Liberals 16.2 per cent and 19 seats, the Centre Party 14.2 per cent and 16 seats, Pro Patria/ENIP 7.86 per cent and 8 seats, 'Our home is Estonia' 5.87 per cent and 6 seats, and the 'Right-wingers' 5 per cent and 5 seats.

FIJI

Labour's tenth anniversary

The Fiji Labour Party held its annual conference and tenth anniversary celebrations in Nadi on 19 and 20 May. The party, founded on 6 July 1985 on the principle of democratic socialism, under the aegis of the Fiji Trades Union Congress, won a clear-cut victory in the 1987 general election in coalition with the predominantly Indian National Federation Party and Dr Timoci Bavadra became prime minister. Labour's period in government was violently ended by a military coup later that year. The constitution imposed by the subsequent military regime in 1990, and condemned by the Labour Party as undemocratic, racially discriminatory and authoritarian, is still in force. Labour is campaigning hard for greater democracy and social justice as the constitution is subject to a current review, and these were the themes of the May conference.

SOCIALIST NOTEBOOK

FINLAND

Social Democrats lead government

After a four-year absence the Finnish Social Democratic Party, SDP, regained its leading place in parliament, winning the largest number of votes and seats in the elections held on 19 March. The party won 28.3 per cent of votes and 63 seats, 15 more than in 1991 and 19 more than their nearest rival, the Centre Party, with 19.9 per cent and 44 seats (down from 55), while the conservative National Coalition Party took 17.9 per cent and 39 seats (down from 40), the Left Alliance 11.2 per cent and 22 seats (up from 19), the Green League 6.5 per cent and 9 seats (down from 10), the Swedish People's Party 5.1 per cent and 11 seats (unchanged), the Christian League 3 per cent and 7 seats (down from 8), the Young Finns 2.8 per cent and 2 seats, the Finnish Rural Party 1.3 per cent and 1 seat (down from 7) and the Ecology Party 0.3 per cent and 1 seat.

The new prime minister is SDP Leader Paavo Lipponen (see Profile page 11), who formed in April a broadly based government including, along with his own party, the National Coalition Party, the Swedish People's Party, the Left Alliance and the Greens. The other Social Democratic ministers are Tarja Halonen (foreign affairs), Jouni Backman (administration), Arja Alho (minister at the finance ministry and the prime minister's office), Antti Kalliomaki (trade and industry), Sinikka Monkare (social affairs and health) and Liisa Jaakonsaari (labour). The prime minister has said that he will tackle unemployment and reduce the government debt.



Lionel Jospin campaigns

Haley/Bordas/flex Features

FRANCE

Jospin a close second

The candidate of the Socialist Party, Lionel Jospin, was narrowly defeated by the conservative Jacques Chirac in the second round of voting in the French presidential election on 7 May. Jospin gained 47.41 per cent of votes, while Chirac, leader of the Gaullist RPR, took 52.59 per cent. Against all media and opinion poll predictions, Jospin had led the field with 23.21 per cent of the votes in the first round on 23 April, ahead of Chirac with 20.47 per cent; the then prime minister, Eduouard Balladur, also a Gaullist, with 18.54 per cent; Jean-Marie le Pen of the extreme-right National Front with 15.27 per cent, and Communist Leader Robert Hue with 8.73 per cent.

Commenting on the final result, Jospin declared that his candidacy had created 'a deep movement of renewal'. He invited 'all women and all men who believe in the values of justice and progress to gather together to keep this hope alive and prepare tomorrow's victory'.

GERMANY

SPD retains state dominance

Elections so far this year to state parliaments in Germany have brought little change to the leading position at state level of the Social Democratic Party of Germany, SPD.

An SPD-Green coalition remained in power in Hesse after the poll of 18 February, with little movement in the vote for the SPD or for the Christian Democratic Union, CDU, of Federal Chancellor Helmut Kohl, while the Green vote rose to well above that of the Free Democratic Party, FDP, the junior partner in the federal coalition.

Elections took place on 14 May in the large state of North Rhine-Westphalia and in the city-state of Bremen. The SPD remained the largest party in both, but lost some votes, notably to the Greens. The most significant loser was the FDP, which failed in both states to reach the minimum five per cent of votes required for parliamentary representation. Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel subsequently resigned as leader of the FDP, increasing opposition pressure on the federal government, which has a slender parliamentary majority.

SOCIALIST NOTEBOOK

GREAT BRITAIN

Election successes for Labour

The British Labour Party continued a wave of election successes in the first half of 1995, as opinion polls showed the Conservative administration of Prime Minister John Major to be the country's most unpopular government ever.

In local elections held on 7 April in Scotland Labour gained 47 per cent of votes, to take control of 20 of the 29 authorities, while three would be controlled by the Scottish National Party, SNP, and the remainder had no single party in control. The Conservatives, with 11 per cent, were reduced to fourth place, below Labour, the SNP and the Liberal Democrats.

The pattern was repeated a month later, when local elections took place in England and Wales. On that occasion Labour took 48 per cent of votes, against 25 per cent for the Conservatives and 24 per cent for the Liberal Democrats. Labour took control of 143 councils, the Liberal Democrats 43, and the Conservatives only 8, with no overall party control in the other 108.

The local polls followed resounding Labour success in a by-election in February in the parliamentary seat of Islwyn vacated by former Labour Leader Neil Kinnock - now one of the UK's two European Commissioners. Labour retained its very large majority in the Welsh constituency, while the Conservative candidate, in fourth place after the Welsh nationalist and the Liberal Democrat, took only four per cent of votes.



Tony Blair

Conference approves constitution change

A special Labour Party conference on 29 April approved a change in the party's constitution, proposed by Party Leader Tony Blair, which replaced the historic 'Clause 4' commitment to common ownership with a new statement of aims and values. The new clause was endorsed by 65 per cent of delegates, who represented constituency parties and affiliated trade unions.

GREECE

New president

On 8 March the parliament of Greece elected Costis Stephanouopoulos as the country's president for the next five years. The new president was a minister in governments of the New Democracy party and subsequently leader of a small conservative party. He was elected with the support of the governing Panhellenic Socialist Movement, PASOK, and the nationalist Political Spring. The prime minister and leader of PASOK, Andreas Papandreou, said that the new head of state would 'transcend party politics'.

GUATEMALA

Modest progress in peace process

Slow progress has been resumed in the implementation of the UN-sponsored process to end the long-standing violent conflict in Guatemala. The UN Mission for the Verification of Human Rights, MINUGUA, was fully deployed in the country on 1 March and at the end of March representatives of the Guatemalan government and the Guatemalan National Revolutionary Unity, UNRG, signed in Mexico City an agreement on indigenous rights. After further agreements on socio-economic, agricultural, military and constitutional aspects, August 1995 is the UN target date for a comprehensive peace accord.

HAITI

58 Election preparations

With the assistance of the United Nations, preparations are well under way for Haiti's elections. The UN peacekeeping mission, UNMIH, consisting of 6,000 soldiers and 900 police from 37 countries, formally took over on 31 March from the US-led multi-national force which intervened in Haiti to permit President Aristide's restoration to office in October 1994 (see 3/94, page 57).

In April the Provisional Electoral Council finally set the election date as 25 June, with a second round where necessary in July. Voting will be for all seats in the Chamber of Deputies and two-thirds of the 27 seats in the Senate, as well as for many state and local elected posts.

ICELAND

SDP in opposition

General elections were held on 8 April in Iceland, where the Social Democratic Party, SDP, had been governing in coalition with the conservative Independence Party.

The SDP gained 11.4 per cent of votes and seven seats in the 63-seat parliament, where it had previously held 10 seats. The Independence Party, led by Prime Minister David Oddsson, took 37.1 per cent and 25 seats (down from 26 at the last elections in 1991), the rurally-based Progressive Party 23.3 per cent and 15 seats (up from 13), the left-wing People's Alliance 14.3 per cent and 9 seats (unchanged), the moderate left Awakening of Nation (standing for the first time) 7.2 per cent

and 4 seats, and the Women's List 4.9 per cent and 3 seats (previously 5).

The SDP subsequently went into opposition when the Independence Party formed a new centre-right coalition with the Progressive Party. The new government notably opposes membership for Iceland of the European Union, while the SDP and its leader, former Foreign Minister Jon Baldvin Hannibalsson, support EU membership.

IRELAND

Labour active in government

The Irish Labour Party held its congress in Limerick on 7 - 9 April in optimistic mood, as it continued to play a crucial role in the coalition government.

Dick Spring, deputy premier, foreign minister and Labour Party leader, was one of the principal architects of the historic joint framework document for all-party talks on peace in Northern Ireland published by the Irish and British governments in February (see Northern Ireland, page 60).

Meanwhile, Ireland's first Labour finance minister, Ruairi Quinn, introduced a budget combining assistance to business with a package of social welfare reforms.



UN troops in Haiti

SOCIALIST NOTEBOOK

ISRAEL

Talks continue

Negotiations between Israeli and Palestinian representatives continued in the first months of 1995, despite the setbacks of several violent attacks on Israelis, which led to public alarm in Israel, prolonged border closures, and an increasingly forceful clampdown by the Palestinian Authority on known Islamic militants.

A historic summit in Cairo on 2 February brought together for the first time Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, King Hussein of Jordan and PLO Chair Yasser Arafat to reaffirm their support for the peace process and Palestinian autonomy.

Israeli and Palestinian leaders attending the meeting of the SI Middle East Committee in March (see SI News, page 36) again underlined their commitment, whatever the delays and difficulties, to the path of peace and negotiation, and later that month the target date of 1 July was set for stage two of the peace agreement, including the redeployment of Israeli forces from the West Bank and provisions for elections in the territories.

A hiccup occurred with Palestinian anger and international concern at Israeli government proposals - subsequently shelved - to requisition some Arab-owned land in East Jerusalem for housing.

Nonetheless, at the end of May Yasser Arafat and Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres issued a statement recommitting both sides to the 1 July target date for the next stage of agreement.

Progress also came in May in talks between Israeli and Syrian representatives, with the announcement in Washington of a 'framework understanding on security arrangements' and

indications from Israeli leaders of willingness in principle to withdraw from the Golan Heights in exchange for a comprehensive peace.

MAPAM congress session

The last annual session of Mapam's eleventh General Congress, elected in 1991, was held on 5 and 6 March. The congress reviewed and endorsed the party's major decisions during this period, notably standing for parliament in 1992 within the Meretz coalition and joining the Labour-led government.

The congress held an in-depth discussion on the theme of 'one land - two peoples' and passed a political resolution which called for every effort to fully implement the Oslo peace accords and proposed a number of concrete measures to build confidence and assist the process.

ITALY

Centre-Left advances

The shift in power which began with the resignation of Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi and his replacement by the 'technical' administration of Lamberto Dini (see 4/94, page 62) continues.

Dini's government received a parliamentary vote of confidence in March, ensuring the passage of its budget and decreasing the likelihood of an early general election.

Meanwhile, a broad coalition of Centre-Left forces which support the Dini government in February declared itself united behind Romano Prodi as a prospective prime-ministerial candidate. Prodi is a well-known progressive catholic personality, a professor of economics and

former president of the Italian institute of public companies.

The largest party supporting Prodi is the Democratic Party of the Left, PDS. The coalition also includes the Democratic Pact - formed by the Italian Socialists, SI, the Democratic Alliance and the Segni Pact; the Popular Party, PPI - formed last year by former Christian Democrats and now minus right-wingers who left in March to form the Christian Democratic Centrists, CCD; the Greens, and smaller left-wing groupings.

The same coalition registered notable successes in regional, provincial and municipal



Nusca Antonello/Frank Spooner Pictures

elections held in April and May, with the PDS emerging for the first time as the largest party. The Centre-Left won the largest share of votes in nine out of 15 regions, as well as the presidencies of 65 out of 81 provinces, 31 out of 35 mayoralties in provincial capitals, and 203 out of 251 mayoralties in other cities with over 15,000 inhabitants. The right-wing forces, including Berlusconi's Forza Italia, the National Alliance and the CCD, won in six regions and took 8 provincial presidencies, 4 mayoralties in provincial capitals and 332 mayoralties in the cities.

Romano
Prodi

LATVIA

60 LSDSP congress

The Latvian Social Democratic Workers' Party, LSDSP, held its 25th congress on 4 and 5 March. An important theme of the discussions was cooperation with the trade union movement.

Policy documents were agreed on the formation of a left coalition with non-communists, on measures to prevent discrimination against old people, proposals for parliament and government, on the state budget and the financing of state education, on the situation in Chechnya, on the 50th anniversary of the end of the Second World War and on religion in Latvia. Janis Dinevics was re-elected chair of the party.

LITHUANIA

Local vote

The elections for town and regional councils held in Lithuania on 25 March resulted in the Lithuanian Social Democratic Party, LDSP, winning five per cent of the vote and 72 of the 1488 seats contested. The governing Lithuanian Democratic Labour Party, LDLP, won 19.9 per cent, the conservative Homeland Union 29.1 per cent, the Christian Democrats 16.9 per cent and the Farmers Party 6.9 per cent.

These were the first local elections to be held under the proportional representation system introduced after Lithuania quit the Soviet Union in 1991.

MALAYSIA

General elections

The Democratic Action Party, DAP, the SI member party in Malaysia, criticised the short campaign period allowed after Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamed dissolved parliament on 5 April and called general elections for 24 and 25 April. The party also protested at its lack of access to the media and the government's refusal to lift a long-standing ban on public rallies.

In a poll which the DAP leader, Lim Kit Siang, called the most unfair and unclean in Malaysia's history, the ruling National Front coalition, which consists of 14 parties, increased its representation from 127 to 162 of the 192 seats in parliament. The DAP's



representation fell from 20 seats to nine. The Sabah Unity Party took eight seats (down from 14), the All-Malaysian Islamic Party six (down from seven), and the Spirit of '46 also six (down from eight).

Leaders of the Democratic Action Party have called Malaysia 'a highly mutilated and maimed democracy', which has become notorious for its internal security acts and threats to freedom of speech and association and detention without trial.

Shortly before the election, the DAP had issued a strong protest at the government's treatment of Lim Guang Eng, a DAP member of parliament, who was arrested and charged with 'creating disaffection against the administration of justice in Malaysia' after criticising in parliament the government's handling of accusations against the former Chief Minister of Melaka province.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Peace plan

A framework document for peace in Northern Ireland was launched in February jointly by the Fine Gael-Labour coalition government in Ireland and the British Conservative administration. The document was agreed after wide-ranging talks which involved, among others, John Hume, the leader of the Social Democratic and Labour Party leader, the Northern Irish member of the Socialist International.

The proposals included a new Northern Irish assembly with executive and legislative responsibilities, a new body to coordinate North-South relations and an agreement between London and Dublin to develop and extend bilateral cooperation.

Speaking in April, Hume called for greater urgency to be given to the peace process. He criticised British Conservative ministers' slowness in starting talks with Sinn Féin, the political party which has links with the Irish Republic Army whose decision to call a cease-fire last year boosted hopes for peace in the territory. Exploratory talks between the British government and Sinn Féin were convened shortly after Hume's statement.

Lim Kit Siang

SOCIALIST NOTEBOOK

NORWAY

Labour congress

The Norwegian Labour Party held its congress in Oslo on 10-12 February. It re-elected Thorbjørn Jagland as party chair and Dag Terje Andersen as general secretary. A resolution passed unanimously reaffirmed the party's commitment to the European Economic Area, to Nato and to the Western European Union, in the wake of the recent referendum decision



Norberto Gonzales

Thorbjørn Jagland

not to join the European Union.

In his speech to the congress Jagland proposed the setting-up of a long-term fund to contain part of the government's current revenue from oil.

Explaining the establishment of such a fund, he said, 'Here in Norway the biggest challenge we are facing is how to adapt the economic growth stemming from oil and gas revenues... The only sensible and sustainable use of this money, however, is to apply it for the benefit of future generations'.

PERU

Presidential and parliamentary vote

The candidate of the Peruvian Aprista Party, PAP, Mercedes Cabanillas, came in third place in the presidential elections held on 9 April, with 4.11 per cent of the vote. The winner was the incumbent president, Alberto Fujimori, who took 64.42 per cent, to secure a second five-year term. Javier Pérez de Cuéllar, the former secretary-general of the UN, took 21.81 per cent and came in second.

The simultaneous parliamentary vote reflected the same pattern of large falls in support for the traditional political parties. The Apristas took 6.53 per cent of the vote and won eight seats. Fujimori's Change 90-New Majority won 52.1 per cent of votes and 67 seats, the Union for Peru, UP, supporting Pérez de Cuéllar, 13.98 per cent and 17 seats and the Opposition Front, including the United Left, IU, 4.89 per cent and six seats.

The PAP honoured the late Víctor Raúl Haya de la Torre on 22 February this year, the centenary of his birth. He founded the party in 1924 and led it through many years of turbulent struggle against dictatorship. He died in 1979.

PHILIPPINES

PSDP congress

The Philippines Democratic Socialist Party, PSDP, re-elected Norberto Gonzales as its leader in the congress it held in Manila on 14-17 February, and elected Efrén Villasenor as general secretary. The party adopted a quota of at least 25 per cent for women's representation. The congress took place in the run-up to partial parliamentary and

local elections held on 8 May, results of which reinforced the position of the national government led by President Fidel Ramos.



61

PORTUGAL

Election date set

President Mário Soares of Portugal has set general elections for 1 October 1995. Recent opinion polls give the Socialist Party, PS, led by SI Vice-President António Guterres - now in opposition - more than 44 per cent of public approval, 11 per cent ahead of the governing Social Democrats, PSD.

SLOVENIA

SDSS congress

The Social Democratic Party of Slovenia, SDSS, formed six years ago, held its congress on 27 May, as the party was negotiating with others on the formation of a coalition to fight next year's parliamentary elections. A new party programme and statutes were adopted, and working methods reviewed. Janez Jansa was re-elected president of the SDSS.

SPAIN

62 *Local and regional elections*

The Spanish Socialist Workers' Party, PSOE, received 30.8 per cent of the vote in the municipal and regional elections held in May, a fall of 7.6 per cent from the last similar elections in 1991. The right-wing Popular Party, PP, saw its vote rise from 25.2 to 35.2 per cent. The Socialists nevertheless polled a million more votes than in last year's European parliament elections and Prime Minister Felipe González, leader of the PSOE, told the party, 'This proves we have a strong electoral base and a unified party'. The PSOE maintained its hold on southern Spain and on the northern region of Asturias.

TUNISIA

RCD dominates local poll

The ruling Constitutional Democratic Assembly dominated the municipal elections held in Tunisia on 25 May, retaining control of all 257 councils. Five opposition parties and a list of independents, standing under a new electoral system, won only six seats out of 4,090 contested.

TURKEY

Party merger

The Social Democratic Party, SHP, and the smaller Republican People's Party, CHP, merged at a congress held on 18 February.

The new grouping takes the name of Republican People's Party, CHP. The party leader is Hikmet Çetin, former foreign minister.

Following the merger various members of the new party have joined the coalition government led by Tansu Çiller, Çetin as deputy prime minister and SI Vice-President Erdal İnönü as foreign minister.

In March Turkey sent a force of 35,000 troops into northern Iraq. The objective, according to prime minister Çiller, was to destroy the bases of the Kurdish Workers' Party, PKK.

FROM THE ARCHIVE

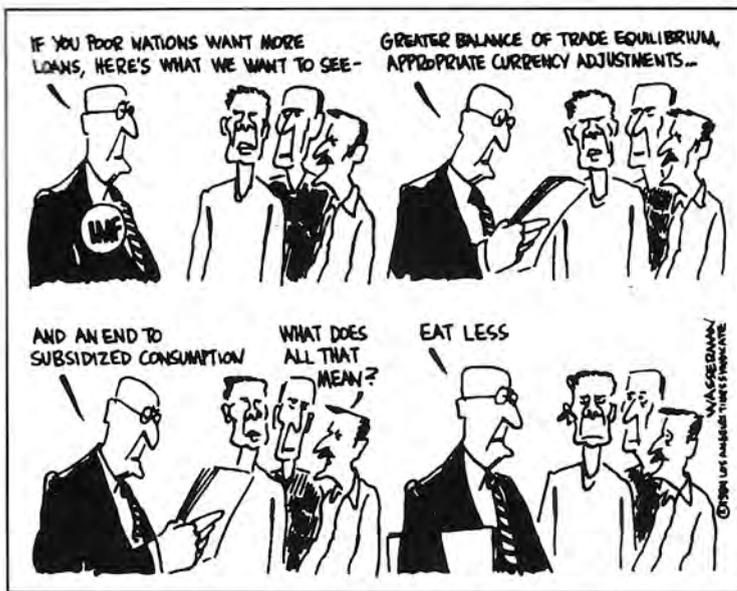
ADOPTING THE UN CHARTER

Once the major declarations of principle by the leaders of delegations were concluded, it remained to organise the commissions, divide up the seats and collect the numerous drafts and amendments. This detailed and easily irritating task was completed in a few days, despite the evident inexperience of some of the functionaries of the new organisation. But goodwill and amiability overcame all obstacles in the end.

At midnight on Friday, that is 9 am on Saturday in Paris, the general secretariat was in possession of some one thousand typewritten pages containing the different states' draft amendments. Some of these amendments were the subject of feverish discussions at the last moment between the 'Big Three' who wanted to preserve the unanimity achieved at Yalta. This was a difficult task, as within the American delegation itself there was far from complete agreement on all points. Finally, the 'Four' presented their own 22 proposed amendments which would have the effect of making the Charter more liberal and diluting the harsher results of the alliance between the 'Great Powers'. Here we can see confirmed those arguments upheld by France after the Yalta conference, when the Dumbarton Oaks text was being presented as inviolable.

Le Monde, 9 May 1945:

report from the founding meeting of the United Nations in San Francisco.



From Intermediate Technology – Small World

'There is an attitude that you don't discuss international social issues.'

British Prime Minister John Major, about the UN Social Summit



'The world is changing - are we?'

A challenge from the Belgian Socialist Party, PS

'We need to make sure that the information super-highway does not develop in a manner that reinforces the imbalances between the haves and have-nots.'

Thabo Mbeki, deputy president of South Africa



From New Statesman & Society

'The post-war settlement is crumbling... The great stability of Western liberal capitalism in the period after 1945 has ended. We have entered a different period, in which the possibilities of maintaining welfare states and national macro-economic management on the level of the nation state are eroded - and the scope of national political control of the conditions of life in a particular country have been very much diminished.'

Historian Eric Hobsbawn

In commemoration of
the 50th Birthday of
Daw Aung San Suu Kyi,

Burma's Democracy Leader & 1991 Nobel Peace Laureate

19 June 1995



" I adhere to the principal of accountability and consider my self at all times bound by the aspirations of those engaged in the movement to establish truly democratic political system in Burma. I remain dedicated to an active participation in this movement."

Aung San Suu Kyi
22 January 1995