



## IV420 - January 2010

# Mobilizations against Brazilian troops in wake of quake

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I understand that at least some currents on the Brazilian left — for example the PSOL — understand that the UN occupation of Haiti was really a US-NATO occupation. This became clear when the US put an end to the pretense and used the quake devastation and catastrophe as a pretext to directly occupy Haiti with US troops.

However, to my knowledge, the Lula government has been silent on this issue. Its military have the lead role in the UN Minustah occupation mission, misnamed to be sure. Bolivia also has troops in the same UN police force — the Blue Helmets.

Today's human catastrophe in Haiti brought about by the quake and the total absence of any sovereign government is an announced second or third demolition of this country — the first being premeditated and brutal interventions and occupations by Washington-dominated foreign armed forces.

The silence of both the Brazilian PT (Workers Party) and the governing MAS movement in Bolivia significantly undermines our Latin American and Caribbean unity. It weakens anti-imperialist forces on all continents.

There is no Haitian democracy, no Haitian state, and much less any

independent government. The cabal fronting for imperialism in Haiti counts in its stable only hired clowns and imitators, political prostitutes and craven bootlickers masquerading as concerned NGO spokespersons.

In any case, I think the publication of this brief report is a very positive sign. Perhaps this indicates that broader layers of the Brazilian political classes are having some doubts about the disgusting and undignified role of Brazil in carrying out with troops the criminal designs of Washington, Paris, and Ottawa in the land of Toussaint Louverture.

*Felipe Stuart C., Managua, Nicaragua*

## Minority groups, radical allies of deposed president Jean-Bertrand Aristide oppose foreign troops in Haiti

Some of the people in poor barrios show disdain for the UN peace forces. This criticism has increased amidst the chaos following the earthquake.

*FÃ BIO ZANINI*

*Feature report from Port-au-Prince*

Cornered and radicalized, a layer of Haitian society is taking advantage of the chaos in the wake of the earthquake to turn up the volume of their now six-year old demand — “Brazilians, go home!”

Most of them are sympathizers of ex-president Jean-Bertrand Aristide, deposed in 2004 by a U.S. action (which the UN ignored) and now exiled in South Africa.

They live in miserable neighborhoods of Port-au-Prince, such as Cité Soleil and Bel Air, where Aristide appears in wall graffiti alongside Bob Marley and Martin Luther King.

“Aristide built everything hereabouts and the Brazilians destroyed them,” said a man who described himself simply as Jean, drinking a beer and smoking grass at ten in the morning amidst the rubble of in a Bel Air street.

Another person who identified himself as “Matador” says that the Brazilians have nothing to do in the country. “They never built even one bathroom here.”

Many people in the region resented the “pacification” operations

conducted by Brazilian troops between 2004 and 2007 to disarm pro Aristide gangs in tough clashes.

"They [the Brazilian soldiers] are not our friends. They kill our people," said Vanel Louis Paul, a leader of Massa Popular, a pro Aristide grouping whose headquarters is in the gigantic slum of Cité Soleil, the biggest in Port-au-Prince.

Emile Wales, a member of that group and a member of the Board of the Fundação Aristide [Aristide Foundation] an aid non-profit NGO sustained by allies of the former president, say that Brazil is one of the countries now attempting to impede the return of their leader from exile.

"We viewed [Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva] as a democrat. But now, looking at what has happened here, we no longer see him that way," he stated.

Over ten days in Port-au-Prince, a Folha [newspaper] encountered many more demonstrations of appreciation for the Brazilians than the contrary. Brazil has the military leadership of Minustah, the UN peace-keepers who are generally well received by Haitians.

Nevertheless, the radicalized layer exists and is active not only in the slums but also within the student movement. The worst scenario for Brazil would be an alliance between the impoverished masses in the slums

and this politicized elite.

"We are watching attentively and with concern the activity of Aristide's partisans, even if they are still weak," said Coronel Alan Santos, public relations officer of the Brazilian Minustah battalion.

## Annual March

Every year on the 28 of February (the anniversary of Aristide's ouster) at least five thousand people March in the streets of Port-au-Prince to remember what they characterize as a coup d'état. Graffiti calling for the withdrawal of Minustah is scant, but visible on some walls in the center of the capital.

There has never been violence in these demonstrations - the gangs linked to the former president were disarmed, and their leaders jailed. About 5500 former members of those paramilitary groups escaped from prison at the time of the earthquake, and they are on the loose.

Aristide wants to return to Haiti and promises never to run again for the Presidency. There have not been any opinion polls in Haiti about his party's popularity, the Família Lavalas. But it certainly continues to be strong in the main pockets of poverty in the country.

"We are present throughout the country. We are the majority party," Maryse Narcisse, party chair and Aristide's main representative in

Haiti, said to Folha.

A former minister in the deposed president's government, Narcisse is more diplomatic when speaking about the Brazilians. However, she clearly calls for a timeline for the withdrawal of foreign troops, something the UN has already said will only take place "several years" ahead.

"We can't fathom how Minustah is going to hang around here forever. It's high time that we knew when their work will end," she said. "We need international solidarity but it has to go along with dignity for us."

## Division

Minustah's response to the earthquake, with Brazil up front, led to a wider gulf between those who defend and those who attack the foreign presence in Haiti.

Thumbs up and applause are the usual signs of approval when Brazilians carry out food distribution. But the opponents are not convinced.

"Minustah has not been capable of giving an adequate response to the earthquake. My impression is that the troops really do not know what to do," said Narcisse.

*Original article taken from: <http://www1.folha.uol.com.br/fsp/mundo/ft3101201008.htm> - Translated by Felipe Stuart C., Managua, Nicaragua*

# An investigation is needed...

31 January 2010, by **Michael Voss**



**Søren Sndergaard MEP, here pictured as a central leader of the SAP in the 1990s, says "The allegations against our party are the**

**height of absurdity."**

A number of politicians has stated that they will call for an investigation to can find the reason why the police did not investigate the PET's allegation that the [Socialist Workers Party](#) (SAP) in the early 90's planned a jail-brake

of the [Blekinge Street Gang](#), and that SAP organized smuggling of illegal immigrants on a huge scale.

"The only kind of liberation we would have considered was liberating the Blekinge Street Gang from the mad idea that bank robbery is a way to promote socialism. SAP was not even

near considering smuggling of refugees into Denmark. We were busy supporting those refugees that were already in Denmark,” adds Michael Voss.

The Executive Committee of SAP is [calling on a future investigating commission](#) to handle their task quite different from the PET Commission.

“The PET Commission just repeated the allegations of the PET with no critical approach at all – even though the alleged activities took place in the

90’s – a period that the Commission were not asked to look into. On top of that three members and employees of the Commission have written a book on a private basis: In the book they state that they believe in these allegations – still without any kind of documentation or proof,” says Michael Voss.

Michael Voss is convinced that these tales has been published in an attempt to legitimize 20 years of spying and infiltration against SAP that did not reveal anything, and that did not lead

to any legal action against SAP at all.

The EC of SAP approached the Commission several times, offering to be interviewed about the activities of SAP in the period of intensive spying and infiltration. But the Commission did never invite the SAP.

“We hope that a new investigation into these allegations will use new, more thorough and more fair methods. If so, we are looking forward be interviewed by a new investigator or commission,” says Michael Voss.

## Election result is the biggest ever unpatriotic crime

31 January 2010, by **Vickramabahu Karunarathne**



**Tamil candidate Shivajilingam (left) and NSSP leader Vickramabahu**

Image:

<http://votebahu.blogspot.com>

Addressing a media briefing in Colombo on Sunday, Comrade Vickramabahu said that the result has been manipulated using sophisticated computer technology to show the world that the Sinhala electorate is totally racist and against any agreement, while the Tamils are not prepared to work alongside the Sinhalese. He said that the spread of variance in the declared result appears unnatural.

He charged that the result was achieved by a ‘daylight conspiracy’ specifically targeting the Tamils of the North East combined with a ‘midnight conspiracy’.

“The midnight conspiracy was launched by state officials who

manipulated the result while the daylight conspiracy was visible in the intimidation of Tamils.” He called the manipulation of votes a ‘Blanquist’ conspiracy run by a select group of officials.

### Shivaji calls not to dissolve parliament

Tamil Presidential Candidate MK Shivajilingam speaking at the media briefing said that bombing in the North East and filming those queuing to vote discouraged people from voting. The small number of internally displaced who were allowed to vote officially could not get to their polling stations due to lack of transport.

He said that the response Comrade Bahu and he received during the election campaign against war and racism throughout the whole island is not reflected in the result. “Sinhala and Tamil people displayed their

willingness to work together for a solution,” he said. He added that some who never ran an election campaign have got a higher number of votes.

Com. Vickramabahu explained that by not displaying the proper picture, the government is trying to portray that there is no room in Sri Lanka for any forward thinking ideology that upholds freedom and democracy.

“This is the biggest ever unpatriotic crime against the country,” he said.

Shivajilingam MP called upon the opposition led by General Sarath Fonseka to request courts to stop the government from dissolving the parliament until the disagreement on the result is resolved.

“There is no point in going to a parliamentary election until we are certain about the result,” he said.

Both Com. Vickramabahu and Shivajilingam MP said that they are willing to be part of any protest against this conspiracy against the voting public.

# A historic gathering of workers and peasants

31 January 2010, by **Farooq Tariq**

For the first time, these two important movements of workers and peasants in Punjab shared a common platform.

The famous Dhobi Ghat parade ground was a sea of red flags that caught the attention of the incoming crowd. Several bookstalls by left-wing organizations and publishers reminded me of the 1960s. Many hundreds visited the book stalls.

The high point of the conference must have been the arrival of peasants from areas including Lahore, Okara, Depalpur, Renala Khurd, and Kulyana Military Estate. After travelling from different areas of the country, over 3,000 peasants joined one procession. They wore their traditional dress and carried Dhool Damaka (drums).

Earlier on 27-28 January, 140 delegates from Labour Party Pakistan held their 5th congress in the same city and leaders of the two movements participated in the congress as delegates.

For two weeks prior to the conference, the city was decorated with the red flags of the Labour Party Pakistan and of the LQM. LQM activists worked day and night for two weeks in order to cover all the roads with signs. Normally only the parties of the rich are able to muster resources enough to color the city. In this case, however, activists' sheer determination to reach as many as possible got out the message of a new labour-peasant movement. Banners, posters and wall chalking signaled the message.

During a time of daily suicide attacks and bomb blasts, holding the workers-peasant conference was a significant development, uniting the under-privileged class under their own leadership. Aside from religious gatherings and rallies, it had been a long time since that many workers and peasants had gathered together in Punjab.

The conference took place in a tense atmosphere, so only committed activists and workers of the two movements participated. Altogether there were over 10,000 participated. Local city officials prepared for any unwanted incident by installing security doors and placing ambulances and fire brigade buses on the site. (We had hoped to mobilize 30,000 but in this atmosphere many local sympathizers stayed home.) Following the end of the conference, a young worker from Faisalabad told me, "I have come here to see what a labour and peasant conference is. Now I have a telephone number of Mian Abdul Qayum, the LQM leader; I am going to organize workers in my factory". At present, there is no union at his textile factory in Faisalabad.

Several social organizations including South Asia Partnership (SAP), Pakistan Institute for Research and Education (PILER), Patan Taraqiyyati Tanzeem, Women Workers Help Line and others mobilized the women for the event alongside with AMP and LQM. Over 1000 women participated: peasant women from Okara Military Farms and other areas as well as women workers from different factories.

The two main conference slogans were the issuing of social security cards to all industrial workers and land ownership rights to the Mozareen of Military Farms. But solidaristic and revolutionary slogans were very prominent: "Workers of the world unite," "One's sorrow is everyone's sorrow," "Long live working-class solidarity," "Those who cultivate should sow," "Asia is red," "Give one more push to demolishing walls," "Socialism is the only answer," "Revolution is our path," "Struggle is our strategy," "Ownership of land or death," "Trade union rights, our human right," "Issue social security cards," "Down with capitalism and feudalism," "No to the IMF and World

Bank," "Down with American imperialism," "No to drone attacks and religious fundamentalism," "For a peaceful democratic Pakistan," "Equal rights for women," "No to discriminatory laws," "Stop violence," "Give peace a chance."

The conference was chaired by Mian Abdul Qayum and the proceedings were conducted by Aslam Meraj, LQM's secretary. Speakers stressed the need for worker and peasant unity to defeat the politics of the rich and feudal. They demanded that all agriculture land occupied by the Military Farms administration must be given to the tenants working on these lands for over 100 years. They called for implementation of the minimum wage in all factories and for a 15,000 rupees (\$160) monthly wage. They announced their intention to participate in the coming local government elections at Faisalabad and other cities. They condemned the atrocities by the military in Baluchistan and announced full solidarity with Baluch people in fighting exploitation and injustice. And they demanded the recovery of the missing persons.

Speakers came from all over Pakistan as well as from France and Australia. They included Rasul Buksh Paleejo, leader Awami Tehreek, Pierre Rousset of France's NPA, Simon Butler of the Socialist Alliance Australia, Mehr Abdul Sattar, secretary Anjuman Mozareen Punjab, Bushra Khaliq, secretary of the Women Workers Help Line, Asim Sajad Akhtar organizer Peoples Rights Movement, Younas Rahu, secretary Labour Party Pakistan, Sindh Chapter, Mohammed Yousaf Baluch, chairman National Trade Union Federation, Safdar Sindhu, secretary Pakistan Trade Union Federation, Ayub Qureshi All Pakistan Trade Union Federation, Atif Jamil Pegan of Harmony Foundation, myself and several others. Several more on the platform included



Jamil Umer of the Awami Jamhoori Forum and leader of the Coordination Committee of Progress parties, Mohammed, Tehseen executive director of the South Asia Partnership, Sarwar Bari, executive director Patan Taraqiyyati Tanzeem, Khalid Mahmud director Labour Education Foundation, Begum Sabeeha head of Khaksaar Tehreek, Nasim Bajwa, an eminent human rights lawyer from the United Kingdom, Zulfiqar Shah of PILER, Ashraf Nadeem, Mian Ashraf, Noor Nabi, Shabir Ahmad and Malik Saleem Jakar of AMP, Baba Jan LPP Gilgit Baltistan, Abdul Jalal, LPP Swat. Nasir Mansoor, LPP national labour secretary.

Speakers saw the conference as an historic beginning of today's working-class politics in Pakistan. "It is new start and it will not be the last event in this regard, we reject the economic and political policies of the present government, which are dictated by American imperialism." They noted that Washington stands empty-handed before the people of Pakistan. They commented that IMF and World Bank policies are adding misery and poverty to the everyday life of the working class. They refused to accept the dictates of IMF and World Bank. They demanded that the government stop privatization and provide

subsidies for agriculture's input. At the same time they demanded that the government must end discriminatory legislation: All citizens of Pakistan must be treated equally in the eyes of the law and constitution. Finally, they noted they were sick and tired of the in-fighting of the Pakistan People's Party and the Muslim League Nawaz. They do not battle over issues of concern to the working class but only on how to share power and status.

Speaker after speaker stressed the need for an independent politics from those parties of the rich. Many pointed to worker and peasant unity at the conference as a practical alternative. Speakers urged the government to control poverty, price hikes, unemployment and the power crisis.

Pierre Rousset, a leader of New Anti Capitalist Party France (NPA) and organizer of Europe Solidaire Sans Frontieres (ESSF), said that the French workers had secured their social security rights after years of struggle. Nonetheless, aided by the WTO, multinational companies were trying to deprive ordinary people throughout Europe from their basic rights. The response is concrete international solidarity by the workers of all countries.

Simon Butler of Socialist Alliance Australia conveyed revolutionary greetings from socialists in Australia, mentioning that Pakistan and Australia might be opponents in the cricket match but the workers of both countries will unite to fight poverty and unemployment together.

For all those attending, the conference was very positive. Most felt the power of unity: "We did this despite all the threats of security. The police kept pushing us to restrict the event inside the grounds, however, we carried out our own plan and we did well" Rana Tahir, one of the main LLQM leaders, told me.

"It was like an Eid day for the Faisalabad power looms workers. We are all happy with the outcome. It is beginning of working class politics in the city. Just, six years on, LQM did what the big parties cannot do. It was a challenge to fill the ground and we did it. "We feel the power, the power of the working class to change the society. If we can do this, we can do many more things in support of the workers. Now the administration has to listen to us and take us seriously" he commented after the rally.

The conference also passed several resolutions.

## World Social Forum, ten years on

31 January 2010, by **Esther Vivas**

The WSF was born with the desire to be a meeting point of social movements opposed to neoliberal globalization and express an alternative to the guidelines of the World Economic Forum in Davos, which brought together annually businessmen and political leaders.

### Objective achieved

The WSF achieved its goal. Event after event attracted ever more participants, culminating in 130,000 at

the latest meeting in January 2009 in Belem, Brazil, although it is true that the political and media impact of the early years has waned. Then, the criticisms and proposals of the Forum had the same echo as the pronouncements in Davos. Today, this has changed.

Another achievement of the WSF has been its ability to decentralize the event, currently held every two years in a different continent in the South, and link it to more local experiences rooted on the ground through the

continental (European Social Forum, Social Forum of the Americas, African Social Forum), regional (Mediterranean Social Forum, Amazon Social Forum) or local (World Social Forum in Madrid, Catalan Social Forum) forums, among others.

Many social movements have recognized its role as reference point and have participated actively therein, endorsing the so-called appeals arising from these meetings, the most significant of which was the global day of action against the war on February

15, 2003.

But the WSF is not without its dangers such as routinization, "ngo-ization", co-option, lack of participation of real social movements and so on, as we saw in the 7th event held in Nairobi (Kenya) in 2007. Even so, the Forum has potential, as was revealed in the latest event in Belem, which was the first example of a collective response to the systemic crisis of capitalism, pointing out the need for a break with the latter. Also the thesis that the WSF must be first and foremost a useful space for social movements and an impulse for action has been more accepted in recent times.

## Some dilemmas

From the end of the 1990s, these movements have been confronted with new challenges and dilemmas and the WSF has not been left out of this.

An example: the global war on terrorism waged by George W. Bush following the attacks of 11 September 2001 served as an excuse for

criminalizing and prosecuting dissident movements. At that time, sections of the media, such as the "Financial Times", foresaw the end of the "anti-globalisation" movement, but it made the fight against the war in Iraq an axis of protest bringing millions of people onto the street to protest against the war in Iraq on February 15, 2003, marking one of the milestones of the movement.

But other developments in the political arena, like the economic collapse in Argentina, the subsequent rise of the piqueteros social movements, neighbourhood assemblies and so on and the return to power of "more of the same", raised new questions. So did the emergence in the Chávez government in Venezuela and its policies of partial rupture with imperialism and neoliberalism, which later found alliances with the governments of Morales in Bolivia and Correa in Ecuador.

If initially the "anti-globalization" movement was dominated by the theses of "Changing the world without

taking power" of Toni Negri and John Holloway, with the development of these events the scenario of political and strategic debate changed substantially.

All these elements have influenced the debate on the future of the World Social Forum and raise issues such as: what relationship between anti-capitalist political parties and social movements? What links with governments such as those of Chávez, Correa and Morales? What strategy in response to Chávez's call for a Fifth International?

Faced with the systemic crisis of capitalism, with an unprecedented climatic, political, social and alimentary crisis, these challenges arise as more urgent than ever. Maybe it is high time, as the Indian writer Arundhaty Roy said at the Fourth World Social Forum in Mumbai (India), "to wage real battles and inflict real damage". When?

*(Article published in the magazine Altermundo-Galicia Hoxe, January 31, 2010.)*

# Remembering Daniel Bensaïd

25 January 2010, by Josep María Antentas



The audience brought together militants of the NPA of all ages, young newcomers and veterans of the 68 generation, representatives of other left forces, people from the world of culture, and also former LCR activists who had shared a militant adventure with Bensaïd and moved away, through tiredness or renunciation, at some point along the road. A road that as said Daniel "was much longer than we imagined in the youthful enthusiasm of the 1960s", but from which he never deviated, until the end of his life, and with the same enthusiasm as at the beginning.

The tribute came just a day after the "Powers of communism" event at Université Paris VIII, which had been organized by Daniel and the Société Louise Michel, and involved renowned French intellectuals like Jacques Rancière and Étienne Balibar, as well as foreigners like Slavoj Žižek and many others.

A long list of speakers recalled various moments in Daniel's life, starting with Alain Krivine and finishing with Olivier Besancenot. In between there was Janette Habel, Flavia D'Angeli, Miguel Romero, Carmen Castillo, Philippe Pierre-Charles, François Sabado, Gregoire Chamayou, Daniel Mermet, Alain Badiou, Edwy Plenel, Samy Joshua, Michael Lowy and Annick Coupe. Their words accompanied the

silent homage dedicated to Daniel by the thousands in the audience. The poet Serge Pey also recited three poems accompanied by a visual performance, and the well-known singer Emily Loizeau played three beautiful songs. The artist Charb, illustrator of Bensaïd's book "Marx mode d'emploi", contributed to the event with several vignettes, projected during the speeches, that gave an emotional ceremony a touch of humour, especially during the showing of a short film with images and fragments from Daniel's life.

Many other well known names from around the world who shared Daniel's militant sympathies participated, such as Tariq Ali, Michael Warschawski and Francisco Louçã, as well as

comrades from Izquierda Anticapitalista, like Jaime Pastor or Manolo Gar  , and of the former leadership of the Spanish LCR like Justa Montero and Chato Galante, and other former militants of the Spanish LCR. Also present were representatives of various revolutionary organisations in other countries, such as Alex Callinicos from the British SWP or Ahmed Shawki from the ISO in the United States. The event was marked by a strong international profile. It was not for nothing that Daniel Bensa  d was a "believing and practicing internationalist" as Fred Borr  s reminded us in his presentation.

"It's hard to pay homage to a person who never accepted it," began Alain Krivine, who recalled the events of May 1968 and the role played by Bensa  d as a student organiser who "remained a revolutionary activist from then until now".

Janette Habel, a former leader of the LCR and the Fourth International known for her work on Cuba and Che, spoke of Bensa  d's political thought with regard to his ideas on emancipation, recalling a debate on the issue the last time they met at the ATTAC Summer University. At a time of confusion on the left in the 1990s, "Daniel was devoted to the task of redefining without betraying" and now it was time "mourn him through fidelity to his message".

Flavia D'Angeli, spokesperson for Sinistra Critica, who met Bensa  d, like so many, through one of the Fourth International's revolutionary youth camps, explained that for the construction of Sinistra Critica and before that Bandiera Rossa during the 1990s, Daniel's thought "was an impressive instrument in dealing with political impressionism" and passing fads. "Daniel never gave up and we will always be grateful to him".

Miguel Romero spoke of the role played by Daniel in the construction of the Spanish LCR under Francoism, recalling the first meeting with him in 1972 in Barcelona. "At the end of this meeting, where we talked about everything, Daniel Bensa  d was already for us Bensa, el Bensa". Daniel, he explained, would also

decades later again play an important role in the reconstruction of a revolutionary political project in the Spanish state, becoming also for a new generation of militants "el Bensa".

Film maker Carmen Castillo, exiled under the Chilean dictatorship and author of "Calle Santa Fe", stated that the solidarity of the Ligue and people like Daniel Bensa  d was fundamental. "Without them we would not be here, we would not have been able to leave". It was thanks to Daniel and his comrades, as Michael L  wy said, that we learned "that the dead are not dead" and that we "live in the company of the absent". Emotional words from the writer John Berger, dedicated to the death of Bensa  d, were read.

Philippe Pierre-Charles, leader of the Revolutionary Socialist Group (GRS) in Martinique, recalled that Daniel Bensa  d always had a particular relationship with the French West Indies. "In his speeches and educational schools that he gave for more than 40 years he always shocked us with his profound knowledge of the history, philosophy, and literature of our country" and he recalled Bensa  d's intervention in a massive conference on colonialism in Martinique in 2006.

Fran  ois Sabado, long-time leader of the LCR and currently the Fourth International, explained the role played by Daniel in the construction of the Fourth International during the 1970s and 1980s, and particularly in countries such as Spain or Brazil, for whom the commitment to the Fourth international IV was a form of "tying the thread of history" and integrating past and present. "Daniel and internationalism were synonymous", he said. Expressing the feelings of all he concluded: "It will be hard to continue without him. He has left us a beautiful heritage. Transmitting it will depend on us."

Gregoire Chamayou from the review "Contre-temps", founded by Bensa  d in 2001, reviewed his political-philosophical thought, through quotes and phrases from Engels, Marx, Gramsci, Peguy, Benjamin, Lenin and Blanqui particularly appreciated by

Bensa  d. "We never know from where will come the spark that can catch fire" he noted, citing Lenin.

Daniel Mermet, a well known radio broadcaster who interviewed Bensa  d on several occasions, and who dedicated a special programme to him in the 1990s, recalled his willingness to "resist the irresistible". Mermet introduced the next speaker, the renowned philosopher Alain Badiou who intervened by way of answers to the questions raised by Mermet. Badiou recalled his intellectual relationship with Bensa  d and the public discussions resulting from distinct visions of politics and emancipation, but always from the same side of the barricades. "With his absence" he said, "there is something that has changed in the intellectual, political, militant, revolutionary panorama". He pointed out that, beyond their differences, when he was attacked in the press as anti-Semitic "the first to leap to my defence was Daniel" and despite their different views on continuity and discontinuity in politics, one of Daniel's virtues was precisely "loyalty to his projects".

Edwy Plenel, a former militant of the Ligue and a prestigious journalist, former editor of "Le Monde" and currently involved with the M  diapart Project, gave an emotional recollection of Daniel and his links with the history of the labour movement and the Paris Commune, and his interest in "transmission", Daniel "was not of one generation, he is of eternity."

Elias Sanbar, a prestigious Palestinian essayist and writer, said that "Daniel was rather than anything, a resistant" and practiced "resistance as it should be done, combining action and reflection."

Samy Joshua, a leader of the NPA and President of the Soci  t   Louise Michel, explained the objectives of this society, set up by Daniel as a space of confluence and plural intellectual debate, in the vicinity of the NPA but independent of it, and for which "the consistent and open thinking" of Bensa  d is an example and a reference in the "immense task" ahead.



Michael Löwy, a respected intellectual and promoter of the eco-socialist international network, active in the LCR and now the NPA, reviewed the political and philosophical thought of Bensaïd, a “Communist heretic”, according to the formula used by both in a joint article on Blanqui. Daniel was noted for his “stubborn fidelity to the oppressed and opposition to any dogmatic orthodoxy”, his contempt for “homo resignatus”, and high quality literary work, “coming from the pen of a real writer.” The best way to pay tribute to Daniel was to remember the

words of the American trade unionist, Joe Hill, just before being shot: “don’t mourn, organize!”

Annick Coupé, a leader of the alternative trade union Solidaires, highlighted the fact that for trade union and associative activists like her, Daniel had a “valuable role in the political debate of the social movements” and cited his commitment to the mobilization intellectual in favour of the strikes of November-December 1995 strikes against the Juppé plan, marking the beginning of the social opposition to neo-liberalism in France.

Olivier Besancenot closed the meeting

stating “that we have met here with the intention of perpetuating his adventure.” “Daniel”, he continued, “helped us to militate, was a transmitter between generations and in many areas” and “the best tribute that we can make is that this transmission continues.”

The Internationale was sung by the thousands of participants, and was preceded by tumultuous applause in memory of Daniel, ending an emotional event in which we all began to take on the reality that Daniel is no longer with us.

Never has a militant meeting filled with so many sad people ended up as such a warm gathering.

# Building the Labour Party Pakistan

25 January 2010, by **Farooq Tariq**

Almost all of the present LPP leadership, including women leaders, were jailed under the Musharaf regime for demanding democratic rights or in the struggle for workers’ and peasants’ rights. The LLP has worked to maintain its political space and refused to be driven underground.

Unlike the traditional Left parties, who set up organizations controlled by the party, since its inception the Labour Party Pakistan has put special emphasis on helping to develop independent social, labour and peasant organizations and other social movements. For example, there is no trade union wing of LPP. Instead we supported the development of the National Trade Union Federation, formed in 1998, and also aided the Pakistan Workers Confederation from its beginning in 1994.

Likewise the LPP has no peasant party wing. It helped a peasant movement, Anjuman Mozareen Punjab at Military Farms, and in 2003 facilitated bringing together more than 22 peasant organizations. This Pakistan Peasant Coordination Committee united under a common platform.

In 2000 the LPP helped to develop the Women Workers Help Line. As an independent women’s organization, the WWHL has become the first organization many working-class women join. [Women Workers Help Line](#)

LPP also helped to develop a youth organization, the Progressive Youth Front, in 2003. It is making steady inroads among the youth. The LPP devoted energy to help the National Student Federation form in 2000. We continue to help this traditional Left-wing group develop into a major student organization.

The LPP strategy of working with the social movements has been one of its distinctive characteristics. During a discussion in 1992 among the Struggle Group, a predecessor of LPP, the decision was made to help social movements develop, even to the point of starting and nurturing social organizations. We opened schools for working children and with the help of the Swedish Teacher Union, we expanded this network. Other Swedish trade unions and progressive organizations helped us start several projects. These ranged from

organizing new trade unions to establishing a trade unions’ resource center, making a video documentary on trade unions, as well as campaigns for peace and democracy. This work was coordinated by the Education Foundation, which today has become the Labour Education Foundation. Since 2000 the LEF has established itself as an independent social organization and played a vital role in developing the trade union movement in Pakistan. [Labour Education Foundation](#)

Back in 1992 The Struggle group joined Joint Action Committee For Peoples Rights Lahore (JAC) at its founding and that relationship has continued when the LPP was formed. Although the LLP was criticized by many on the Left in the mid-1990s as an “NGO party,” the LLP chose not to respond directly to this attack with the expectation that our work in practice would be the best answer.

The LLP strategy of building networks and alliances includes Left unity in Pakistan. We were part of the Awami Ittehad in 1997 and later of Awami Jahoori Tehreek (2006). Today we are part of a coordination committee for



progressive parties.

LPP supporters have worked to develop several other networks with other left groups and social movements. These have included the Anti-War Committee Pakistan (1991) and the Anti-Privatization Alliance (2005). Since 1996 we have held the Faiz Ahmad Faiz Amn Mela annually. Faiz Ahmad Faiz, the revolutionary poet had inspired millions in the Indian subcontinent and worldwide, one of the most respected poet of Urdu. He devoted his life to strengthen Left and the peace movement.

We believe it is important to learn to work together in a country where there are many who actively oppose a socialist perspective and some who refuse to even listen. It is important to be, at the same time, very firm in one's ideology and very flexible tactically. This means we express our opinion, even when disagreeing with others, but work to maintain cordial relationships.

## Magnifying Our Voice

Within 24 hours of launching the Labour Party Pakistan on Facebook, we received responses from over 200 friends. Just launched on 19 January 2010, our LPP Facebook page has more friends joining the group every day.

[LPP Facebook](#)

LPP has also build a Yahoo email group called Socialist Pakistan News, mostly known as SPN. With over 5400 members, it is the largest of any Pakistani political email group. Launched in 2004, it has become a source of information, views and debates among the progressive forces not only in Pakistan but internationally. [socialist\_pakistan\_news@yahooogroup.s.com]

While in 2002 the [LPP website](#) was the most read political website in Pakistan, it could not maintain the momentum. However it still has a solid readership and is a good source of information about trade unions, the

peasant movement and progressive views.

Since 1997 LPP supporters have regularly printed a weekly magazine [Mazdoor Jeddojuhd](#). For the prior 17 years appeared as a monthly. The weekly has a small subscription-based print edition within Pakistan and is widely read in an on-line edition within Pakistan and across the globe.

## International Solidarity Essential

LPP is very keen to participate in international and regional movements and alliances. It has been part of the anti-globalization movement and has helped to organize some of the largest anti-imperialist demonstrations and rallies from a progressive point of view in Pakistan. Our supporters have participated in all the World Social Forums since 2004 when WSF Mumbai was held. This work included the Pakistan Social Forum, and led the way, in 2006, for the World Social Forum Karachi.

During its initial year of existence, the LPP was part of an International called the Committee for Workers International (CWI), but left within the year. Since then it has established close links with several international trends, groups and movements including the Democratic Socialist Party Australia, the Scottish Socialist Party, the Fourth International (FI), as well as both the LIT and UIT in Latin America. With others who left the CWI, the LLP formed a Socialist discussion group at [socialistdiscussion@yahooogroups.com]. We have also established close links with Swedish trade unions and lately with the Social Democratic Party Sweden in the Gothenburg and Kalmar districts. The LPP became a permanent observer of the FI in 2004.

## Preparations for 5th Congress

The LPP has a proud record of its democratic internal life. We have held

all our congress in a timely manner. The 5th Congress will take place 27-29 January 2010. For the first time the LPP will conclude the congress with a mass rally. Two labour and peasant movements have joined together to organize this event; we anticipate an attendance of 30,000. If that happens, it will be the largest gathering of Left forces in Punjab within recent times. On 29th January an international workers peasant's conference is planned at famous Dhobi Ghat Ground Faisalabad. These events are taking place at a time when the parties of the rich have abandoned the working people of Pakistan. They have been left on the mercy of the sheer exploitation of so called free market and the imperialist aggression. Prices are going up and there is no wage increase.

The religious and right wing parties are giving full political support to all the violent actions of the religious fanatics on the name of fighting "imperialism". The daily drone attacks by Americans are giving some political justifications to the fanatics to carry on. The space for progressive politics has been saturated by the conflict of right wing parties of the rich and the religious fundamentalism.

The LPP congress and the convening of the mass conference of workers and peasants is an effort to snatch the lost space.

The conference on 29th January is been organized jointly by Labour Qaumi Movement and Anjuman Mozareen Punjab, the two most militant and mass organizations of the workers and peasants. There is no parallel to the struggle of these two movements in different districts of Punjab.

The main leaders of different Left and social organizations and movements are speaking at the conference.

One of the main highlight of the conference will be mass participation of working class women. Workers and peasants are bringing their families to the event.

The main aim of the three days event is to build a progressive space in Pakistani politics. It is new beginning.

This is our answer to the rise of religious fundamentalism. Mass mobilizations of the working class will strengthen their voice and empower them to challenge for their rights. We all are making financial contribution to these events by all mean. Day and night is been spent by many to build the event. However, we are in desperate need of raising at least 500,000 Rupees (\$6000) during the next one week.

We have no rich backers. We need your support now. We could have raised this amount earlier. However, the children and the families of the four comrades who died on 13 December 2009 in a road accident became a priority of ours. We have raised nearly one million Rupees and an appeal to raise three million is still on its way.

This is an emergency call to all our friends and supports to come to help us. We have all the hope of raising this amount within this week.

---

**Please send your amount on line if you are in Pakistan to**

Labour Party Pakistan

Account number 2679-3

MCB Bank,

Beadon Road Branch 0949 Lahore

*From outside Pakistan*

Account Title: Labour Education Foundation

Account Number: 01801876

Swift: ALFHPKKALDA

Bank: BANK ALFALAH LTD., LDA PLAZA Branch, KASHMIR ROAD, LAHORE, PAKISTAN

Or please send through any mean you consider is ok.

**Appeal by**

Nisar Shah, Farooq Tariq, Nazli Jave  
Labour Party Pakistan  
Yousaf Baluch, Nasir Mansoor  
Chairman National Trade Union Federation

Azra Shad, Bushra Khaliq,  
Women Workers Help Line

Khalid Mehmood, Niaz Khan  
Labour Education Foundation

Kashis Aslam  
Progressive Youth Front

Mian Abdul Qayum, Aslam Meraj,  
Nasim  
Labour Qaumi Movement

Nadeem Ashraf, Mehr Abdul Sattar  
Anjaman Mozareen Punjab

Please indicate your support to  
farooqtariq@hotmail.com  
or call 0300 8411845

## **Daniel Bensaïd, a revolutionary for our times**

**14 January 2010, by Josep María Antentas**

In Daniel we have lost one of the most prominent figures of the European anti-capitalist left. Daniel Bensaïd was one of the founders of the French JCR in 1966 and the Communist League in 1969 (later renamed the LCR in 1973 after being banned). A key figure in the events of May 1968 through the March 22 movement, he remained faithful to his revolutionary commitment until the end of his life, unlike many illustrious names of his generation who became "repentant rebels".

A leader of the LCR until the early 1990s, he played a key role in the life and development of what would become one of the most emblematic formations of the European revolutionary left. A militant internationalist, he was a leader of the Fourth International for a long period

and devoted much his political activity to internationalist work, playing a key role in the FI's construction in several countries. In his memoirs published in 2003, *Une lente impatience* [A Slow Impatience], he noted, humbly: "leadership inspires in me a holy repulsion: I prefer to do than to have done. This could be due to egalitarian virtue. It may also, equally, be the sign of a disorganised inability to delegate and confer trust."

Daniel Bensaïd's influence marked several generations of revolutionary militants in France and around the world. For my generation, for those that joined the same current and project as Daniel in the 2000s, he was an irreplaceable reference. For us, the anti-capitalist left activists forged in the heat of the anti-globalization movement, the student movement, the

revolutionary youth camps, the reference point of the French LCR, the debates of the European anti-capitalist left, Daniel was our most beloved and respected international figure.

We felt an irrepressible attraction for somebody capable of writing about Walter Benjamin or elucidating on the political alliances of the LCR, publishing a work on Joan of Arc or talking about the dilemmas of the Brazilian left before Lula, or sympathizing with the thought of Derrida or August Blanqui. In Daniel Bensaïd a man of action, an international political leader and an intellectual of the first level converged. A combination of qualities that made him very unique in the panorama of the international left and one of those figures of lasting impact.

The Daniel Bensaïd that some knew

was a man of precarious health and fragile appearance, "spectral" some would say, but possessed of an iron strength and will. Daniel was a good sort, friendly and affectionate, modest, personable, always willing to listen and talk a while. Someone we always invited to the most special occasions. The last time was to participate with us in Madrid and Barcelona in our commemorations of the events of May 1968 organized under the title "May 1968-May 2008, we continue the fight".

Since the 1990s, sick and in ill health, he devoted his efforts to theoretical and intellectual work, withdrawing from the tasks of political leadership, without therefore renouncing militant activity and his multiple commitments, talks and travels. At a time of disclaimers, capitulations and bewilderment, his voice helped maintain an essential reference for moving forward. He undertook a huge task of renewal and revitalization of Marxist thought, leaving a vast written legacy and countless books, published with an unsurprising frequency. Taking advantage of militant meetings in Paris to drop by the La Brèche bookstore and get hold of the "latest" by Bensa became over the years one of my most enjoyable routines. Daniel also encouraged publishing projects, collections, and a tremendous work of intellectual discussion and search for convergence between different critical traditions through the magazine *Contre-Temps*.

He devoted much of his time to the study of Marx's thought in works such as *Marx l'intempestif* (1995 - published in English as *Marx For Our Times*), or its companion volume *La Discordance des temps* (1995), both resulting from teaching and study work during the 1980s, in his position as a lecturer in philosophy at the University of Paris VIII, at a time of retrogression and decline of leftist thinking. However, published on the eve of the November-December 1995 strikes against the Juppé plan that marked a return of mobilization and the social question, both works presented a stimulating reading of Marx, liberated from dogmas and fetishes. They are, possibly, his most significant works.

He would continue his study of Marx in multiple books. In 2001 a meticulous biography, *Passion Karl Marx* was published, with reproductions of the correspondence between Marx and Engels and images and illustrations of the era, where he sought to "put in context the critical spirit of a time, emphasizing the resonances between the globalization of then and now" and proposed we read *Capital* as "the dialectical elucidation of the mysteries of capital in the manner of Edgar Allen Poe's Dupin or Sherlock Holmes: a crime has been committed; surplus value has been stolen; and the booty passes from hand to hand, is split between accessories, rascals, money launderers, so that we forget its origin...."

He also published studies on concrete aspects of Marx's thought, like the complete critical edition of *On the Jewish question*, a study of Marx's writings about the theft of firewood, taken as a starting point for analyzing the dynamics of contemporary globalization, or a developed analysis of Marx's political thought, *Penser l'Inconnu* (2008), a critical edition of the texts of Marx and Engels on the Commune. In it he portrayed Marx as a "brilliant analyst of conjunctures and a virtuoso of politics, not as a simple effect or reflection of economic and social determinations, but as the art of mediation".

Recently, he published a presentation of some of Marx's texts on economic crises where he reviews Marx's interpretation of the nature of crisis, and begins a strategic discussion of the thinking of Keynes and Marx on this topic, looking for their points of confluence and divergence: "as a political project as a whole, and not as a sum of partial measures, Keynes's programme openly proclaims, aims to save capital from his own demons. That of Marx aims to overthrow it."

One of his last books was a pleasing introduction to Marx, *Marx mode d'emploi* (2009) published with illustrations by the artist Charb, well received by militants of the NPA and by youth keen to venture into the "critical adventure" of Marx's thought. Conceived as "an invitation to discovery and controversy", not

intended to "restore the true thought of an authentic Marx" but "to propose one of his possible modes of use", reviewing Marx's ideas about the logic of capitalism, communism, political organization, internationalism, the relationship between humans and nature and so on.

Much of his work is marked by its concern for questions of strategy, rethinking revolutionary strategy for the 21st century. He dedicated much of his thought to analysis of the "spatial and temporal transformations of political activity" within the framework of capitalist globalisation. In *Le Pari Melancolique* (1997) he addressed the "metamorphosis and mismatches in the world" in the light of globalization, defending the need, before a "century ending on the ruins of its inaugural hopes", a politics of commitment and "support for revolution" based "in the act, not in the evidence of the secured solution, but in the irreducible contingency of the hypothesis". A revolution "not as model, prefabricated schema, but as strategic hypothesis and ruling horizon".

In *Le Sourire du Spectre* (2000), he considered on the 150th anniversary of the Communist Manifesto the possibilities of a recurrence of the "spectre of communism", at a time where already the resistance to globalization that buried the "end of history" discourse of Fukuyama and neoliberal triumphalism was emerging. His *Irreductibles. Théorèmes de la résistance à l'air du temps* (2001) presented in the form of five elegantly written theorems attacked the "cynical rhetoric of resignation", and defended the "irreducible strength of indignation, which is exactly the opposite of the customary and of resignation.. Indignation is a start. A way to stand up and make progress. One is outraged, is disturbed, and then we'll see. One is outraged passionately, before even finding the reasons for this passion".

*Resistances. Essai de Taupologie générale* continues this search for a politics of resistance, through the figure of the mole, a "metaphor for someone who moves stubbornly, for underground resistance and sudden

eruption "." Starting in the period of Victorian globalization and critically linking the thought of Althusser, Badiou, Derrida, and Negri, the book examines what the conditions of a revolutionary politics are and develops the "strategic notion of crisis" understood as "a moment of decision and truth, when history hesitates before the point of a fork "."

Strategic thinking also has a central place in *Éloge de la Politique Profane* (2009) an important work which analyzes the transformation of the basic political categories of Modernity, the "eclipse of politics" and "strategic reason" before the neoliberal offensive, and discusses the various "contemporary utopias", specific to the periods subsequent to great defeats "where the possible and the necessary are no longer points in contact"

Within the framework of this concern for strategy, he also entered with passion into writing about the "anti-globalization" movement and the controversies within it, arguing with authors as Negri or Holloway, in works such as *Changer le monde* (2003), or analyzing the historical significance of the movement in *Le nouvel internationalisme* (2003). He participated in significant debates in several World and European Social Forums and countless international meetings, seminars and initiatives linked to "anti-globalization".

In spite of this great intellectual effort he continued his involvement with the life of the LCR and the Fourth International and the vicissitudes of the international left. He also devoted much of his work to discussing issues of political orientation in France, criticizing Jospin's plural left in *Lionel, qu'as tu fait de notre victoire* (1997), to delving into discussions on identity in the context of the crisis of the French Fifth Republic in *Fragments Mécréants* (2005), and polemicising with characters such as Bernard-Henri Lévy and the "new philosophers" against whom he wrote *Un nouveau théologicien B-H. Levy* (2007).

In 2003 he published his memoirs, *Une lente impatience*, tracing his personal, political and intellectual itinerary. Modestly, he defined his

book as a "simple testimony to help understand what we have done and what we want". Looking back he stated: "We have sometimes, even often, been wrong, and on quite a few things. At least we have not made a mistake either in combat or in enemies." A combat he wrote about with his usual prose of high literary quality, covering the events of May 1968 and its aftermath, the Algerian war, the times "when history was biting us on the neck", the fight against the Franco dictatorship, the figures of the left in Latin America, the neoliberal restoration, the rise of the global justice movement or the state of contemporary Marxist thought.

Memory, transmission and inheritance occupied much of the writings and militant concerns of Daniel Bensaid. He polemicalised with François Furet and authors of the *Black Book on Communism* and its historical falsifications, and devoted his work *Qui est le juge?* (1999) to questioning the "Court of history" and the "temptations of appeal to the old fetishes, History or Humanity" rather than the acceptance "of the fragile uncertainty of human judgment" and "deciphering the subtlety of the three handed game between legal justice, historical justice and political justice."

Among his multiple and varied intellectual influences we can highlight Walter Benjamin, to whom he devoted the book *Walter Benjamin Sentinelle Messianique* (1990), part of a trilogy beginning with *Moi, the revolution* (1989) published on the occasion of the bicentenary of the French Revolution, and finishing with *Jeanne de Guerre lasse* (1991), devoted to Joan of Arc. If the trilogy could seem far from Marx, Daniel indicated in his biography that actually "it - the dates show it - follows a parallel path to better return to the issue of communism, the untamed road of the heretics, by the detour of messianic rationality along the steep path of a logic of the event."

He became an unquestionable moral and intellectual authority, acting as a transmitter, a bridge between two different epochs providing an invaluable political-intellectual reference by which we incorporate ourselves in the completed militancy

of the "short 20th century". He never missed an appointment at the LCR summer universities or the revolutionary youth camps where his educational talks were always the stellar moment that everyone anticipated. "Les Trotskysmes" (2002 - published in English as "Who Are the Trotskyists?") revealed the trajectory of a minority current in the history of the labour movement, at the beginning of a new century, "that will not be an effortless theoretical and practical advance", claiming "a true Trotskyism whose "inheritance without practice is, without doubt, insufficient, but at less necessary to undo the amalgam between Stalinism and communism, to free the living from the dead and turn the page on disappointments."

He participated in the birth of the NPA, accompanying the passage of the LCR to the new project. Shortly before its creation he wrote in *Penser Agir!* (2008): "in proportion to the closeness of the time of passing from the Ligue to the new party, there are those who question ever more insistently the dozens of 'veterans', founders of the League in 1969 or those expelled from the Communist students, the JCR, if they do not feel nostalgia to see it disappear to grow into a new force. To answer them I would say that we rather have the feeling (and a bit of pride, let us face it) of work realised and a road travelled. It was much longer than we imagined in the youthful enthusiasm of the 1960s and not easy to stay so long being 'revolutionaries without revolution.'"

Daniel has died a year after the creation of the NPA, where he would have had a major role to play in training of its militants, in the consolidation of the strategic and programmatic framework of the party and the transmission of a heritage "without directions for use" to militant generations. He summarized better than anyone the objectives of the new project, to create: "a new party, as faithful to the dominated and the dispossessed as the right is to the owners and the rulers, that makes no apologies for being anti-capitalist and wanting to change the world." On the eve of its foundation he published with Olivier Besancenot "Prenons Parti! Pour le socialisme du XXIème siècle" (2009) a good book for arming anti-



capitalist activists with ideas, proposals and strategic perspectives.

The last time I saw Daniel was at the first summer university of the NPA in Port Leucate last August, where he gave several talks and presented the Société Louise Michel, a foundation set up in order to create a pluralist

space for theoretical reflection and debate. We talked about the NPA, our recent campaign in the European elections, and the possibility of a Castilian edition of his book *Marx, mode d'emploi*, and his critical edition of Marx's texts on economic crises. Despite the persistent disease, and the fact that he looked weak and tired,

nothing presaged the tragic outcome that came only a few months later.

It is hard to accept that Daniel is no longer with us. His death is a hard blow to all those who valued his presence, his books and his talks, one of the most stimulating elements of our militant adventure.

## A revolutionary who fought steadfastly

14 January 2010, by **Gilbert Achcar**



One of the key figures of the French student revolt of 1968, Bensaïd was a prominent founding member of the Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire (LCR), along with Alain Krivine. He remained in the leadership of this organisation, an affiliate of the Trotskyist Fourth International, until he was struck by illness.

Bensaïd continued nevertheless to play a central role as a contributor to the political thinking of his movement, accompanying its recent mutation into the 10'000-member Nouveau Parti Anticapitaliste (NPA) represented by Olivier Besancenot, the well-known young postal worker and occasional presidential candidate.

Daniel Bensaïd was an embodiment of the French revolutionary tradition – one of his books published on the 200th anniversary of the 1789 revolution bore the title *Moi la Révolution* (I, the Revolution). He was fond of radicalised Jacobinism – i.e. the revolutionary legacy represented by Babeuf and Blanqui – which he combined with libertarian sympathies in reference to the 1871 Paris Commune.

Yet he was deeply internationalist. He was especially involved in developments within the radical left in Latin America through the Fourth International, thanks to his command of Spanish and Portuguese. He saw in Russian Bolshevism the heir of radical Jacobinism and defended Lenin's legacy against the sweeping critical reassessments that followed the collapse of the Soviet Union.

He was also a fierce representative of this very specific feature of French radicalism: thorough secularism. Two of his latest books bore titles referring to this aspect of his thinking: *Fragments mécréants* (An Unbeliever's Discourse) and *Eloge de la politique profane* (In Praise of Secular Politics).

His most important theoretical work, *Marx l'intempestif*, was published in 1995. The book was translated into English and published in 2002 under the title *A Marx for Our Times: Adventures and Misadventures of a Critique*. It offered an unconventional reading of Marx, clearing him of the accusation of determinism. The book signalled Bensaïd's recognition as a public intellectual, a frequent author of op-eds in *Le Monde* and *Libération*, and a regular guest of intellectual radio and TV talk shows.



Bensaïd's first book was published in 1968, co-authored with Henri Weber (afterward a Socialist Party member of Senate). Its title, *Mai 68*, une répétition générale (May 68: A Dress Rehearsal), spoke volumes about the spirit of the time. After his book for the bicentennial of the French Revolution, he published works on Walter Benjamin and on the figure of Joan of Arc, the latter work influenced by Charles Péguy's interpretation. This seemingly eclectic range of topics reflected the melancholy created by the post-1989 international political shift, with the ideological assault on Marxism and the triumphalism of the global neoliberal drive. One of Bensaïd's later books was indeed titled *Le Pari mélancolique* (The Melancholic Wager).

Ever since he contracted AIDS, believing that his days were numbered, Bensaïd set out to write and publish at an impressive speed: close to 20 books of various sizes and on various topics in 15 years, from his 1995 book on Marx until his death. At the same time he confronted death most bravely: a revolutionary who fought steadfastly to his very last breath.

# Daniel Bensaïd: militant, intellectual, friend

12 January 2010, by **François Sabado**

He was one of the founders of the Jeunesse Communiste Révolutionnaire (JCR - Revolutionary Communist Youth) and the Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire (LCR - Revolutionary Communist League, French section of the Fourth International)



A leader of the May 68 movement, he was one of those people with a very sure feeling for political initiative. He had been one of the leaders of the 22nd March Movement. Grasping the dynamic of social movements, in particular the link between the student movement and workers' general strike, he was also one of those who understood the necessity of building a political organisation, of accumulating the forces for building a revolutionary party.

The quality of Daniel's intelligence was to combine theory and practice, intuition and political understanding, ideas and organisation. He could, at the same time, lead a stewarding force and write a theoretical text.

He was one of those who inspired a fight which combined principles and political boundaries with openness and a rejection of sectarianism. Daniel, his own political convictions deeply rooted in him, was always the first to want to discuss, to try to convince, to exchange opinions, and to renew his own thinking.

As a member of the daily leadership of

the LCR from the end of the 1960s to the beginning of the 1990s, he played a decisive role in building a project, an orientation which combined daily activity with a revolutionary outlook. A good part of his theoretical and political work was focused on questions of strategy, and the lessons of the main historical revolutionary experiences.

Daniel was profoundly internationalist. He played a key role in the building of the LCR in the Spanish state in the Franco period. In those years he played a major role within the Fourth International, in particular following closely developments in Latin America and Brazil. He contributed largely to renewing our vision of the world and to preparing us for the upheavals of the end of the 1980s.



Revolutionary election campaign  
1969: Daniel Bensaïd, Alain  
Krivine, Henri Weber

From the 1990s until the end, while continuing his political fight he concentrated on theoretical work: the history of political ideas; Marx's Capital; the balance sheet of the twentieth century and its revolutions, first of all the Russian revolution; ecology; feminism; identities and the Jewish question; developing new policies for the revolutionary left faced with capitalist globalisation. He regularly attended and followed the Social Forum and the global justice

movement.

Daniel ensured the historical continuity of open, non-dogmatic, revolutionary Marxism and adaptation to the changes of the new era, with the perspective of revolutionary transformation of society always in his sights.

Although seriously ill he overcame it for years, thinking, writing, working on his ideas, never refusing to travel, to speak at rallies or attend simple meetings. Daniel set himself the task of checking the solidity of our foundations and passing them on to the young generation. He put his heart and all his strength into it. His contributions, at the International Institute in Amsterdam, in the summer universities of the LCR and then of the NPA, at the Fourth International youth camp, made an impact on thousands of comrades. Transmitting the experience of the LCR to the NPA, Daniel decided to accompany the foundation of our new organisation with a relaunch of the review *Contretemps* and forming the "Louise Michel" society as a place for discussion and reflection of radical thought.

Daniel was all that. And in addition he was warm and convivial. He loved life.

Although many "68ers" turned their coats and abandoned the ideals of their youth, Daniel abandoned none of them; he didn't change. He is still with us.

*Translated by Penelope Duggan*

## Peasants' movement in no mood to disappear

## 12 January 2010, by **Bushra Khaliq**

The meeting was arranged in an open venue, decorated with red flags. Over 3000 tenants, men, women and children were present braving chilly, windy and foggy weather. They had come there on tractor trolleys, motor cycles, cycles and donkey carts. Women were less in numbers this time than men, which was unusual as women have always been in great numbers on such meetings and prominent feature of all AMP activities.

From Lahore we 3 comrades, myself, Nazli and Maqsood attended this meeting and spoke on the occasion to register our continuous solidarity and support with the movement. The most important thing one can feel was the degree of determination on the faces of the tenants. They were as determined today to get their land rights as 10 years ago. The worst degree of state repression by Musharraf regime could not down their morale.

The historic tenants' movement started in year 2000 is now ten-year old. The decade of their long struggle is studded with matchless sacrifices, rigorous resistance and unwavering determination. It may be recalled that over one million tenants are struggling

against Rangers and military (owners of farms) over the control of 68,000 acres of highly cultivable land which tenants have been tilling for the last 100 years.

The meeting was a clear manifestation that tenants are in no mood to disappear in the face of the state oppression. If we look at the social and political impacts of this movement these are significant in nature. The movement has helped generate new dynamics of gender power and political discourse. During the last 10 years, the movement has positively changed the gender relations in favor of women in a feudal dominated society. Women are now more empowered, out of boundary walls of the homes to play their due and important political role. Besides this a new layer of young tenants leadership has also emerged on the political scene and making local ruling elite to feel their strong presence. They are now major political actors in their local constituencies.

A cursory glance at the 10 year classical struggle also compels one to recall how peaceful tenants and their brave women fought for their land rights. This is truly a unique example at least in South Asia. These tenants

faced the Musharraf regime and its repressive tactics, refused to retreat and forced Rangers to halt their oppression.

In my speech I urged the Punjab government to distribute all the state agriculture cultivable lands among the landless local peasants and women peasants be given priority in any formula recently going to be devised to hand over these lands among peasants in Punjab.

I also highlighted the role of women in the ongoing movement as they become fully aware of their importance being major stake holders. From town to town and village to village they have taken up the struggle of land right with equal burden of socio-economic responsibilities.

I emphasized the importance of women's participation in movements to start, sustain and win. I told them that the movement is a beautiful story of resistance in front of the brutal state forces. It is an unstoppable narrative of sacrifices, arrests, tortures, restrictions. And still you are determined to carry on the struggle till the fulfillment of genuine demands.