

ANIMO MAGAZINE - NICE TO MEET YOU! ::

Special International Edition

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:: IN THIS ISSUE ::

- 2 - Welcome
- 2 - Actions & Campaigns
- 3 - Young people for solidarity in Europe
- 3 - Red is green: for a nuclear phase-out
- 4 - Corporate Social Responsibility?
- 4 - Who's afraid of migrants?



Women on top



National Congress - Antwerp



The HANG GANG campaign



Take a break



Balloons for solidarity - Leuven



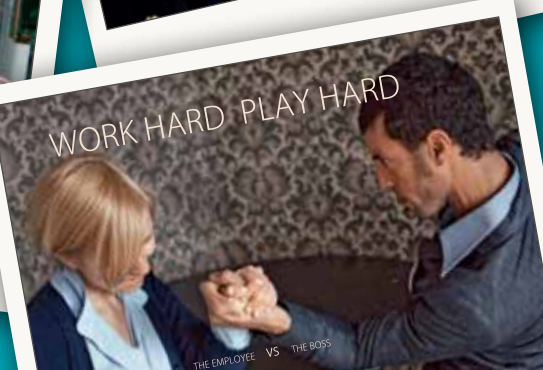
Daddies for more babytime



Fighting for jobs - Car Salon Brussels



Spot the 'bad Fleming'-button



Protect your ears



HELLO!

In this international edition of our magazine Boomerang you can catch a glimpse of what young socialism in Belgium is all about. **Animo** young left is the youth movement of the Flemish socialist party in Belgium. Belgian politics is complicated, but we are not! That is why we work together with our French speaking colleagues. Together we stand strong.

Animo is a vibrant and energetic political movement. We give young people a taste of politics from a left and socialist perspective. Together with its members **Animo** seeks to explore politics and raises awareness about the life and opinions of young people. As a political youth organization **Animo** builds a fair, social en democratic society.

Street activism lies at the heart of **Animo**. Campaigning against injustice and for a better and more social future is one of our main goals. Together with more than hundred local branches we meet up for debate, congresses, masterclasses, and much more.

But we look further. Injustice does not stop at national borders. Migration, human rights, development, international environmental policy: issues that can only be dealt with through international cooperation. Exchanging ideas with comrades abroad is not only inspiring, but makes us stronger as a worldwide movement.

Have fun reading about our actions and opinions. Meet **Animo**, meet the young left fire!

WANT MORE?

- ➔ Visit our website www.animoweb.be, learn some Dutch to understand our opinion pieces or just look at the pictures and shop around.
- ➔ Meet us at European and International events of socialist and social-democratic youth
- ➔ E-mail us info@animoweb.be to visit our headquarters in the heart of Brussels (Grasmarkt 105/44, 1000 Brussels)

ACTIONS & CAMPAIGNS

The range of Animo campaign topics is wide, from socio-economic themes to anti-nationalism, housing, youth culture, feminism, LGBTQ rights and much more... Below you can find some of our most successful campaigns.

IK BEN EEN SLECHTE VLAMING

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I'm a 'bad' Fleming

It is with great pride that **Animo** started the club of 'bad' Flemings... With the campaign 'I'm a 'bad' Fleming' we aim at addressing the rise of nationalism in Flanders. Those who go against the hegemonic discourse of Flemish nationalism are all too easily put into the corner of the 'bad' Fleming.

We think it is possible to be Flemish as well as Belgian and European and world citizen. We see language and culture as important, but find this independent Flemish state completely unnecessary. Most importantly, we believe in solidarity across borders. And we call on all people who think like us to join the club of 'bad' Flemings.

I'm a 'bad' Fleming... because I have a constructive vision! The world is facing many challenges: from economic crisis and poverty, to discrimination and the decay of our environment. For all these international problems with a local impact the answer cannot be found in Flemish nationalism or separatism.

I'm a 'bad' Fleming... because I believe in solidarity! Refusing economic aid and closing off solidarity mechanisms to support poorer regions: a despicable idea that completely undermines the European ideal and international solidarity.

I'm a 'bad' Fleming... and I'm not the only one! 82% of all Flemish want Belgium to remain.

Hire Me!

'Hire me!' is **Animo's** campaign for youth employment. We want policy makers to invest in young people. Moreover, we want to empower young people, which is why we are urging them to emphasize their skills and talents as young people. Our message is positive yet urgent: hire young people now.

Young people want to work, but they gradually become discouraged in their attempts to find a job.

Young people are not cheap labour forces that can be disposed of easily. There are limits to the number of unpaid internships, temporary jobs and short-term contracts a young person can go through.

We recognize that, we, young people may lack experience. However, we have a lot more to offer than experience! That is why we urge all young people to emphasize their talents and skills as young people. Things that can certainly be added to our CVs: Motivated. Eager to learn. Fresh and creative.

What would the world be without young energy? Not much. So hire us!

THE HANG GANG: hang out and have fun!

Animo defends the right of young people to hang out. With our campaign, 'THE HANG GANG' we want to make a stand for young people and their right to be present in public spaces. Moreover, we demand more public spaces for young people. Join THE HANG GANG and reclaim the streets!

Animo's concrete action points for cities and local communities: we need more space for young people:

- ➔ A friendly environment to be young! Hanging out in the streets is free, spontaneous, social, easily accessible. Invest in urban planning with an eye for young people: more green, open spaces, places for recreation and a youth centre in each local community.
- ➔ Listen to the 'unruly' youth! Give young people a voice at each governmental level and certainly when decisions will impact their lives, their communities and places to hang out.
- ➔ Tolerance! Young people and children are part of our society, they come out on the streets and they like to play outside. Stimulate tolerance through actions and campaigns.
- ➔ Strengthen community work! Hanging out in public spaces is a social and not a criminal phenomenon. We need more investments in community work instead of in police surveillance in order to ensure a genuine feeling of safety.



THE HANG GANG

Female Orgasm... I care!

With the campaign 'Female Orgasm... I care!' **Animo** wants to focus on the topic of female sexuality, by calling on women and men to fight for women's right to pleasure. Women's pleasure should not be inferior to that of men. And let's be honest, everyone is a fan of the female orgasm.

Research shows that more than half of all young women fake their orgasms. Others don't know how to reach orgasm. Men are open to women's desires, but sometimes don't pay enough attention to it or they just don't know where to start. To many, the female orgasm is still shrouded in the unknown and is surrounded by many clichés and stereotypes.

Female orgasm... I dare. Female orgasm... I care!



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Young people for solidarity in Europe

The voice of young people fighting for jobs is getting louder. What happens in Spain has an impact on all of Europe. Animo calls for solidarity and action in the Belgian national newspapers. Read Animo's article as published in 'De Standaard' on the 1st of June 2011.

For weeks, young people have been occupying the Puerta del Sol Square in Madrid, Spain. They are there because they want a change in politics, a different world, and above all, at last a fair chance at decent employment. Understandable, in a country where 40% of all young people is unemployed. In our own country too, more and more young people are showing their discontent. In Brussels young people are out on the streets to express their dismay at the current political and social immobility. If elder statesmen from our party, such as Louis Tobback, then conclude from this that the voice of young people is 'too vague', then I do not feel as if they are talking about us at all. I would argue that the voice of young people is just not being listened to enough.

All those who reduce the Spanish protest to a meaningless demonstration of a silent generation are wrong. The challenges we are facing as young people are serious ones: a decent job for everyone, and this in the face of a very high youth unemployment, rising government debt, a lowering of salaries and massive cuts in social security. Young people are fully aware that their welfare is in danger. Young people want to work, so that they can contribute to society instead of being dependent on it. They want solidarity, and not division and bickering among politicians.

In 1968 people demonstrated against wrong decisions being taken, today we are denouncing the fact that no decisions are being taken at all. Therefore it is only reasonable to say that something should happen instead of nothing. However, even this is too much for our politicians. Nothing is happening and political immobility is at its height. To see the Spanish protests as an attack on the left is incorrect. Young people are protesting for a better future. And it is not the Spanish left-wing government that is to blame here, but rather, a powerless Europe.

The Spanish are, as many other Europeans, the victims of a crisis that goes beyond the power of their own national governments. A few years ago, Spain had an unemployment rate of only 8%. But then the global economic turmoil started and Spain had to make spending cuts under pressure of Europe. Result: soaring unemployment, which mainly affects the average Spaniard.

There is no shortage of progressive ideas to get out of this crisis. Imagine a Europe where solidarity and social welfare would be the central issues. Would there still be such a rush for spending cuts? Would the Spanish recession be as heavy? Would we have had to save the banks whose risky behavior got us into trouble in the first place? Ask Greece, Portugal and Ireland, about what they experienced. It is not just extremist parties such as the True Finns that are blocking reform, the 'moderate' right is also doing this, be it less openly.

The protests against the spending cuts in Spain are not meaningless and void. They are protests about real issues. They are protests of people with real demands, who are sick of the powerlessness of their national governments.

I refuse to believe that the current young generation – be it in Spain or in Belgium – is ill-mannered, conceited and apathetic. In my own organization, **Animo**, I see many young people that are motivated, energetic and idealistic. What we do lack as a generation, is the unity to truly push for change. Let us grab this opportunity that arises in Spain, but also the ever louder sounding voice of young people here in our own country to protest, united against the political and social immobility. Let us use this opportunity to shape the left-wing political agenda of tomorrow. Let us go for more ambitious solutions, that go beyond the easy discourse of longer working. We need more redistribution of wealth and not longer working. Let us fight, united and without setting up generations against each other, for keeping our social model, a model that has been fought for by generations before us, and all the rights that follow from it.

Anke Gittenauer
President Animo young left

Image Reporters

Red is green : for a nuclear phase-out

The environment, a socialist theme? We are convinced it is, because the key issue here is also solidarity: across nations and generations. For instance, it is the people in the developing countries and the poor in our countries that will be hit the most by the negative consequences of climate change. In addition, they are the least to blame for causing climate change. The massive CO2 emissions that are at the root of climate change came from the industrialized world. In the developing countries there will be an increase in food scarcity, disease, homelessness and mass migration. In the richer countries the less well off, will have more trouble preparing themselves for the negative consequences of climate change. The nuclear debate also hinges on the issue of solidarity. In our opinion nuclear energy is not a viable option for the future, as it will unnecessarily burden future generations with toxic waste.

Last year, **Animo** young left reacted to the fact that our government would invest 60 million euros in the Nuclear Research Centre (SCK) and 21 million in the Institute for Radioactive Elements. This decision already made the promise of a nuclear phase-out by 2025 impossible.

There are many myths about nuclear power:

Myth 1 ➡ Nuclear energy is safe. Nuclear waste remains dangerous for 240,000 years. **Animo** calls for solidarity with future generations, who will be burdened with this waste. 25 years ago, the nuclear disaster in Chernobyl took place. The UN estimates the death toll at 4000. NGOs like Greenpeace estimate the cumulative number of victims to be around 93,000.

Myth 2 ➡ Nuclear energy is cheap. On the contrary, it is really expensive. For instance, the money that will be invested in the SCK for the construction of a new research reactor amounts to 960 million euros over 10 years. This is money that could be better spent on renewable energy or energy efficiency. And then we haven't even taken into account the costs of a nuclear disaster. It is also a myth that nuclear power provides cheap energy for consumers. The European Commission and OECD state that energy prices in Belgium are among the highest in the EU, while we are also leading the ranks in terms of nuclear energy use.

Myth 3 ➡ Everyone uses nuclear power. All in all, nuclear power is a fairly marginal phenomenon in the world, as it accounts only for 2% of global energy use. In Belgium 51.8% of all energy we use comes from nuclear power plants. Only France is a bigger consumer of nuclear energy. There is also the myth that nuclear power is an endless source of energy. However, uranium reserves are limited. Then why do we invest so much money in an energy source with such an uncertain future and with so many risks? Many countries have already decided to stop investing in nuclear power or have simply never bothered with it.

Myth 4 ➡ We can't do without nuclear energy. We can, but in order to do so we will have to invest in alternatives right now and we will have to stop postponing change. This means we need to invest in solar energy, wind power (offshore wind farm plans in the North Sea), hydroelectric, cogeneration, biomass from organic waste material, etc.

Investing more in energy efficiency also offers huge potential for jobs, and this from transportation to manufacturing to construction (better insulation of houses).

Postponing change will only be an advantage to the nuclear lobby and quasi-monopolists such as Electrabel in Belgium. Therefore, **Animo's** wish list for an energy policy that is both affordable for citizens and environmentally friendly is:

- ➡ 100% green energy for all by 2020.
- ➡ Social maximum prices for electricity and gas, for everyone.
- ➡ The construction of a North Sea electricity grid that will connect the offshore wind farms in northern Europe. The eventual goal is for this grid to be connected with the solar panels in southern Europe, which allows countries with a surplus of energy to pass it along to countries where the demand is higher.

Animo rejects the idea of building new nuclear power plants. We need less short-term thinking and more long-term vision. In our opinion, the energy of the future should be clean, affordable, safe and accessible for everyone. **Animo** would like to see more emphasis on energy efficiency and smart investments in renewable energy. We see nuclear energy as expensive, polluting and certainly not a solution to the energy problem. We owe it to ourselves and future generations to invest in renewable energy.

Domino
Animo's green network



Image Reporters

Corporate Social Responsibility?

The biggest oil spill ever. One of the worst nuclear disasters in history. The biggest financial and economic crisis since the 1930's. An increase of extreme weather catastrophes due to climate change.



Images Reporters

The failure of governments to intervene

And there are more stories: in the US the deadliest mine disaster in 25 years occurred. Despite prior knowledge of this mine not complying to safety regulations. Worldwide millions of Toyota cars were withdrawn, because of a production mistake which caused deadly accidents. It was painful to read the internal emails from Toyota, boasting about successful efforts to stop a costly withdrawal of the faulty cars.

At telecoms giant France Telecom and at Foxconn, an electronics supplier for Apple, there were numerous suicides. At the French telecoms giant controversial reorganization measures and a bullying management style were to blame.

At Foxconn in China work circumstances were very poor. Some quotes from the Chinese workers at Foxconn: "Life is meaningless." "I don't find any pleasure in my job and I feel like a machine." "It is hard to

make friends if it is forbidden to talk during work." The same complaints from people, all over the world. The same problems, with 1 and the same cause: the gigantic failure of governments to protect their citizens against the blind drive for profit of companies.

The myth of self-regulation

CSR or Corporate Social Responsibility is a nice word, which is supposed to mean that companies can make efforts to do business in an ethical and sustainable way. Unfortunately the word 'CSR' - and similarly 'green' and 'sustainable' - is in the best case just a small drop on a hot plate or in the worst case: a smokescreen and a PR strategy. CSR is certainly not self-regulation that can replace external regulation. Of course, exceptions can be made. Never doubt that 1 group of people, or 1 individual with an ideal can make a difference. Small businesses seem to be better environments for such initiatives than large companies and multinationals.

International action needed

All over the world, the same complaints, with the same origins. There is reason for hope in the sense that action is certainly possible: international cooperation on regulation, implementation, monitoring and where necessary: sanctions.

These are really not new recipes, but given the extent of the most recent disasters it is more than necessary to use these tools for action to the full. As the bank crisis and environmental disasters such as those in the Gulf of Mexico and in Fukushima demonstrate, the scale of our globalised economy and industry is so big that when things go wrong, they go very wrong.

Maite Morren
International Secretary Animo young left

Who's afraid of MIGRANTS?

According to a recent survey of research group Growth from Knowledge (GfK) on the most important concerns of Europeans, 18 percent of Belgians is most worried about immigration and integration. As such, Belgium occupies the third place in the European 'ranking' on this issue. What is this fear based on?

Shameful migration policy

The mismanagement of migration issues of the previous government has played an important role in strengthening the fear for a massive influx of new migrants. The new 'migration pact', as reached by the federal government in June 2009, nevertheless aimed at limiting immigration to Belgium through more strict policies on fake marriages, family reunification and nationality acquisition. The credibility of this agreement was, however, overshadowed by the persistent unclearness regarding the new regularisation criteria for 'illegal' migrants and the flagrant failing of the reception policy for asylum-seekers. Not the restrictive tone of the governments' proposed policy, but the images of overflowing asylum centres and irregular migrants on hunger strike caught the public eye. The reporting on these situations fed the idea that the government had lost all control over migration policy.

Me(di)a culpa

The media thus likewise has an important share in encouraging feelings of fear amongst the public opinion. All too often, no distinction is made between different groups of migrants; terms like irregular migrants, asylum-seekers, people seeking family reunification and migrants of the second and third generation are all used interchangeably with as a result that people (may) get the impression that Belgium is being 'swamped by foreigners'.

Most of the labour migrants from the fifties and sixties and their (grand)children, as well as many recognized refugees and successful applicants for family reunification, have meanwhile been granted Belgian nationality, but this reality does not receive enough attention in the media.

Most journalists moreover seem insufficiently aware of the fact that the usage of terms like 'migrant youngsters' in their reporting on criminality has a stigmatising effect for migrants in general; many of these youngsters have never set foot outside of Belgium - and are hence *stricto facto* no migrants - but the association between migration and crime is nonetheless made. (Extreme-)right parties obviously like to play on these misconceptions.

Integration = work in progress

The fear for 'newcomers' must also be connected with an 'old issue'; many people are annoyed by the fact that labour migrants from the fifties and sixties, and certainly their children and grandchildren, are still not sufficiently 'integrated'; they are more often unemployed, are doing less well in school, are still not fully fluent in the language, etc.

But who is responsible for the lack of socio-economic integration of three generations of migrants? Important to know is that the government only started to pursue an official integration policy in 1989.

Convinced of the fact that the so-called guest workers would eventually return home, the government did long not consider it necessary to organise any form on integration policies; there were no language classes for newcomers, no extra tutoring for children of migrants etc. Fortunately, the situation is different today.

In Flanders, newcomers are now even obliged to follow an 'integration course' to prepare them for life in our society. This does not change the problematic situation of 'oldcomers', yet to understand why so many migrants have difficulties to 'integrate' at school or on the labour market, it is crucial to remember that a better integration policy in the past may not have completely prevented the current issues but certainly diminished them substantially.

In order to correct the prevailing problems, both 'new' and 'original' Belgians will have to make an effort. Not only migrants have the responsibility to 'integrate'. The integration process does not happen alongside us; it is a two-way process. In a swiftly changing society, mutual understanding and tolerance are an absolute condition to realise an integrated whole. Integration is hence not a phenomenon we should be afraid of but to which we should all actively contribute.

Hannelore Goeman
National Board Member Animo young left