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Belgium

# Left electoral alliance projects new left party

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**On Saturday 28 October 650 people, coming from different political and social movements of Flanders, Brussels and Wallonia, decided together to stand in the federal Belgian elections of May 2007. This new left movement is the political expression of workers' struggle against the neoliberal attacks by the government on pensions and social security in the last year. The movement has the support of three former leading figures of social-democracy and the socialist trade-union movement. One of them is George Debunne, former president of ETUC.**

[[https://internationalviewpoint.org/IMG/jpg/union\\_demo.jpg](https://internationalviewpoint.org/IMG/jpg/union_demo.jpg)] **October 28 2005 demonstration**

On 28 October 2005 more than 100,000 trade-unionists demonstrated in the streets of Brussels against a governmental plan called "the generation pact". Directed by the Lisbon strategy, the Belgian government, a coalition of social-democrats and liberals, opened an attack against pensions and other social achievements of the working class. This social movement ended in a defeat, given the fact that not one political party represented in the Belgian parliament was ready to defend this movement on the political level.

In the summer of 2005, the former social-democratic members of parliament Jef Sleecx and Lode Van Oustrive, together with the former ETUC-president George Debunne, organised a campaign and a petition against the European Constitution and for a democratic consultation of the population in Belgium. When the movement against the "generation pact" rose up in the autumn of 2005, these three former leaders of the socialist movement in Belgium chose the side of the trade-unions against the social-democratic parties SP.A (Flanders) and PS (Wallonia).

On 15 October 2005, Jef Sleecx gathered with 150 trade unionists at the doors of the congress of the SP.A. They carried banners with the slogan "We turn our backs on the SP.A." This was literally a turning point. From that moment on, trade-unionists and political organisations invited Jef Sleecx all the time to explain his position in meetings throughout the country.

More and more Jef Sleecx became clear about what he wanted: the creation of a new left party in Belgium to defend the workers movement and to stop neoliberal policies. He created "the committee for other politics" (Comité voor een Andere Politiek, CAP), a Flemish committee that wanted to prepare a leftist political alternative on the national level for the federal elections of 2007.

Simultaneously in Wallonia a similar movement developed, which is called 'Une Autre Gauche' (Another Left). This movement was the result of an appeal that appeared in a newspaper in which a group of leftist people put forward the need for a new political force, on the left of the PS and the Greens. The PS was and is still in the grip of a long series of corruption scandals and was as a governmental party, just like the Flemish SP.A, co-responsible for the neoliberal policy and the attacks against the workers' movement.

In the spring of 2006 both initiatives were launched. More and more they started to collaborate. The CAP in Flanders had the support of the SAP-POS, section of the FI, the LSP, section of the CWI, and parts of the CP. Une Autre Gauche in Brussels and Wallonia had the support of the SAP-POS, section of the FI and other political groups. In June 2006 CAP and Une Autre Gauche decided to organise together a political conference to bring together all the people who want to build a political alternative for the federal elections of 2007.

[<https://internationalviewpoint.org/IMG/jpg/Jef.jpg>] **Jef Sleecx at POS/SAP meeting**

This is the conference that took place on Saturday 28th October. With the participation of 650 militants of the anticapitalist left, of the trade-unions, of the social movements, it became a big success. In the afternoon the participants prepared a future program for the movement in twelve different workshops (jobs, public services, protection of trade-unionists, ecology, international solidarity, women etc.). In the evening the conference adopted by

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a large majority a short resolution in favour of a participation in the federal elections of May 2007.

The conference became one of the most important events for the anti-neoliberal and anticapitalist left in Belgium for many years. The preparation of the electoral campaign starts today!