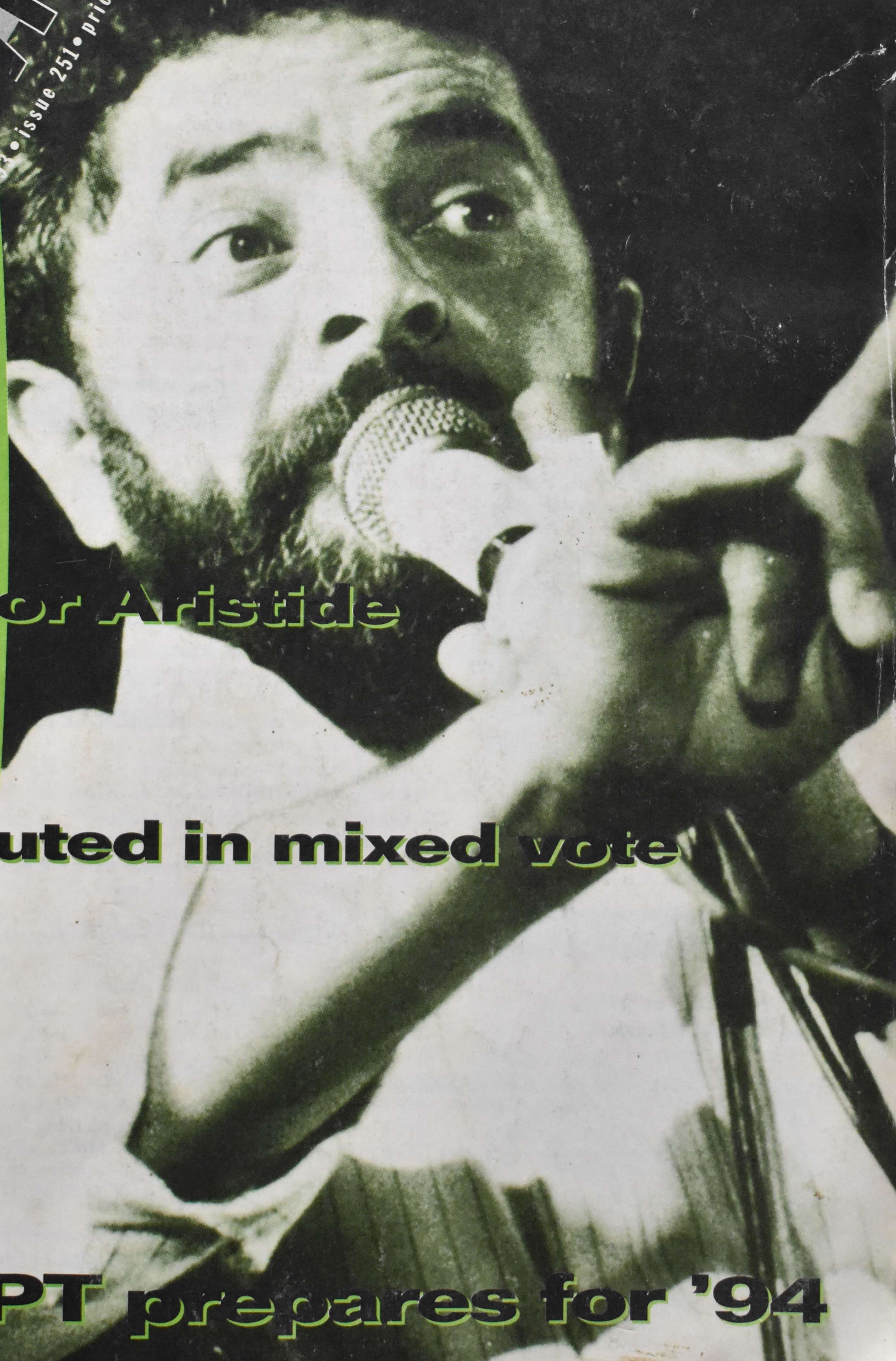


international

VIEWPOINT

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Waiting for Aristide

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José Borrás Medina

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

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

In 1958 he became a militant, joining the Communist Group which would later give rise to the Revolutionary Communist League (LCR), the first organisation in Spain to affiliate to the Fourth International since the 1930s.

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

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

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

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

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



Sri Pathmanathan

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

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

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

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

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

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

Senegal

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

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

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

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