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**APPEAL TO SUPPORT THE
RESISTING GREEK PEOPLE and
its TRUTH COMMISSION ON
PUBLIC DEBT – FOR THE
PEOPLES’ RIGHT TO AUDIT
PUBLIC DEBT**

To the people of Europe and the whole world!

*To all the men and women who reject the politics of austerity
and are not willing to pay a public debt which is strangling*

us and which was agreed to behind our backs and against our interests.

We signatories to this appeal stand by the Greek people who, through their vote at the election of 25th January 2015, became the first population in Europe and in the Northern hemisphere to have rejected the politics of austerity imposed to pay an alleged public debt which was negotiated by those on top without the people and against the people. At the same time we consider that the setting up of the Greek Public Debt Truth Commission at the initiative of the president of the Greek Parliament constitutes a historic event, of crucial importance not only for the Greek people but also for the people of Europe and the whole world!

Indeed, the Truth Commission of the Greek Parliament, composed of volunteer citizens from across the globe, is destined to be emulated in other countries. First, because the debt problem is a scourge that plagues most of Europe and the world, and secondly because there are millions and millions of citizens who are rightly posing basic and fundamental questions about this debt:

“What happened to the money that made up this loan? What were the conditions attached to it? How much interest has been paid, at what rate? How much capital has been repaid? How was the debt allowed to accumulate without benefiting the people? Where did the capital go? What was it used for? How much was diverted, by whom, and how was this done?”

“And also: Who took out this loan and in whose name? Who granted the loan and what was their role? How did the state become involved? By what decision, taken with what authorisation? How did private debts become ‘public’? Who set up such inappropriate schemes, who pushed in this direction, who profited from them? Were offences or crimes committed with this money? Why has penal civil, criminal and administrative responsibility not been established?”

All these questions will be subjected to rigorous analysis by the commission, which has an official mandate to “gather all information relevant to the emergence and disproportionate increase in public debt, and to subject the data to scientific scrutiny in order to determine what part of that debt can be identified as illegitimate and illegal, odious or unsustainable, during the period of the Memoranda, from May 2010 to January 2015 as well as in the preceding years. It must also publish precise information – which must be accessible to all citizens, provide the evidence to back up public declarations, raise awareness among the Greek population, the international community and international public opinion, and finally draw up arguments and demands calling for cancellation of the debt.

We consider that it is the most basic democratic right of every citizen to demand clear and precise answers to these questions. We also consider that refusal to reply constitutes a denial of democracy and transparency on the part of those at the top who invented and use the “debt-system” to make the rich richer and the poor poorer. And even worse: we consider that by jealously keeping for themselves the monopoly right to decide the fate of society, those at the top deprive the overwhelming majority of citizens not only of their right to make decisions but above all of the right to take their destiny and the fate of humanity into their hands!

This is why we are launching the following urgent appeal to all citizens, social movements, ecological and feminist networks and movements, trade unions and political organizations that reject this ever less democratic and humane neo-liberal Europe: Show your solidarity with the Greek resistance by supporting in action the Greek Public Debt Truth Commission and its work in identifying that part of the Greek public debt which is illegal, illegitimate, odious and/or unsustainable.

Defend it against the outrageous attacks it has been subjected

to from all those forces in Greece and the rest of the world who have an interest in keeping the truth about the “debt-system” hidden from view.

Actively take part in the citizen debt audits that are being developed throughout Europe and elsewhere.

Share your support and solidarity on your social networks, since this support and international solidarity is the only way to thwart the ruling powers’ plan to suffocate Greece and the people who are fighting against our common enemy: the politics of austerity and the debt that is strangling us!

We are confronted by an experienced adversary, united, well-coordinated, armed with extraordinary powers and absolutely determined to pursue its offensive against every one of us to the bitter end: we who constitute the overwhelming majority of our societies. We cannot allow ourselves the luxury of resisting separately, each in his own corner. So let us unite our forces in a vast movement of solidarity with the Greek resistance and support for the Truth Commission of the Greek Parliament, multiplying such debt audit commissions everywhere where that is possible. Because the struggle of the Greek people is our struggle and their victory will be our victory. Our unity is our only strength

United we stand; divided we fall!

Click here GreekDebtTruthCommission.org to sign this Appeal

A first indicative list of 300 personalities supporting the Appeal

1. Immanuel Wallerstein, sociologist, historical social scientist, and world-systems analyst, USA
2. Noam Chomsky, MIT, USA
3. Ken Loach, film and television director, UK

4. Hugo Blanco Galdos, historico dirigente movimiento campesino indigeno, Peru
5. Etienne Balibar, philosophe, France
6. Frei Betto, writer, political activist, liberation theologian, Brazil.
7. Leonardo Boff, theologian and writer, Professor Emeritus of Ethics, Philosophy of Religion, and Ecology at the Rio de Janeiro State University, Brazil.
8. Gaillot Jacques, France, Évêque
9. Paul Jorion, Belgique, Détenteur de la chaire "Stewardship of Finance", Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Belgium
10. Padre Alex Zanotelli- missionario comboniano(Napoli-Italia)
11. Ada Colau (major candidate, Barcelona en Comú) Barcelona-Estat español
12. Susan George, honorary president of Attac-France; president of the Transnational Institute, France
13. Costas Isychos, Deputy Minister of National Defense, Greece
14. James Petras, retired Bartle Professor (Emeritus) of Sociology at Binghamton University in Binghamton, New York and adjunct professor at Saint Mary's University, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada who has published prolifically on Latin American and Middle Eastern political issues, USA
15. ALBIOL GUZMAN Marina parlamentaria electa del Parlamento Europeo en las Elecciones al Parlamento Europeo de 2014 por la coalición de La Izquierda Plural.
16. DE MASI Fabio, Ökonom und Politiker (Die Linke). Bei der Europawahl 2014 wurde er in das Europäische Parlament gewählt.

17. CHRYSOGONOS Kostas, European parliamentarian, Syriza, Greece
18. LOPEZ BERMEJO Paloma, sindicalista y política española. Fue elegida eurodiputada, Izquierda Plural, España
19. Ransdorf Milislav, Member of the European Parliament for the Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia, Czech Republic.
20. FORENZA Eleonora, , Parlamentaria Europea (L'Altra Europa con Tsipras) membro della segreteria nazionale del Partito della Rifondazione Comunista, Italia
21. Arcadi Oliveres, economista català i un reconegut activista per la justícia social i la pau, Catalunya
22. Jorge Riechmann, Jorge Riechmann, ensayista, poeta y profesor de filosofía moral (Universidad Autónoma de Madrid). Miembro del Consejo Ciudadano de Podemos en la Comunidad de Madrid.
23. Joanne Landy. Co-Director, Campaign for Peace and Democracy, New York City, USA
24. Tariq Ali, writer, UK
25. Mariana Mortagua, députée Bloco, Portugal
26. Cecilia Honorio, députée Bloco, Portugal
27. João Semedo, députée Bloco, Portugal
28. José Soeiro, député Bloco, Portugal
29. Jeffrey St. Clair, editor of CounterPunch, author of Born Under a Bad Sky and Grand Theft Pentagon, USA
30. Nico Cué, secrétaire général de la FGTB Métal, Belgium
31. Jaime Pastor, Profesor de Ciencia Política y editor de Viento Sur.

32. Michael Lowy, écrivain, professeur, France
33. Paolo Ferrero, segretario nazionale del partito della Rifondazione Comunista- Sinistra Europea, Italia
34. Farooq Tariq , General secretary , Awami Workers Party, Pakistan
35. Andrej Hunko, deputé Die Linke, Germany
36. Annette Groth, deputé Die Linke, Germany
37. Mireille Fanon Mendes France ,Expert ONU, France
38. István Mészáros, Professor Emeritus of Philosophy, University of Sussex, Hungary/UK
39. Pierre Khalifa, coprésident de la Fondation Copernic, France
40. Aminata Traore, ancienne ministre de la culture du Mali
41. CARMEN LAMARCA PEREZ, catedrática de Derecho Penal Universidad Carlos III de Madrid, España
42. Francisco Louçã, Bloco de Esquerda, Portugal
43. Pablo Micheli, secrétaire général de la CTA (Central de los Trabajadores Autónoma de la Argentina)
44. Joxe Iriarte "Bikila", Miembro de la coordinadora nacional de la organización vasca, Alternatiba y de la coalición Eh-Bildu.
45. Mary N. Taylor, member of editorial board, LeftEast website/Assistant Director, Center for Place, Culture and Politics, City University of New York., USA
46. Ahlem belhadj, pédopsychiatre; militante féministe, Tunisie
47. Achin Vanaik, founding member of the Coalition for Nuclear

Disarmament and Peace and a co-recipient of the International Peace Bureau's Sean McBride International Peace Prize for 2000, India

48. Michel Warschawski, écrivain-activiste, Israel

49. Eleonora Forenza, eurodeputata "L'Altra Europa con Tsipras", Italia

50. Besancenot Olivier, NPA, France

51. Sol Trumbo Vila , Economic Justice, Corporate Power and Alternatives Program , Transnational Institute (TNI)

52. Jesper Jespersen, professor of Economics, Roskilde University, Denmark

53. Marta Harnecker, writer Chile

54. Michael A Lebowitz, economist Canada

55. Krivine Alain, NPA, France

56. Marco Revelli, professore universitario ed ex portavoce "L'Altra Europa con Tsipras", Italia

57. Marcel Francis Kahn, medecin, France

58. Houtart Francois, Fundación Pueblo Indio del Ecuador

59. SAMIR AMIN, Professeur d'Université, Président Forum Mondial des Alternatives, France

60. Mariya Ivancheva, member of editorial board, LeftEast website/Post-doctoral research fellow, University College Dublin, Ireland

61. Pablo Echenique, Podemos, Espana

62. Gustave Massiah (AITEC (Association Internationale des Techniciens Experts et Chercheurs), membre du Conseil International du Forum Social Mondial, France

63. Juan Carlos Monedero, Podemos, Espana
64. Achcar Gilbert, professor SOAS University of London, UK
65. Gerardo Pisarello (Barcelona en Comú) Barcelona -Estat Espanol
66. Paul Lootens, Président, Centrale Générale FGTB, Belgium
67. Vicent Maurí, Portavoz Intersindical Valenciana, Espana
68. Pablo Micheli, secrétaire général de la CTA (Central de los Trabajadores Autónoma de la Argentina)
69. Dr Pritam Singh DPhil (Oxford) ,Professor of Economics,Department of Accounting, Finance and Economics, Faculty of Business, Oxford Brookes University, Oxford, UK
70. Raúl Camargo Fernández, candidato en la lista de Podemos a la Comunidad de Madrid. Miembro de Anticapitalistas, Espana
71. Miguel Benasayag, philosophe, psychanalyste, Argentina/France
72. Vincent DECROLY, ancien parlementaire fédéral indépendant, membre du Secrétariat de VEGA (Vert et de gauche), Belgium
73. Catherine Samary, économiste et altermondialiste, France
74. Harribey Jean-Marie, professeur de sciences économiques et sociales, France
75. Coutrot Thomas, économiste, porte parole d'Attac France
76. Aziki Omar, Secrétaire général, ATTAC/CADTM MAROC
77. Marga Ferré, Coordinadore General de areas Izquierda Unida, Espana
78. Vladimir Unkovski-Korica,member of editorial board,

LeftEast website/ Assistant Professor, Higher School of Economics, Moscow, Russia

79. Alessandra Mecozzi, Libera International, Italia

80. Dr. Elmar Altvater, Politikwissenschaftler, Autor und emeritierter Professor für Politikwissenschaft am Otto-Suhr-Institut der FU Berlin., Germany

81. Guido Viale, economist, promotore della lista "L'Altra Europa con Tsipras », Italia

82. Gustave Massiah (AITEC (Association Internationale des Techniciens Experts et Chercheurs) membre du Conseil International du Forum Social Mondial, France

83. Dr Guy Standing, Fellow of the Academy of Social Sciences, Professor in Development Studies, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London. Co-President, Basic Income Earth Network (BIEN), UK

84. Julio Perez Serrano, Head of the Contemporary History Research Group, Faculty of Philosophy and Letters, Universidad de Cádiz, Espana

85. Roberto Musacchio, già eurodeputato, Italia

86. Véronique Gallais, militante et actrice de l'économie sociale et solidaire, membre du conseil scientifique d'Attac France

87. Jean Gadrey, économiste, Conseil scientifique Attac, France

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89. Paul Mackney – Co-Chair, Greece Solidarity Campaign, UK

90. Katz Claudio, economist, profesor, Argentina

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93. Luciana Castellina, già deputata e già presidente Cultura del Parlamento Europeo, presidente onoraria ARCI
94. Tijana Okic, University of Sarajevo, Faculty of Philosophy, Philosophy, Faculty Member, Bosnia/Herzegovina
95. Josep Maria Antentas, profesor de sociología de la Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (UAB), Espana
96. David Graeber, London School of Economics, Usa/UK
97. Sergio Rossi, Full Professor & Chair of Macroeconomics and Monetary Economics, University of Fribourg, Switzerland
98. Óscar Carpintero, Profesor de Economía Aplicada, Facultad de Ciencias Económicas y Empresariales, Universidad de Valladolid, Espana
99. Geoffrey Harcourt, Emeritus Reader in The History of Economic Theory, Cambridge 1998; Professor Emeritus, Adelaide 1988; Visiting Professorial Fellow, UNSW 2010–2016, Australia
100. Janette Habel , universitaire, France
101. ANDREJA ZIVKOVIC, sociologist and member of Marx21, Serbia
102. Philippe Diaz, cinéaste, réalisateur de « The End of Poverty », USA
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104. Andrew Ross, Professor of Social and Cultural Analysis, New York University, USA

105. Lieben Gilbert, Secrétaire Générale CGSP Wallonne, Belgium
106. Esther Vivas, periodista, Estado español
107. Pierre Salama, économiste, professeur emerite des universités
108. Teresa Gómez, économista, miembro del Círculo 3E (Economía, Ecología y Energía) de PODEMOS
109. PACD (Plataforma Auditoria Ciudadana de la Deuda), Espana
110. Liliana Pineda, abogada, escritora -15M-movimiento por la defense de agua, Espana
111. Claude Calame, Directeur d'études, EHESS, ATTAC, Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales, Centre AnHiMA (Anthropologie et Histoire des Mondes Antiques, UMR 8210), France
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118. Dr. Jorge Garcia-Arias, Associate Professor of Economics, University of Leon, Espana

119. Lankapeli Dharmasiri, member of the Polit Bureau of the NSSP, Sri Lanka
120. Colectivo Internacional Ojos para la Paz
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123. Roger Silverman, Workers' International Network, UK
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125. Dr Julian Wells, Principal lecturer in economics, School of Economics, History and Politics, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, Kingston University, UK
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135. Samy Johsua, professeur émérite Aix Marseille université
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150. Rome Daniel, Attac – Professeur d'économie gestion, France

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152. Gotovitch José, historien, Professeur hon. Université Libre de Bruxelles, Belgium
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154. Dr. Jeff Powell, Senior Lecturer, Economics, Department of International Business & Economics, University of Greenwich, Old Royal Naval College, London, UK
155. J. Francisco Álvarez DNI 41981064S Full Professor of Logic and Philosophy of Science. National Distance University of Spain. Madrid, Espana
156. Christian Zeller, Professor of Economic Geography, University of Salzburg, Austria
157. Dillon John, Ecological Justice Program Coordinator, KAIROS: Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives, Canada
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176. Domenico M. Nuti, Emeritus Professor, Sapienza University of Rome, Italia
177. Christine Pagnouille, ATTAC Liège, Université de Liège, Belgium
178. . Dr Judith Mehta, heterodox economist, recently retired from the University of East Anglia, Norwich, UK.
179. Maria João Berhan da Costa, CADPP, Revista Rubra, Habita, Portugal

180. Héctor Arrese Igor, profesor Universidad de Buenos Ayres, Argentina.
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182. René Passet, Professeur émérite d'économie à l'Université Paris 1- Panthéon-Sorbonne, France
183. Dr. Susan Caldwell, professor (retired), Conseil d'administration d'Alternatives, Montréal, Canada
184. Dr. Deborah Potts , Reader in Human Geography, King's College London, UK
185. Dr. James D. Cockcroft, author, professor (retired), Honorary Editor Latin American Perspectives; a founder Red en Defensa de la Humanidad; Montréal, Canada
186. Daniela Tavasci , senior lecturer ,Queen Mary University of London, UK
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188. Malcolm Sawyer, Emeritus Professor of Economics, University of Leeds, UK
189. Matyas BENYIK, Chairman of ATTAC, Economist, Budapest, Hungary
190. Ricardo Ortega Gonzalez, economista, funcionario de Eusko Jaurlaritza-Gobierno Vasco, España
191. Gabriel Colletis, Professeur de Sc. économique à l'Université de Toulouse 1-Capitole. France
192. Adam Rorris, National Coordinator, Australia-Greece Solidarity Campaign, Australia

193. Carlos Durango Sáez , Universidad Carlos III de Madrid, Espana

194. Dr. Laura Horn, Associate Professor, Roskilde University, Denmark

195. Dr. Peter Herrmann, Федеральное государственное бюджетное образовательное учреждение высшего профессионального образования «Российский экономический университет имени Г.В. Плеханова/

Federal state-funded educational institution of higher professional education Plekhanov Russian University of Economics, Russia

196. Dr. Miriam Boyer, ibero-Amerikanisches Institut, Germany

197. Jérôme Duval, CADTM, Estado español

198. Michael Hartmann, Professur für Elite- und Organisationssoziologie, Technische Universität Darmstadt, Germany

199. Dr. Ulrich Duchrow, professor, Scientific Council of Attac Germany

200. Mogens Ove Madsen, Associate Professor, Department of Business and Management, Aalborg University, Denmark

201. Guglielmo Forges Davanzati, Professor of Political Economy, University of Salento, Italia

202. Mehmet Ugur, Professor of Economics and Institutions, University of Greenwich Business School, UK

203. Jacques Berthelot, économiste, France

204. Herbert Schui, Prof. of Economics, Germany

205. Mateo Alaluf, Prof émérite de l'Université Libre de Bruxelles (ULB), Belgium

206. Michele CANGIANI, economist, écrivain, université Ca' Foscari, Venise, Italia
207. Marcela de la Peña Valdivia, Chargée de missions (Sociologue, Maitrise en gestion interdisciplinaire de l'environnement, spécialité femmes et développement. Certificat interuniversitaire d'évaluation de politiques publiques, Suisse
208. Jean Batou, professeur, Université de Lausanne, Suisse
209. Julia Varela Fernández, catedrática de sociología de la universidad complutense, Espana
210. Benny Asman, Economic historian, Belgium
211. Pepe Mejia, activista/militante de Attac Madrid, Plataforma contra la operación especulativa en Campamento, Plataforma en Defensa de la Sanidad Pública de Latina, miembro de Podemos y de Anticapitalistas, Espana
212. Joaquin Aparicio Tovar, Catedrático de Derecho del Trabajo y La Seguridad Social. Decano, Universidad de Castilla-La Mancha, Espana
213. raffaella bolini – Arci
214. International Alliance of Inhabitants (Cesare Ottolini IAI Global Coordinator)
215. Marco Bersani, Attac Italia
216. Professor Robert Dixon, Department of Economics, The University of Melbourne, Australia
217. Nicolás Giest, argentinian lawyer, and a also a researcher about the argentinian external debt, Argentina
218. Anastassia Politi, metteur en scène – comédienne, France
219. Luis Glez Reyes. Ecologistas en Acción, Espana

220. Georges Menahem, Economiste et sociologue, directeur de recherche au CNRS, MSH Paris Nord, France
221. Franck Gaudichaud, enseignant-chercheur Université Grenoble-Alpes (France)
222. Iván H. Ayala, profesor universitario, investigador del Instituto Complutense de Estudios Internacionales, Espana
223. Asier Blas Mendoza – Profesor del Departamento de Ciencia Política de la Universidad del País Vasco UPV/EHU, Espana
224. Jean NKESHIMANA, Country Program Manager, Terre des Jeunes du Burundi
225. Piero Di Giorgi, direttore di Dialoghi Mediterranei, Italia
226. Dr. Stefanie Wöhl, Guest Professor, University of Kassel, Political Science Department, Kassel, Germany
227. Enzo Scandurra, Full Professor of Urban Planning, Sapienza University of Rome, Italia
228. Massimo Pasquini, Segretario Nazionale Unione Inquilini, Italia
229. Manuel Martínez Forega, Crítico literario y filólogo. Estudios de Filología Española, de Filología Románica y de Derecho en la Universidad de Zaragoza, Espana
230. Josep Maria Antentas, profesor de sociología de la Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (UAB), Espana
231. Barry Finger, Editorial board member, New Politics, Netherlands
232. Giusto Catania, Assessore al Comune di Palermo. – Ex Deputato europeo, Italia

233. Janette Habel , universitaire, France
234. Francesco Denozza, Professore ordinario di diritto commerciale., Dipartimento di diritto privato e storia del diritto., Università degli Studi di Milano, Italia
235. Javier De Vicente, (on behalf of) UNION SINDICAL OBRERA (USO), Secretario Confederal de Accion Internacional, Espana
236. Sebastian Franco (Alter Summit wants to sign the Call for the Commission on debt audit).
237. Jonathan Davies, Professor of Critical Policy Studies, De Montfort University, UK
238. Katu Arkonada – Red de Intelectuales en Defensa de la Humanidad, Espana
239. Juan Tortosa, periodista, Espana
240. Eleonora Ponte, Movimento NO TAV Valle di Susa, Italia
241. Pablo de la Vega, Coordinador Regional, En representación de la “Plataforma Interamericana de Derechos Humanos, Democracia y Desarrollo (PIDHDD Regional)”, organización de derechos humanos de carácter regional, con presencia en 15 países latinoamericanos y caribeños, y sede administrativa en Quito Ecuador
242. Matias Escalera, Cordero, Escritor y profesor, Espana
243. Enzo Traverso, Cornell University, USA
244. José Manuel Lucía Megías, Catedrático de la Universidad Complutense de Madrid, Escritor, Espana
245. Juan Ramón Sanz, Presidente de la Fundación “Domingo Malagón” Madrid España
246. Bruce Clarke, artiste plasticien, France

247. Luis Buendia, Associate Professor of Economics, Espana
248. Dominique Taddéi, économiste, ancien député, président de la commission des lois à l'Assemblée Nationale, France
249. Isabel Pérez Montalbán, escritora, Espana
250. Pablo Duque García-Aranda. Músico y profesor. Madrid, España
251. Frédéric Neyrat, philosophe français, ancien directeur de programme au Collège international de philosophie et Docteur en philosophie (1998). Il est membre du comité de rédaction de la revue Multitudes et de la revue Lignes, France
252. Daniel TANURO, militant écosocialiste, membre de la LCR, Belgium
253. BRACONNIER, Yves, CGSP-Enseignement-Luxembourg, Belgium
254. Jean-Marie Roux, économiste et syndicaliste France
255. Antonio Canalià sindacalista CGIL Piemonte Italia
256. Michel Cahen, senior researcher, CNRS/Sciences Po Bordeaux, France.
257. Yu Maxime, Compositeur-Comédien, Liège, Belgium
258. Renato Zanolì – Commissione Ambiente PRC Torino – Italia
259. Luis Cabo Bravo, miembro de IU de Madrid y de la dirección del PCE, Espana
260. Giorgio Ferraresi, "Società dei territorialisti", già Ordinario di urbanistica al Politecnico di Milano, Italia
261. Edouard Bustin, enseigne les Sciences Politiques à l'Université de Boston et est, également, membre du Centre d'études africaines, USA/Belgium
262. Guillermo Cruz, Guillermo Cruz, realizador de

documentales (€uroestafa), España,

263. Françoise Clément, chercheur militante altermondialiste, France

264. Gianni Fabbris – coordinatore nazionale di Altragricoltura –

Confederazione per la Sovranità Alimentare, Italia

265. Luis Dominguez Rodriguez. , Presidente de Attac Castilla y Leon.

266. Antonio Martinez-Arboleda, Reino Unido, profesor universitario, Espana

267. Werner Ruf, Professor an der Universitaet Kassel, Germany

268. Ricardo García Zaldívar. Economista. Activista (Attac España

269. Pratip Nag, Unorganised Sector Workers Forum, India

270. Marc Amfreville (professeur Paris-sorbonne), France

271. L'Initiative de Solidarité avec la Grèce qui Résiste – Bruxelles, Belgium

272. Jean-Michel Ganteau, Professeur, Université Montpellier 3, France

273. Marco Revelli, professore universitario ed ex portavoce "L'Altra Europa con Tsipras", Italia

274. Rosa Rinaldi, Direzione Rifondazione Comunista

275. Sylvie FERRARI, Associate professor in economics, University of Bordeaux, France

276. Srecko Horvat, Independent scholar, Croatia

277. Karl Fischbacher (Labournet-Austria)
278. Guido Ortona (Prof. Ordinario di Politica Economica), Dipartimento DIGSPES,, Università del Piemonte Orientale, Italia
279. oscar flammini, Espacio de Cultura y Memoria “El Rancho Urutau” de la Ciudad de Ensenada, Provincia de Buenos Aires, Argentina
280. Isabel VAZQUEZ DE CASTRO, Enseignant-Chercheur, formatrice ESPE, France
281. Arnal Ballester, dessinateur. Catalogne, Espana
282. amal Juma, coordinator of the Stop the Wall Campaign.
283. Liliane Blaser, Documentalista, Venezuela
284. Gonzalo Haya Prats, profesor y director del Departamento de Teología en la Universidad del Norte de Chile; profesor de habilidades directivas en instituciones de enseñanza empresarial en España
285. Sol Sánchez Maroto. Socióloga/Antropóloga/ Activista (Attac España)
286. Raquel Freire, cineasta, activista, Portugal
287. Lisa Tilley, Erasmus Mundus GEM Joint Doctoral Fellow, Department of Politics and International Studies, University of Warwick | Université Libre de Bruxelles, Belgium
288. Thomas Berns, professeur, Université Libre de Bruxelles, Blegium
289. Francesca Gobbo , former Professor of Intercultural Education & Anthropology of Education, University of Turin, Associate Editor of “Intercultural Education”, Italia
290. Marcos Del Roio, prof. de Ciências Políticas UNESP,

Brasil.

291. Andrea Zinzani, researcher in Political Geography, CNRS (Paris), France

292. MARIAN SANTIAGO (ciberactivista ecosocial), Espana

293. Gloria Soler Sera, Barcelona, escritora-profesora, Espana

294. Sara Rosenberg, escritora y dramaturga, Argentina-España

295. CARINA MALOBERTI, Consejo Directivo Nacional – ATE-CTA (Asociación Trabajadores del Estado – Central de Trabajadores de la Argentina)

296. Convocatoria por la liberación Nacional y Social, Frente Sindical:

Agrupación Martín Fierro (Varela, Mar del Plata y Neuquén

297. Massimo Torreli, Responsabile “L’Altra Europa con Tsipras”.

298. Hichem SKIK, universitaire, dirigeant Parti “Al-Massar” (Voie démocratique et sociale), Tunisie

299. Inma Luna, escritora, poeta, periodista y antropóloga, Espana

300. Manuel Giron, catedratico, Alicante, Espana

Working people in Bosnia at

the end of their tether: Two Tuzla workers – former combatants – plan suicide.

(Since this article was written, we have learnt that the press and the police were following the marchers and the police confiscated the petrol cans along the way. Fearing that they might actually do as they threatened, the Sarajevo government gave the two a fictitious minimum-wage factory job for a year. They came back home alive.)

200 Tuzla workers set off on the “One-Way March” to the Croatian border at Orasje, saying they didn’t want to stay in their own country without jobs or a future (See “A cauldron ready to blow”, *Workers’ International Journal* no 10, January 2015). There has been an exodus of tens of thousands of Kosovars and their families to Europe. Although the guns have fallen silent, death still stalks the Balkans. Tossed on the scrap heap like a load of rusting machinery, and not having any political perspectives, the working class is condemned to gestures of despair.

So at 9 o’clock this morning two Tuzla workers, former combatants, set off to walk from Zivinice (an industrial suburb of Tuzla) to Sarajevo, planning self-immolation with petrol in front of the Federal Government building there.

Sefik Muminovic (55) and Dzemal Zahirovic (59) fought for Bosnian independence against Serbian and Croatian fascists. In poor health and with nothing at all to fall back on, they have made many attempts to find help from various institutions. Seeing their families languish in black decline, they have decided to end it all. They wrote a public letter in the hope that their deaths would save their families.

“We tried to get a meeting at the ministry of former combatants for Tuzla canton, but they said they could do nothing for us us. We tried to talk to our Mayor in Zivinice but he wouldn't let us through the door. We met with humiliation wherever we went, and this in a country we gladly sacrificed our health to defend. We and our whole families are in despair and starving. That's why at 8am tomorrow (Monday 13 April) we will kiss our loved ones goodbye in front of the town hall and then, after a moment's silence in front of the war memorial to our dead comrades, we will pick up our petrol cans and head straight for Sarajevo. There's no point to a life spent in poverty”, said Sefik Muminovic on the *Tuzlanski.ba* website. (1)

They issued a public statement:

“We, Sefik Muminovic and Dzemal Zahirovic, have decided to set off at 9am from the Zivinice town hall on foot for Sarajevo, where we will PUBLICLY IMMOLATE OURSELVES in front of the Federal Government building as a protest against this society which we fought for and which cannot guarantee us a dignified life. We have already been dead as human beings for a while now. But we will not sacrifice our pride. Let the whole world witness our serious state of health as our families starve to death.”

Muminovic fought in the 210th Brigade Sprecanski detachment. After the war he worked in the Djurdjevik mines for five years; he was sacked from there while on sick leave.

“They promised they would give my boy a start at the mine to stop me from taking them to court. But they tricked me, nothing came of it. The manager wouldn't see me. None of us at home – my wife, my son, my daughter, my daughter in law or me – have any work. We've got nothing left to eat. I tried to commit suicide, but they saved me at the last minute. The former combatants' ministry for the canton say they can do nothing. I cannot see any way out; we are knocked back

everywhere we turn. All I can do now is end it all", Muminovic told the daily *Avaz* in despair.

Dzemal Zahirovic belonged to the elite 121 Unit, was twice wounded and gets nothing despite officially being 40% disabled. He says:

"When the war started I immediately joined the defence of the state. I was on every battlefield. And what does this state give us?! I have six children. One daughter died last year from sheer poverty. Nobody in the family has a job, although we are all able to work. I wish the politicians would wake up and help the combatants who have been let down by everybody. If I eat today, there will be nothing left for tomorrow. What sort of life is that?"

This morning they said tearful farewells to their nearest and dearest and the local people and set off from Zivinice. "The whole town of Zivinice ... is echoing with tears, cries of anguish and sadness", *Tuzlanski.ba* reported this morning.

We do not know what will happen today and in the days to come. But the workers' movement in Europe, its activists and anyone at all who claims to be on the left have a duty to come to the aid of the working people of Bosnia. The international struggle of working people functions according to the principle of communicating vessels: those who pay today can draw doubly and triply tomorrow when they need to. Before we can help Bosnian workers to stand up politically, we have to help them out of the despair in which they languish.

I propose a permanent Bosnian workers' solidarity fund to which everybody can make a monthly payment of 5 or 10 euros for as long as they decide, following the example of the solidarity fund set up in Nancy for the Greek clinics in Patras and Athens. We will set up a bank account for this purpose in the next few days together with comrades in solidarity with the workers of Bosnia-Herzegovina.

May I use this opportunity publicly to thank all those who supported the Dita workers in Tuzla last autumn: 1,600 euros were sent from the ATTAC 54 account to the Tuzla trade unionist Emina Busuladzic.

The original French version of this article was published online on 19 April 2015 at <http://www.europe-solidaire.org/spip.php?article34766>

By Radoslav Pavlovic, 13 April 2015

Notes:

1.

<http://tuzlanski.ba/demobilisani-borci-iz-zivinica-najavili-cin-javnog-spaljivanja-zbog-siromastva/>

Necessity of a broad workers' front – Attack is the best defence! Invitation to a conference in Zagreb 31 January – 1 February

Workers' Front (<https://-fronta.org>) invites you to attend and give a talk at the trade union conference which will be held in Zagreb at the Centre for Culture and Information (KIC) 31 January – 1 February 2015 (Saturday and Sunday)

This trade union conference is the continuation of the past two conferences organized by Workers' Struggle under the

working title “Workers’ resistance to the destruction of companies” in 2012 and 2013, which tried to help create space for discussion, tighter connections and a network for information exchange between trade unionists, as well as social movement activists, and contribute to the strengthening of labour movement in Croatia. The Third Trade Union Conference, “Necessity of a broad workers’ front – attack is the best defence!” is organized by Workers’ Front, an initiative aiming to become a workers’ party which should give additional importance to this conference.

In the light of increasing poverty of a large majority of the population, declining economy and unprecedented social stratification, as well as a joint attack on the workers’ rights by all political parties and business elite, we intend to question past strategies of organizing workers’ resistance and offer a vision of an alternative model which would unite trade union and political levels of struggle into a stronger entity.

The aim of this conference is to exchange trade union experiences in terms of workers’ struggle, forge closer links between militant trade unions and point out the necessity of labour unions for all workers.

We think that it is of essential importance for unionists and activists to join forces in a common resistance against this social and economic system and its supporters – the political elite. Some of the most honest and active Croatian trade union leaders will be present at the conference, such as Mario Iveković (Novi sindikat/New Trade Union), Mijat Stanić (HAC / Croatian Motorways), Željko Stipić (Preporod School Trade Union), Zvonko Šegvić (Brodosplit Shipyard) and Denis Geto (HEP/ Croatian Electricity Company). Alongside the trade unions leaders will be members of the Workers’ Front who will present their opinions regarding political, but also trade union landscape in Croatia. Beside domestic unionists, we have also invited international speakers to the third union

conference: unionist Goran Lukič from the largest Slovenian trade union organisation ZSSS (Association of Free Trade Unions of Slovenia) members of *Združena levica* from Slovenia (the United Left) and activists and workers from Serbia and

We hope to see you at our conference in Zagreb.

If you have any further questions, do not hesitate to contact us.

Best regards,

On behalf of Workers' Front:

Dimitrije Birač: +186 99 594 9485

Denis Geto: +186 98 165 568

Marko Milošević: +186 95 659 6149

kontakt@radnicka-fronta.org

For more information regarding the previous conferences, please refer to the following links:

<http://www.radnickaborba.org/2012/11/22/sindikalna-konferencija-radnicki-otpor-unistavanju-poduzeca>

<http://www.radnickaborba.org/2012/12/03/veliki-uspjeh-sindikalne-konferencije-radnicke-borbe>

<http://www.radnickaborba.org/2012/12/12/deklaracija-sindikalne-konferencijee>

Appeal for support from DITA workers in Tuzla

A European workers' euro for 100 workers in Tuzla!

A very destructive war cost many lives and split the Bosnian working class. Then an international protectorate imposed new authorities, promising workers a "Swedish Paradise". But what they actually got was a "Greek Hell". There is no work for either young or old, there is little enough medical care and it isn't free; You have to pay for schooling unless you go to a religious school; if the administration delays issuing you a new identity card, you simply lose the right to vote ... Meanwhile they have stopped trying to catch war criminals or doing anything for former combatants or war victims.

Peace is deadlier than war In Bosnia-Herzegovina. Privatisation of industry has everywhere brought factory closures and new capitalists on the lookout for property deals; The Polichem chemical group's seaside hotel in Neum is worth ten times more than all its plant and thousands of workers in Tuzla.

The DITA detergent works are emblematic of political corruption and decay which stand out among the thing that Bosnian workers have suffered. Only 132 of the thousand employees who provided all former Yugoslavia's industrial and household cleaning products remain. Shares that were sold to workers quickly ended up in the hands of particular people who saddled the firm with bank debt of millions of German Marks (the equivalent of the national currency km), embezzled the money, giving it to "partners" they control and then, either unable (or unwilling) to re-start production, handed the firm back to the state for a symbolic 1km. But neither the state nor the canton of Tuzla wanted this poisoned present. They ruled it "unconstitutional", but they also, incidentally, refused to give it back to the workers until they paid back

the astronomic debts ... What do you do in nightmare like this? The hundred or so workers still at DITA have received no wages for 32 months. They have tried everything: factory occupation, hunger strikes, demonstrations, occupying cross-roads, lobbying all the political parties and trying all levels of the justice system. Even now, whatever the weather, they go on the street once a week and protest angrily. There are many couples with husband and wife working in the same factory. Many workers lost everything in the spring floods. Since February they have been the first to demonstrate, and today they are still the last to leave the demonstrations. But morally and materially they are at the end of their tether. Should we wait until one of them pours petrol over her or himself or jumps off the public gallery of Parliament onto the Mafia men and their mouthpieces below, to burst the bubble of fear and "every man for himself"? A Romanian worker did just that recently.

Only the working class in the rest of Europe can help Bosnian workers. Internationalism must not remain an empty phrase. Fortunately there are still workers in Europe who can spare a pound or a euro to save their brothers in Tuzla from despair, like the members of the First International who paid a shilling a year to help their brothers on strike in a foreign country.

DITA symbolises struggle and resistance in Bosnia Herzegovina. If they fail, a wave of demoralisation will drown the Tuzla area like a new flood. To support them now is to support ourselves tomorrow,

Radoslav Pavlovic

Monika Karbowska

Emina Busuladzic is the chair of the strike committee. You can read (below) an interview she did with Monika Karbowska, and her banking details for international aid (please mention "DITA") are as follows:

Emina BUSULADZIC, Muharema Merdzica br. 18, 75000 TUZLA

NLB Banka d d., Tuzla
Marsala Tita 34
75000 Tuzla, BiH

Telefon +387 25 259 259

Fax +387 35 302 802

Email: info@nlb.ba

Name: Emina Busuladzic SWIFT: TBTUBA22 IBAN
BA391320010526292230 Foreign exchange 105262922 JMBG
0703956185034

Version française ci-dessous.

Bosnia:

“We want to live by our own labour, and for that workers need to control production”

Sunday 5 October 2014

Last June, militant feminist and internationalist Monika Karbowska visited Tuzla, the “cradle” of the social explosion which shook Bosnia in February. There she met the men and women who work at Dita, a factory which was at the heart of the popular mobilisation. This is her testimony and her interview with Eminka Busuladjic, union representative at Dita and one of the founders of the new Solidarnost union.

Tuzla, June 2014: It is very hot when we arrive in this medium-sized town in north-eastern Bosnia. Like almost every town in Bosnia, Tuzla is in a valley surrounded by wooded



Eminka Busuladjic

mountains. These mountains conceal acres of industrial sites nestling in the hillsides: coal and salt mines (salt is the region's historic natural resource) and the chemical plants processing these natural resources. Like all the countries run by the former "communist" regime, these medium sized towns in what was then Yugoslavia were provided with factories and the population had a golden age in the 1970s.

Tuzla is a town rich in long traditions of class struggle and workers' solidarity. In fact it was the site of a workers' revolution in 1920: Bosnian coal-miners came to the defence of Slovenian colleagues who had been sacked, setting up a short-lived Boshevik republic. An imposing statue in the dilapidated town square recalls for all time this gesture of the Tuzla worker.

On 5 February 2014 Tuzla gave the signal for a new workers' revolt in Bosnia. Young people set fire to a public building in protest against the corruption of the canton government. The police retaliated and the little town was shaken by rioting. But then the workers at the DITA chemical complex, who had been protesting in vain for several years against privatisation, joined the movement and brought their Tuzla workers' traditions with them: they convinced the young people to stop burning public buildings down. They also convinced them to support strikes against privatisation.

Then protest movements broke out in 10 other towns in Bosnia, including Sarajevo. Even Republica Serpska was affected, with demonstrations in Banja Luka. The demonstrators demanded the removal of corrupt elites and reform of the political system inherited after the Dayton cease-fire, imposed by western powers, which generated corruption at every level (municipal, cantonal and federal).

That's when the activists in the Bosnian Left, which came out of the 2009 student movement and organised in several groups such as the Lijevi movement, had the idea of organising

Popular Assemblies, or so-called Plenums, in the public cultural centres which still exist in every town in Bosnia.

Women played an enormous role in this renewal of the working class and social movement in Eastern Europe. We follow one of them, Eminka Busuladjic, one of the founders of the new Solidarnost union. Eminka started 30 years ago on the production line at the DITA factory. She worked her way up and is now in charge of research and development. She came under pressure to give up her trade union activities, but she has not let go; it's her factory and her life.

MK: Eminka, can you tell us about DITA and the struggles you have had so far?

EB: DITA, Industrija Deterdženata Tuzla, was one of the biggest chemical complexes in Yugoslavia. DITA produced liquid and powder detergents which were feedstock for industrial and domestic cleaning products as well as cosmetics. DITA was a well-known leader in this field in Yugoslavia and had a big presence in the local market. It had its own rail link and factory shops as well as a big sales centre in Belgrade.

Run on the Yugoslav self-management model, the firm was nationalised when Bosnia was created, then privatised in 1998 for the benefit of "gangsters" who saddled it with 99 million German Mark debts and ruined it. Before privatisation, DITA had 1 000 paid staff and 400 "volunteers". They were all sacked and at present there are only about 118 workers left, about 75-80 of whom took part in the protests [last February].

When we were privatised, 272 people bought shares but out of those 272, 7 held more than 45%, and that was the management team. The workers were supposed to take out credits to pay for shares, between 1 000 and 10 000km credits on monthly salaries of 2 000km and monthly repayments of 500km [Km is the local currency based on the German Mark].

The director was meant to invest the money raised from the

share sales, but he did nothing – the workers' capital was embezzled. There was never any real workers' control of the company management because they abolished public access to the accounts in 1989 and that's why it was so easy to destroy the company.

Since then investment has been zero and the machines deteriorating a bit more every day. But in the chemical industry the plant is so heavy and maintenance is so important that if you stop maintaining it that really does say you want to stop production, since it won't be easy to start up again. DITA is already some way down that road, with several production lines stopped.

(...) [The workers] know that DITA got big credits because the local director of [the Austrian bank] Hipobank was on the board, but nothing was invested because there was no workers' control over it.

(...) The management strategy was to have the workers believe they would be paid once the liquidation of the business went through, so pushing workers to wish for the destruction of their own work-tool, selling off assets to pay themselves. (...) The aim was to wind up production and invest the money in tax havens.

MK: Can you tell us how DITA workers' recent struggles went and what your involvement in last February's Plenum movement was?

EB: Realising, because of the successive sackings, that privatisation simply meant destruction, the workers who were left at DITA started a strike and occupied the entrances to the factories from 4 April 2011 until 19 March 2012. The canton government promised it would be bought by the Serbian Bohemia group.

Wages were paid for two months, but in that period equipment and products worth 2 million km were sold off, and that is

probably what that manoeuvre was all about.

In November and December 2013 the workers revolted properly and blocked the entrances and exits to the factory. The company used private security guards to expel the workers from the site. The struggle came to a face-to-face showdown in front of the factory: the workers told the security guards they were not going to move and that they would not leave because they owned shares in the company.

That's when they realised that management were trying to close the plant. It became clear that the credit lines the firm had taken out were never re-invested in production. Moreover, the management were sub-letting part of the factory on behalf of the subsidiary, LORA, whose shares are also owned by DITA directors.

We used to meet every Wednesday to protest. On 29 January 2014, we once again demonstrated outside the canton government office. That's when the Marxist group, Lijevi, joined us and publicised our struggle in the media with photographs, films and articles. Then the protest movement took off in a massive way on 5 February. Police tear-gassed the workers and young people who were demonstrating. Police repression finally united the two components in the struggle, the workers and the youth.

10 000 people demonstrated outside the canton government building. In the end the government started negotiations. As it went on, the President of the canton resigned, but the situation at DITA was not resolved. The canton symbolically bought the company back for 1 mark, but the question of wiping out the odious company debt, which workers were demanding, never got mentioned.

The chemical union federation gave us no support, so we realised we had to act at a local level, with the support of local townspeople, our neighbours. For that, the experience of

the Plenums, the Assembly and hundreds and then thousands of townspeople, open debates which took place at the cultural centre was an enormous school of democracy for us, and of rebuilding the links at a local level.

I took part in the first Plenum on 7 February thanks to meeting a Lijevi activist. I talked about our struggle at DITA and that's how unity between the workers and the other demonstrators was achieved.

There were 25 people at the first Plenum, and seven of them were arrested by the police. So we went to the court with them. There was a real risk that the police would actually start shooting. Trade unionists, including us, came along to stop the police firing at the demonstrators. At the Plenums, we set up working parties with economists to demand a review of all privatisations. It was the young people in Lijevi who helped us. The Plenums demanded: "Put the workers in the front!" The workers wanted to develop production and stop any new privatisations, and above all to raise the question of the company's debts to the banks.

MK: How could the establishment of your union change the situation as it stands?

EB: The Plenums movement changed a lot of things because it put pressure on the courts, who started prosecuting "Mafioso" style privatisations and destruction of production machinery.

At the moment management organise "yellow" unions or call in people who did not join in the demonstrations to split the workers. It was to put a stop to that that DITA workers set up the *Solidarnost* union, to continue to put pressure on and struggle against the criminalisation of the Plenum movement: some people are still being prosecuted for "sabotage" and "crimes against private property" since the movement! Moreover, the unions are very fragmented. That's why the Plenums had the aim of unifying the unions in a common front.

Anyone can join the *Solidarnost* union. You can be a member even if you don't work at DITA. That broadens its base and turns it into a school of struggle. We want unemployed people, pensioners and students to get involved in the struggle. For example, pensioners from our industry have been a valuable source of support, and so have trade unionists in the electrical industry and health.

Before the war the unions were strong, but after they were talked down and destroyed. I'm a member of *Solidarnost* union but I'm on the strike committee too. Management accused me of lying and manipulation. They may even take me to court. Sub-contractors have also accused me of stopping them from working on the site. I don't think what these sub-contractors are doing benefits the factory. In any case they can't get me barred from the site because I'm a shareholder!

MK: What future do you want for the factory and what can activists around Europe do to support you?

EB: Every day the machines deteriorate a bit more. There is no time to lose. Two thirds of production has stopped, and some of the buildings are rented out to sub-contractors who store unidentified chemical products here and don't produce anything. Why should workers have to pay for the management's corruption and refusal to do its job? The workers won't let up the pressure: We are occupying the factory and we demand an independent inquiry into the mafia-style privatisation and we want the privatisation cancelled.

As for what activists elsewhere in Europe can do: The European Left can help us by sending activists who can publicise our struggle and our work ... We want to revive the region, we want to live off our own labour, and for that workers need to control production.

Tuzla's trade unionists need support, publicity and solidarity from working people in Europe. The most important thing is the

working people's committee of the Plenum. We need to work to build up confidence between workers. A new revolt is brewing.

MK: Do any women work at DITA and are they involved in the struggle?

EB (laughs): Women are cleaner-living and more dangerous and have more endurance! The men can get drunk and put the struggle in danger! Women don't.

The demand to have the privatisation reviewed is revolutionary. Workers in Tuzla look on the privatisation as simply a criminal act when all's said and done, just like working people at Walbrzych in Poland who denounce the way their town has been destroyed by closures and privatisation and seizure of their property by oligarchs who have no right to it. It's not just about stopping a criminal act, but declaring it null and void, i.e. re-nationalising the firm. The emergence of this demand is a huge step forward in Eastern Europe. Workers never gave up Yugoslavia's past, and it's coming back with the dream of new solidarity, a country where working people can once again have the respect that is their due, and, why not, power?

Bosnie : « Nous voulons vivre de notre travail et pour cela les ouvriers doivent contrôler la production »

dimanche 5 octobre 2014



Nous présentons ci-dessous la contribution de Monika Karbowska, militante féministe et internationaliste, qui en juin dernier s'est rendue à Tuzla, « berceau » de l'explosion sociale qui a secoué la Bosnie en février. Elle y a rencontré les travailleuses et travailleurs de DITA, usine qui a été au cœur de la mobilisation populaire. Elle nous fait parvenir son témoignage et l'interview d'Eminka Busuladjic, responsable syndicale chez DITA et fondatrice du nouveau syndicat Solidarnost.

Tuzla, juin 2014. Il fait très chaud lorsque nous arrivons dans cette ville moyenne au Nord Est de la Bosnie. Comme presque toutes les villes de Bosnie, Tuzla est située dans une vallée très encaissée entourée de montagnes boisées. Ces montagnes cachent des hectares de sites industriels nichés dans le creux de la vallée : mines de charbon, de sel, la ressource naturelle historique la région, ainsi que des usines chimiques de transformation de ces ressources. Du temps de la Yougoslavie, comme dans tous les pays de régime « communiste », ces villes moyennes ont été dotées d'usines et la population y a vécu son âge d'or dans les années 70. Tuzla est une ville riche d'une longue tradition de lutte de classes et de solidarité ouvrière. En effet, en 1920 Tuzla a été le théâtre d'une révolution ouvrière : les mineurs de charbon bosniaques prirent la défense de leurs collègues slovènes licenciés. Ils ont fondé alors une éphémère république bolchévique. Une imposante statue dans un square délabré rappelle toujours la geste du travailleur de Tuzla. Le 5 février 2014 Tuzla donnait le signal d'une nouvelle révolte ouvrière en Bosnie. Des jeunes brûlèrent un bâtiment public pour protester contre le gouvernement cantonal corrompu. La police riposta et des émeutes secouèrent la petite ville. Mais voici que les ouvriers du complexe chimique DITA qui protestaient en vain depuis plusieurs années contre les privatisations se sont joint au mouvement en lui apportant

les traditions ouvrières de Tuzla : ils ont convaincu les jeunes de ne pas brûler les bâtiments publics. Ils les ont aussi convaincus de soutenir les grèves contre les privatisations.

Alors des mouvements de protestation éclatèrent dans 10 autres villes de Bosnie dont Sarajevo. Même la Republika Serpska a été touchée avec des manifestations à Bajna Luka. Les manifestants exigeaient le départ des élites corrompues et la réforme du système politique hérité du cessez le feu de Dayton, générateur de corruption à tous les échelons (municipal, cantonal et fédéral) et imposé par les puissances occidentales.

C'est alors que les militants de la gauche bosniaque, issus du mouvement étudiant de 2009 et organisés dans plusieurs groupes dont le mouvement Lijevi, ont eu l'idée d'organiser des Assemblées populaires, dites Plénums, dans les centres culturels publics existant encore dans chaque ville de Bosnie. Les femmes ont joué un énorme rôle dans ce renouveau du mouvement ouvrier et social à l'Est. Nous suivons l'une d'elles, Eminka Busuladjic, fondatrice du nouveau syndicat Solidarnost. Eminka a commencé il y a 30 ans dans la production à la chaîne de l'usine DITA. Elle a gravi les échelons et actuellement elle est responsable de la recherche et développement. Elle a subi des pressions pour arrêter le syndicalisme. Mais elle ne lâche pas prise. C'est son usine et c'est sa vie.

MK : Eminka pouvez-vous nous présenter DITA ainsi que les luttes que vous avez menées jusqu'à présent ?

EN : DITA Industrija Deterdženata Tuzla, était un des plus grand complexes chimiques de la Yougoslavie. DITA produisait des détergents liquides et en poudre, qui servaient de matière première à des produits de nettoyage industriel et domestique, et aussi des cosmétiques. DITA était un leader dans ce domaine en Yougoslavie, connu, très présent sur le marché local. Elle avait un accès propre au chemin de fer et des magasins d'usine ainsi qu'un grand centre de vente à Belgrade.

Gérée en système d'autogestion yougoslave l'entreprise a été

nationalisée lors de la création de la Bosnie puis privatisée en 1998 au profit de « gangsters » qui l'ont endettée à hauteur de 99 millions de Deutsche Mark et ruinée. Avant la privatisation DITA comptait 1000 salariés et 400 « volontaires ». Tous ont été licenciés et il ne reste actuellement que 118 travailleurs dont 75-80 ont participé aux protestations [de février dernier].

Lorsque la privatisation a commencé les travailleurs ne se rendaient pas compte que cela menait à la fermeture de l'entreprise. Le directeur de l'époque avait été élu « manager de l'année » et promettait monts et merveilles. Il insinuait que l'usine n'était pas productive car l'électricité ainsi que les matières premières seraient trop chères.

Lors de la privatisation 272 personnes ont acheté des actions mais sur les 272, 7 détenaient plus de 45% et c'étaient les cadres de l'administration. Les ouvriers ont dû prendre des crédits pour acheter des actions – de 1000 à 10 000 KM de crédits sur des salaires de 2000 KM avec des mensualités de 500 KM.

Le directeur devait investir l'argent des actions mais il n'a rien fait – le capital des ouvriers a été détourné. Il n'y a jamais réellement eu de contrôle de gestion de l'entreprise parce que la comptabilité publique a été abolie en 1998 et c'est pour cela que c'était si facile de détruire l'entreprise.

Depuis l'investissement est nul et les machines sont détériorées de jour en jour. Or dans la chimie l'équipement est tellement lourd et son entretien tellement important qu'un manque d'entretien signale fortement l'envie d'arrêter la production qu'il ne sera pas facile de reprendre plus tard. DITA est sur cette voie après l'arrêt de plusieurs de ses lignes de production.

(...)

[Les ouvriers] savent que DITA a obtenu de grands crédits parce que le directeur local de Hipobank [une banque autrichienne] était au conseil d'Administration mais rien n'a été investi parce que les ouvriers ne l'ont pas contrôlé.

(...) La stratégie de la direction était de faire croire que les ouvriers seraient payés une fois que la liquidation de l'entreprise serait prononcée, en poussant ainsi les ouvriers à vouloir la destruction de leur outil de travail afin de vendre les actifs et de se payer ainsi. (...) L'objectif était de liquider la production et de placer l'argent dans des paradis fiscaux.

MK : Pouvez-vous nous dire comment se sont déroulées les luttes récentes des travailleurs de DITA et votre participation au mouvement des Plénums de février dernier ?

EB : Comprenant à force de licenciements successifs que la privatisation est une destruction, les travailleurs restant à DITA commencent une grève et occupent les entrées de l'entreprise du 4 août 2011 au 19 mars 2012. Le gouvernement cantonal promet le rachat par le groupe serbe Bohemia. Deux mois de salaires ont été payés mais pendant ce temps-là l'équipement et des produits de la valeur de 2 millions de KM [1 million d'euros] a été vendu et c'était bien le but de la manœuvre.

En novembre et décembre 2013 les ouvrier/res se sont révolté/es définitivement et ont bloqué les entrées et sorties de l'usine. La direction a expulsé les travailleurs du site par des vigiles privés. La lutte a pris l'aspect d'un face à face devant l'entrée de l'usine : les ouvriers répondaient aux vigiles qu'ils ne partiraient pas parce qu'ils sont des actionnaires de l'usine.

La prise de conscience que la direction cherchait à fermer l'usine est venue alors. Il devient évident que les crédits accordés à l'entreprise n'ont jamais été réinvestis dans la production. De plus la direction sous-loue une partie de l'usine et l'argent part sur le compte de LORA la filiale dont les directeurs de DITA sont aussi actionnaires.

Nous nous rassemblions tous les mercredis pour protester. Le 29 janvier 2014 nous avons encore protesté devant le gouvernement cantonal. C'est alors que le groupe marxiste Lijevi nous a rejoint et a médiatisé notre lutte par des photos, des films et des articles. Puis le mouvement de

protestation a démarré massivement le 5 février. Les policiers ont gazé les ouvriers et les jeunes qui manifestaient. La répression policière a finalement unie les deux composantes de la lutte, ouvriers et jeunes.

10 000 personnes manifestaient devant le bâtiment du gouvernement du canton. Finalement le gouvernement a commencé la négociation. Par la suite le président du canton a démissionné mais la situation de DITA n'avait pas été résolue. Le canton a racheté l'entreprise symboliquement pour 1 Mark mais la question de l'effacement de la dette odieuse de l'entreprise que les ouvriers réclament n'a pas été abordée.

Le syndicat de la Fédération de Chimie ne nous soutenait pas. Nous avons donc compris que c'est au niveau local qu'il fallait agir, avoir le soutien des habitants de la ville, des voisins. Pour cela l'expérience des Plénums, Assemblée de centaines puis de milliers d'habitants, de débats libres qui ont eu lieu au Centre Culturel a été une énorme école de démocratie pour nous et de reconstruction de liens au niveau local.

Le 7 février j'ai participé au premier Plénum grâce à ma rencontre avec un militant de Lijevi. J'y ai parlé de notre lutte à DITA et c'est ainsi que l'unité entre les ouvriers et les autres manifestants se fait.

Au premier Plénum il y a 25 personnes. 7 personnes sont alors arrêtés par la police. Nous les avons alors accompagnés au tribunal. Le risque que la police tire à balles réelles était grand. Les syndicalistes dont nous étions sont venus pour empêcher les policiers de tirer sur les manifestants. Au Plénums nous avons fondé des groupes de travail avec des économistes pour exiger une révision de la privatisation. Ce sont les jeunes de Lijevi qui nous aident. Les Plénums exigent « mettez les ouvriers en premiers » ! Les ouvriers veulent développer la production et éviter les autres privatisations. Surtout que la question des dettes de l'entreprise vis à vis des banques se pose.

MK : Comment la création de votre syndicat peut-elle changer la donne ?

EB : Le mouvement des Plénium a beaucoup changé les choses car il a mis la pression sur les tribunaux qui ont commencé à condamner les privatisations mafieuses et la destruction de l'outil de production.

Actuellement la direction organise des syndicats « jaunes » ou elle appelle des gens qui n'ont pas protesté pour diviser les travailleurs. C'est pour contrer cela que les ouvriers de DITA ont créé le syndicat Solidarnost. Pour continuer à mettre la pression et pour lutter contre la criminalisation du mouvement des Pléniums : des personnes sont toujours poursuivies pour « dégradations », « sabotage » et « atteinte à la propriété privée » depuis le mouvement ! De plus les syndicats sont très fragmentés. C'est pour cela que la lutte des Pléniums a pour but d'unifier les syndicats pour un front commun.

Solidarnost est un syndicat ouvert à tous. On peut en être membre sans être un travailleur de DITA. Cela élargit la base et constitue une école de lutte. Nous souhaitons que les chômeurs, les retraités et les étudiants rejoignent la lutte. Par exemple les retraités de l'industrie ont été un soutien précieux ainsi que les syndicalistes de l'électricité et de la santé.

Avant la guerre les syndicats étaient forts mais après ils ont été décriés, détruits. Je suis membre du syndicat Solidarnost mais aussi du comité de grève. J'ai été accusée par la direction de mensonge et de manipulation. Il se peut que je sois poursuivie par le tribunal. Je suis aussi accusée par les sous-traitants de les empêcher de travailler sur le site. Je pense que ces sous-traitants ne font rien de bon pour l'usine. De toute façon ils n'ont pas le droit de m'interdire d'entrer sur le site car je suis actionnaire !

MK : Quel avenir souhaitez vous pour votre usine et que peuvent faire les militants européens pour vous soutenir ?

EB : Chaque jour détériore davantage les machines. Nous n'avons pas de temps à perdre. Les 2/3 de la production est arrêtée et une partie des bâtiments est louée à des entreprises sous-traitantes qui y déposent des produits chimiques non-identifiés sans rien produire. Pourquoi est-ce

aux ouvriers de payer la corruption et l'absence de gestion de la direction ? Les ouvriers ne relâcherons pas la pression : nous occupons l'usine et exigeons qu'une enquête indépendante sur la privatisation mafieuse soit menée et la privatisation annulée.

En ce qui concerne ce que peuvent faire les militants européens, la gauche européenne peut nous aider en envoyant des militants médiatiser notre lutte et notre travail. (...) Nous voulons que la région revive, nous voulons vivre de notre travail et pour cela les ouvriers doivent contrôler la production.

Les syndicalistes de Tuzla ont besoin de soutien, de médiatisation et de la solidarité des travailleurs d'Europe. Le plus important est le comité des travailleurs du Plénum. On doit travailler à créer de la confiance entre les ouvriers. Une nouvelle révolte se prépare.

MK: Est-ce que DITA emploie des femmes et est-ce qu'elles participent à la lutte ?

Eminka rit : Les femmes sont les plus propres, plus dangereuses et plus endurantes ! Les hommes peuvent boire et mettre la lutte en danger, les femmes non !

La revendication de révision de la privatisation est révolutionnaire. Pour les ouvriers de Tuzla la privatisation n'est rien d'autre qu'un acte criminel finalement, tout comme pour les travailleurs de Walbrzych en Pologne qui dénoncent la destruction de leur ville par les fermetures et les privatisations et l'accaparement de leurs biens par des oligarques illégitimes. Il ne s'agit pas seulement d'arrêter un acte criminel mais de l'annuler donc de renationaliser ! L'émergence de cette exigence est une avancée énorme en Europe de l'Est. Le passé yougoslave que les travailleurs finalement n'ont jamais renié revient sous avec le rêve d'une nouvelle solidarité, un pays où les travailleurs auraient de nouveau le respect qui leur est dû et pourquoi pas le pouvoir.

India: A discussion on “What does Modi’s victory mean?”

By Roger Silverman, June 2014

(Cde. Silverman is one of the founders of Workers International Network. The original article, which was specially commissioned for Workers International Journal, has also been posted on <https://groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/socialistdiscussion>. WIN also has a Facebook Group: <https://www.facebook.com/WorkersIntlNetwork>)

The article I wrote recently on the Indian election results initiated a correspondence with the son of a British friend who is currently working in Bangalore, India. He has illusions in Modi, and we have had a fairly spirited exchange of ideas. I have copied here my latest reply to him...

Thanks for your reply. For me, too, it is stimulating to have my ideas challenged (even when they are right!). I haven't got time for a thorough reply now, but here are a few interim points to keep the discussion going:

You keep quoting the wishes of the USA (in this case, once again in relation to their collusion with India in unilaterally violating the nuclear non-proliferation pact), as if that were a decisive factor in determining the future course of world history. If anything, this policy had far more to do with US determination to tie the hands of Pakistan, with its ambivalent attitude to Islamic fundamentalism, than with India's rivalry with China; it is after all towards Pakistan that the Indian H-bombs are facing.

But even leaving that issue aside, your faith in the power of

the USA to shape the world according to its own interests is hopelessly anachronistic and touchingly naïve in the current epoch, and is belied in front of our very eyes, day after day, from Ukraine to Afghanistan to Iraq to Latin America. The USA may well want to find some means of curbing China's growth, but for all the reasons I've already mentioned, any hope of promoting India to the extent that it threatens to eclipse China is doomed.

(Incidentally, you also disregard the evolution of the Chinese economy. Increasingly, China's economy is shifting its former dependence on the export of cheap goods to the growth of a potentially enormous internal domestic market.)

Independent India was born amid a bloodbath of communal genocide. It was plagued from the beginning with caste atrocities and domination over the sub-continent's patchwork of national minority cultures and languages. There is simply no basis for your assumption that the medieval barbarities of India's caste heritage are now coming to an end. The very survival of a bigoted communal rabble like the BJP – let alone its current ascendancy – gives the lie to that illusion. The BJP is the shamelessly blatant political voice of Hindu communal supremacy over the Muslim and other minority religions; of perpetuation of an upper-caste apartheid system of "untouchability"; and of brutal imposition of the dominant minority Hindi language over the regional cultures.

Narendra Modi personally is the man who, as chief minister of Gujarat, presided over the communal slaughter of thousands of Muslim men, women and children, and who this very day is ramming the Hindi language down the throats of the vast non-Hindi speaking majority. I'm afraid the myth that he represents some kind of modernising technocratic enlightenment is, frankly, laughable.

In a society where every day women are raped, hanged from trees and burned alive over dowry disputes, what do you make of the recent public pronouncements by BJP ministers that rape is "sometimes right, sometimes wrong" and that "these incidents happen accidentally"? Is this evidence that "India

is evolving”?

Under Modi, the last vestigial traces of the old policies of the Nehru dynasty are being stamped out. Modi is the face of reaction in India today – the traditional ideology of India’s brutal ruling class and castes, now openly feeding the voracious appetites of the global corporations, and triumphally stamping out the last vestiges of the long-discarded policies of the Nehru dynasty, which had made at least token concessions to planning, protection and secularism – albeit hypocritically and corruptly administered.

You advocate an “effectively regulated” market economy; but who is to administer regulation over the tiny handful of rampantly predatory multinational corporations, incomparably richer and more powerful than any state, that exploit the world’s resources and populations?

You defend the provision of health care, food subsidies and education for their potential role in improving productivity, but haven’t you noticed that welfare measures of any kind – health care, subsidies, housing, education, unemployment and disability benefits – are being destroyed worldwide? And don’t you feel uneasy at finding yourself actually advocating the wholesale demolition of workers’ rights to even minimal employment security in a country where hundreds of millions of people are already unemployed or chronically underemployed? And even defending it, on the very dubious grounds that it will allegedly help provide employment? Even if this turns out to be marginally correct, any jobs that it does create will be at starvation rates of pay and under daily threat of instant termination.

I hope that you will use your stay in India, as I did for many years, to talk to people at all levels, stay with workers’ families, sleep on floors and roofs, shower with buckets of cold water, contend with rats and mosquitos, languish under power cuts, witness first-hand the hardships and struggles of ordinary people, and look at life from their standpoint too, as well as those of well-fed business economists.

And do travel outside India’s “Silicon Valley” to get a more

rounded picture of the real Indian society; although even Bangalore suffers from more fundamental problems than mere “conservatism in women’s dress codes”.

I am reading Luce’s book (Edward Luce: In Spite of the Gods: The Rise of Modern India), and will give you a fair and balanced appraisal of it once I have finished it. But I have to warn you that so far my impressions are not favourable.

Roger Silverman, June 2014

On some lessons of the French municipal elections (March 2014)

By *Balazs Nagy*, April 2014

The entire French press is unanimous. Whether left or right in their traditional political colouration – the difference is actually pretty superficial – they compare the so-called socialist party’s resounding discomfiture in the municipal elections to Napoleons historic disaster on the Berezina River in Russia in 1812, the prelude to his ultimate defeat. For once the accuracy of their judgement is beyond dispute. So our first response is above all to see what we can learn. Its a perfectly straightforward and normal thing to do, although our conclusions differ noticeably from everyone else’s.

First of all it is important to emphasise that elections change absolutely nothing in the fundamentals of the capitalist social system or, therefore, in the overall situation. This view is sharply opposed to the popular belief carefully fostered by the usual politicians and organisations

of the left. Even if elections do change that systems form or shape, they move within the framework it imposes and are an integral part of it. Whether municipal, parliamentary or European, they are just part of how the (most democratic!) system in place functions, while remaining profoundly bound to the way it moves and works.

How true this is has been more than adequately demonstrated, and two major and opposed schools of thought on the matter were in evidence during the elections. One body of opinion – an extremely heterogeneous one (especially if you include the right wingers) – traditionally asserts that elections really can bring about effective changes in the system. It has to be said, regrettably, that even a party such as the Front de Gauche (Left Front) and its component parts – which we see as actually standing on the side of working people, and as such on our side too – remains a prisoner to these blinkered electoral (parliamentary) politics. Its leaders, in effect, leave us to suppose mistakenly, or even themselves assert, that a strong showing (and all the more so outright victory) at the polls would enable them radically to change the capitalist social system.

Abstentions are a kind of vote

In contrast to these shallow parliamentary politics, another large and growing section of the population regularly and deliberately abstain. Although municipal elections supposedly affect people more directly, these latest ones saw record abstention levels of 36.6 per cent, particularly among young people.

Most bourgeois politicians and commentators get onto their moral high horse over this. They have the nerve to impugn such peoples republican credentials, and the audacity to accuse them of helping the right wing. Here or there, the reproach is added that they make it impossible for the Left Front and/or its component parts to make consistent progress, and so change

the system.

These abstentions, however, express a definite verdict on the existing capitalist system as a whole, fundamentally rejecting it and repudiating the absurd belief that voting can change the system. In this sense, they are right and we defend them against those republican paragons of (questionable) virtue, even though we think that abstaining is negative and sterile and therefore inadequate.

An accurate map showing the percentage of voters who abstained in the recent French municipal elections would clearly show another France living on the periphery of the cities in the proletarian banlieues. It is working-class France, including the unemployed, suffering under savage austerity. The bourgeois press was so bold as to reveal a tiny corner of its extent and significance. In Paris red belt there were 58.6 per cent abstentions in Ivry, 56.8 in Stains, 56.7 in Vitry-sur-Seine; then 56.7 per cent in Vaux-en-Velin in the outer suburbs of Lyon and 55.5 per cent in the disaster-stricken working-class town of Roubaix in the North. The figure is the same for Trappes in the outer suburbs of Paris, the biggest victims of galloping inequality. Bourgeois journalists and all the petit-bourgeois milieu editorialise about this in the abstract – wringing their hands over the losses suffered by the middle class! The working class and its fate simply disappear from these peoples preoccupations. This arises from a deliberate desire to minimise this dangerous class's importance, even to the point of denying its existence. So you can bet they will never draw up any such map because it would cast rather a pall over their chatter and somewhat upset their peace of mind.

On the importance of elections

Elections cannot change the capitalist system (as we can see in the daily more severe blows it inflicts on us), but political organisations would be making an unpardonable error

if they concluded that there is no point in elections. In the first place, they are important because they quite faithfully reflect each party's impact and influence, providing a pretty accurate graphic image (including abstentions) of the level and nature of the population's political consciousness.

This political thermometer marked a general defeat for Hollande and his government and, in passing, wiped out all the myth-making that had gone before about municipal elections being all about strictly local issues: all those who in 2012 had expected this government to protect them against the attacks of capital, this time around voted against his party or abstained. That message is clear. In this sense the bourgeois way the newspaper *Le Monde* explains what this vote means is deliberately misleading. They write that Holland is now paying the bill for a poor start to his tenure because it was not sustained by a clear and clearly-articulated project. (Editorial on 1 April 2014). But the obviously bourgeois nature of his project was exactly what working people did understand and voted against. Nevertheless, in its usual convoluted way, the newspaper does express the bourgeoisie's innermost concerns and its insistence that greater determination should be shown in serving that class. Their complaint expresses these requirements and their preferred response, which is to take matters directly in hand via their own traditional parties. In this they are encouraged by Hollande's own bourgeois proclivities. That explains the significance of the heightened profile of the Union for a Popular Movement (UMP), the Union of Democrats and Independents (UDI) and the Democratic Movement (MoDem), parties which express the bourgeoisie's desire to press ahead with the destruction of social gains. We can be quite sure that Hollande will do everything he can to satisfy these expectations and will (if possible) become even more hostile to what working people want.

The strength of the fascists (barely) conceals their

bourgeoisie character

The considerable advance made by the National Front (FN) is almost entirely due to its demagogic propaganda which appears to defend the interests of workers and working people. But watch out! This tactic of appearing to defend working people is a well-established and well-known trick used by all extreme-right parties. In the 1920s Hitler developed the same stratagem, presenting himself as a defender of working people. He went so far as to call his party socialist, merely adding the adjective national. As for Mussolini, he came straight out of the Italian Socialist Party. As with all fascists, social demagogy was their most important weapon, and this is what the National Front has picked up on. But how demagogic this political line is, is revealed clearly by the fact that it does not attack the whole bourgeoisie and its social system. It only sets its sights on one of its political lines, the one currently in the foreground: Europe. It advocates a different line, i.e. the withdrawal into nationalism represented by the other, minority, section of the European bourgeoisie. So the FN attacks the bourgeoisie's majority (European) policy, but not the bourgeoisie as a class which exploits other classes, nor its capitalist system. Far from it, it vigorously attacks immigrant workers, in other words the majority of the working class, and carries on alarmingly about workers' gains, denouncing various benefits. It has derived great advantages not just from this lying demagogy, which continues to conceal its avowedly bourgeois nature, but also the fact that no single party has yet unmasked it as a bourgeois party. Normally, criticisms merely affect its anti-European stance and its racist and nationalist phobias, without touching on the bourgeois basis on which they grow like excrescences.

Why is the Left Front marking time?

Elections are also an opportunity for all those united around shared political aims to rally together so as to further extend their ranks. This is particularly true of all those who

wish, on the basis of a programme, to make a step forward towards freeing working people from the yoke of the capitalist system. So the elections offered the Left Front a chance to develop. So how to explain that, despite the terrible crisis of capitalism and the fact that workers rejected this society, the Left Front did not just fall a long way back from its spectacular results in the presidential elections, but was clearly overtaken by all bourgeois parties, including the FN and the UMP?

This absurd situation is a consequence of the Left Fronts political ambiguity. While it makes it clear that it thoroughly opposes the French and European bourgeoisies recent austerity policies, it does not come out clearly against the capitalist system as such. It stays vague and enigmatic on this cardinal point which really does require some straight talking. This obscurity is revealed in the lack of a clearly working-class programme directed against capitalism as the social system at the root of all austerity. This lack of a programme and the fact they are locked into the normal bourgeois election framework have condemned them to limp along far behind the others. In short, their position does not measure up to the situation. How can you expect the Left Front to unmask the National Front as a bourgeois party if they equivocate over their own objectives? The municipal elections show that, under these conditions, the Left Front is condemned to mark time while the National Front has made considerable progress, including among discontented workers.

So the main lesson of the elections is obvious. They show ever more clearly that, instead of looking for scapegoats, the main task facing our Left Front is to make an objective assessment of its activity as a whole, above all its political programme,

Balazs Nagy, April 2014

New Valls government: A government of anti-working class struggle

By *Balazs Nagy*, April 2014

The recent local government elections and the formation of a new government are a good opportunity, indeed a direct incentive, to say more about the mean, twisted and nasty way the Hollande team running the country think. Their politico-social reasoning is very simple, not to say simplistic. It is what you might call classical social-democratic thinking of a kind well-known over the last hundred years or more.

Resolute defenders of decadent capitalism

The main thing that really marks these people out, among all those who claim to be on the side of working people, is that they present capitalism as an eternal system whose existence you just have to accept. So according to this disgrace to the name of socialist, everything we do is necessarily limited and determined by the framework of capitalism and its general rules. But as a consolation to working people, according to this conception, the capitalist system can be put right, amended and improved, and our job is to contribute to that. This cheapskate philosophy which has long been selling the mission of liberating the working class for a mess of pottage still had some limited validity when, in return for this sell-out, the bourgeoisie was still able to concede various actual reforms. But imperialism is the period of capitalism's decline – something which social democrats obstinately deny – in which, because it is exhausted, this system is organically unable to concede the slightest reform.

Now the present crisis has brutally revealed that this decline has got to the point where not only have reforms become impossible for this moribund system, but in order to survive it needs to attack and destroy previous reforms. This need is what explains its general offensive against existing reforms and its intransigent determination to fight that right through to the end.

But social democrats are incorrigible; they have not abandoned their grotesque fantasies, but adapted them precisely to the many-faceted requirements of this offensive on the part of a bourgeoisie with its back to the wall. For all Hollande's solemn oaths – and this sheds some light on the social democrats consummate duplicity – they then told us all the fibs about the need on the one hand to swell the coffers of international capital by paying back the debt, and on the other to help our own impoverished capitalist with yet more billions. Against all the evidence they still maintain the lie that thanks to this aid the grateful bourgeoisie will do everything it can to secure the well-being of working people. Even a few weeks ago Hollande was still handing out dozens of billions in line with this plan, but he and his ilk were the only ones (like all self-respecting social democrats) who still believed the incredible dream that in exchange the bourgeoisie would give unemployed people work. (Through these outrageous deceptions they hoped to justify making savings by drastically cutting expenditure on health, education, all welfare benefits, wages, right to a job and so forth, to the point of threatening their very existence.) Alongside this savage demolition of genuine previous reforms – and to show that they are true reformists carrying out actual reforms – they have flooded the country with a wave of so-called societal reforms – at the margins of and even outside of social and economic life – such as same-sex marriage, electrical cars and so forth. The main function of these pretend reforms has invariably been to distract attention from the activity of destroying previous reforms.

The local government elections brought a stinging defeat to those who, in their arrogant and pretentious duplicity, thought that working people had swallowed this hogwash hook, line and sinker. They were sincerely and profoundly surprised when they saw the results. But to go from there to imagining that Hollande and co would revise their policies and adapt them to what working people want would be an absurd illusion. Far from it!

A build-up of losses and other miseries threaten workers.

The new government is not just a body committed carrying on Hollande and co.s bourgeois policy of robbing working people. In view of the preceding governments alleged dawdling in getting on with the job and also the bourgeoisies growing appetite, not to say bulimia, it is going to toughen up considerably. After 26 March, the employers body Medef trumpeted: A more ambitious trajectory than the 50 billion cut already announced is now absolutely imperative, (Le Monde, 30-31 March 2014). Then the headline on the same newspapers editorial of 1 April spelled out what the government has to do: Hold course! No wobbling, get on with it! And then Hollande's road map made it clear: The only responsible outcome is to set afoot and then roll out reforms aiming at securing an economic recovery. We all know the terrible reality hiding behind these anodyne words. The self-proclaimed leaders of the bourgeoisie in Brussels have also jumped at the chance to insist on greater rigour from the French government. And the commercial treaty being prepared between Europe and the US has up its sleeve further blows which will make any hopes of an economic recovery by France, already pretty well compromised, even more precarious.

Hollande reacted swiftly, obeying not indeed the wishes of the disappointed voters but the requirements of his real, bourgeois, bosses. He quickly established a new government team tightly organised around his closest social-democratic partners. His new prime minister, Valls, is ready-made to

epitomise it, with his even more pronounced right-wing political orientation and aggressive character. It is no accident that he has long wanted to rid his party's name of the adjective socialist. So right from the start this team presents itself as an advanced detachment of a bourgeois attack formation. The odd reassuring and soothing phrase where required do not alter this truth. We shall have occasion later on to comment in greater detail on this new governments anti-worker offensive, the first elements of which, aiming to dismantle the social security system, we have just seen.

There certainly is a change, not to say a turn. Here is an end to the procrastination and shilly-shallying which, however much they suit Hollande's innate weakness, have become intolerable to the bourgeoisie and seem contrary to the nature of the new government. The presence of people with a left aura like Hamon and Montebourg has nothing to do with any real left. Much more, it signifies the end of equivocation or misunderstanding surrounding these careerists reputations. Indeed, if there is a real left in this party, apart from the usual fake-left loud-mouths like Lienemann and co., now would be the time to say so in opposition to the deployment of definite measures and attacks against workers gains. Above all, now is the time for all organisations who speak and act in workers interests to rally round the Left Front to prepare together a broad united front of all working people against the redoubled attacks by capital and its new government.

Balazs Nagy, April 2014

Euro-election results reveal signs of Political turmoil in Europe

By *Bob Archer*

Politicians and the media talked a great deal about earthquakes as the results of last months elections to the European parliament were published. This was especially true in France and the UK, where the established parties were beaten at the polls by the Front National (FN) and the UK Independence Party respectively.

Failing to assuage voters anger could mean the erosion, if not the destruction of the union in a matter of years, said veteran Austrian journalist Erhard Stackl, writing in The New York Times International Weekly. In some countries, the vote against an integrated Europe was profound.

He consoled himself with the observation that nevertheless two-thirds of the votes were cast for pro-European parties. And in Germany, the economic powerhouse of the 28-nation bloc, Chancellor Merkel and her allies still command a comfortable majority.

Smarting under a series of lost seats in the European parliament, many established bourgeois parties needed all the consolation on offer.

Actually integrating and developing a unified economic unit in Europe is a historic necessity. How urgent it is has been adequately demonstrated by two terrible world wars centring on the continent.

The simple fact that the bourgeoisie finds it profoundly difficult to carry out this fundamental task is striking proof of how deep the crisis of capitalism is.

But their brainwashing machine quickly springs into action to distract attention from this problem to a series of real or imaginary surrogates:

There are three main reasons for the voters anger, Herr Stackl continues: dissatisfaction with political leaders, who are seen as uncaring and arrogant; frustration because of the slow economic recovery; and the growing fear of foreigners.

Encouraged by demagogues, citizens of the well-to-do countries are blaming immigrants from poorer countries for many of their woes.

All established political parties from conservatives to social democrats speak and act on behalf of the capitalist class. They work might and main to remove all the social gains working people have made in previous decades and centuries. This includes all the so-called socialist parties, whether PASOC in Greece, the SPD in Germany, the Parti Socialiste in France or Labour in the UK, who all chant in unison that the debt ? which is really a tax levied by bankers via national state fiscal systems on working people all around the world ? has to be paid down, and that in order to do so, government spending on all social services, state education and health provision, housing and welfare and all the rest has to be cut, and whatever fragments remain, privatised.

It is not the personal qualities of politicians which is the question here, but their attachment to the needs of a particular class, the bourgeoisie. Whether or not people are conscious of it, their anger towards these politicians is caused by a series of attacks on working people on behalf of this bourgeois class.

The slow economic recovery is caused by the global depth of the crisis of capitalism and, indeed, by what the bourgeoisie does in order to overcome it, for example cutting the living standards of swathes of working people across the continent, attacking benefits and wage levels, and so forth.

The growing fear of foreigners really is not just encouraged but fanned into flame by demagogues.

But, besides the vile gutter press which has carried out a sustained campaign of vilifying and scapegoating migrants, those demagogues also include significant forces in parties as respectable as the UK Labour Party. People who cannot recognise and fight their real enemy, concealed within a fog of business deals and obscure financial transactions, are incited to turn on their neighbours because of some imagined ethnic, national or religious difference. They are taught by these demagogues to judge their fellow working people by such standards and to blame them for a crisis they have not created.

Many commentators lump the FN and UKIP together with radical

socialist parties like Syriza in Greece, Podemos in Spain and others. This is sowing deliberate confusion. The FN and UKIP deliberately seek a turn back into national economic isolation from the rest of the continent while whipping up backward chauvinism. Syriza and the others are a very different matter, and represent an attempt to resurrect political organisation among working people.

There are indeed some forces on the left which follow UKIP and the FN in denouncing European unity and migration, groups such as the Communist Party of Britain's NO2EU campaign in the UK, but in fact anybody who agreed with these bourgeois politics were always mainly going to vote for an openly right-wing grouping anyway.

Indeed, the media also played a role in this, completely ignoring the left anti-EU candidates but adoringly splashing pictures of Nigel Farage and Marine Le Pen at every opportunity across front pages and the TV screen.

The subsequent media rhetoric about earthquakes hides the odd fact that most of these right-wing parties did less well in these elections than they have previously. The Dutch Party for Freedom of Geert Wilders saw their share of the vote tumble from an earlier prediction of 20% to a mere 13.3%. The Finns Party (True Finns) saw similar shrinkage in their vote. In recent Hungarian elections, Jobbik won 20% of the vote, but in the Euro-elections they claim as a break-through, they only achieved 15%.

However, the outcome of the 2014 European elections strengthen and embolden some of the most reactionary forces across Europe. With resistance by working people to cuts and austerity continuing across the continent, often inchoate as is it, such forces will soon be unleashed to impose the bourgeoisies attacks on working people.

More than ever, a step forward in building a workers movement across the continent for a Europe of working people is essential. The answer to fascism does not lie in relying upon the bourgeoisie to sustain democratic methods when it is wracked by crisis. It lies in mobilising working people to fight for the needs of their class.

But this must involve overcoming the damage to working class organisation and consciousness brought about by the bourgeoisies attacks, the collapse of the USSR and its

satellites and the degeneration of socialist and communist movements.

The articles by [Balazs Nagy](#) in the [Wirfi Journal No.5 June 2014](#) deal with all these issues through the prism of the French municipal elections and preparations for the recent Euro-elections. They provide the essential basis for grasping the current political situation and acting upon it.

Down with the bourgeois politics of the Front National! Against reactionary, nationalist fascism!

By *Balazs Nagy*, May 2014

The forthcoming European elections will no doubt produce unprecedented advances by the French Front National (FN). It gained considerable strength by its spectacular advances in the recent municipal elections, which have clearly given it a head-start in the European elections. So a critical examination of its programme, in particular in relation to Europe, is not only vital in itself but allows us to clarify what the essential problems for Europe are. It also allows to look at all the other parties European policies.

Now, to decode what the FN's orientation towards Europe is and what it means, we must first of all describe its national policy. We must do this not on the basis of that party's own deceptive slogans or what other people say about it, but on the firm basis of the only objective criterion for political

evaluation, i.e. its class character.

What is the Front National's real class character?

Actually, we need to establish clearly what the FN's social basis is and indicate unequivocally which class's interests are expressed in its programme and activities. This is the fundamental question which politicians and commentators either evade or completely muddle up, but it is the most important one.

There are, of course, some vague and hesitant answers which describe the Front National as a petit-bourgeois party, or one that speaks on behalf of layers of de-classed workers. And it is true that in the FN's various shenanigans you will see out-and-out, provocative and panicked members of the petit-bourgeoisie as well as disorientated and desperate working people who follow this party. A large number of bourgeois propagandists also call this a populist party, alluding to its social demagogy. But the only concrete content of this description is simply the bourgeoisies familiar contempt for anything in the slightest way connected with the people.

All these descriptions are superficial. The adjective populist is so devoid of meaning that brain-dead journalists, in deference to the futile and inconsistent great minds they follow, apply it not just to the FN, but to Melançon's Left Party (Parti de Gauche) too! What do they care that the class nature and objectives of these two parties are radically opposed, or that by acting in this way they are depriving themselves of an investigative method that actually has some validity.

But it is also superficial to view the FN as a petit-bourgeois party, even if there is an element of truth in it. It is true that the Front National is petit bourgeois in its composition, like similar bodies all over Europe. That was also true in the past of Hitlers and Mussolini's parties, and the rest of them, before they seized power. This widely-held opinion arises from immediate impressions based on superficial features of these parties, which various cohorts of petit-bourgeois do flock to join. It goes no further than the social composition of these

parties, and completely neglects to describe their clearly and explicitly bourgeois programme.

The NF's bourgeois nature is clearly underlined by the party's programme and – as we shall see in detail later on – by what it actually does. But so-called classical bourgeois and social-democratic politicians and all their spokesmen make all that disappear as if by magic. This blindness is the intellectual expression of the class and social stratum to which they belong, and they also display it towards all past fascist movements (from Hitler and Mussolini to Franco and Salazar).

This conception, which camouflages the social nature of fascist parties behind their social composition, was taken up and amplified by Stalinists in the 1930s and pressed into service for their Popular Front policies to rescue bourgeois society. Certainly the tenacious persistence of this superficial point of view right up to the present owes a lot to the still considerable influence of Stalinist ideology, which continues to poison minds at large, long after its progenitors power collapsed. As for the kinship between the FN and past (and present) fascist parties, it can be confirmed to the extent that their specific – and shared – bourgeois character is clearly understood. To check this we need first to make a brief detour into the past.

Past lessons help us to understand the present

What we need, to help us orientate ourselves correctly, is a theoretical elucidation of the historic experience of those years, in particular Trotsky's Marxist explanation, which remains totally valid today. Against all the general, botched and inconsistent characterisations one encounters today, he alone provided a serious analysis of fascism based on the class struggles and movements in capitalist society in its period of decline. Of all the many writing he devoted to this subject, let us pick his study: *What Next? Vital Questions for the German Proletariat* (1932), which I strongly recommend to

all activists.

In it, Trotsky notes that in the period of its imperialist decline, capital is able to stay in power only through the entire support of either social democracy or fascism. And if the strength of the proletariat is paralysed by the lack of its own political organisation or the inability of its leadership to march towards the seizure of power, these auxiliary arms of capital will grow stronger. But the inevitable accentuation of the general crisis of capitalism and its growing exhaustion sap and undermine the traditional pedestals upon which social-democratic activity is based: reforms and parliamentary democracy. The exacerbation and prolongation of the general crisis thus abolish the foundations upon which social-democracy rests (reforms) and alters the framework within which it operates (parliamentary democracy). So social democracy grows noticeably weaker while the fascists, with their unbridled social demagoguery, grow stronger.

Only a thin membrane today separates France – or indeed the majority of European countries – from a similar situation. To be able to re-establish capitalism's former equilibrium and check the decline that threatens it, the bourgeoisie urgently needs not just to completely demolish the gains the proletariat made previously, but also to smash (or completely domesticate) its organisations. At the moment, they reckon that they can do that without recourse to the direct terror of fascism. They have already appreciably weakened democracy in an authoritarian and Bonapartist direction both within each country and at a European level. They have also succeeded in destroying a considerable mass of social rights and advantages, and all without any large-scale social shocks. Even if they still have a long way to go, all the signs are that they will be able to continue along the same lines. So you can sum it up like this: The so-called democratic rule of the bourgeoisie, profoundly corrupted by the virus of bonapartist authoritarianism, has already shown much more muscle in imposing tough decisions, while at the same time

that class is still afraid of the kind of leap into the unknown involved in going over openly to fascism, the memory of which is still painfully alive. It prefers to stick with the social democrats who anyway seem determined enough to destroy social gains and rights and working class organisations (or at least severely discipline them). Above all, they are reassured by the remarkable weakness and torpor of the workers organisations, the virtual absence of a vigorous response by the proletariat. So everything encourages them to continue as they did in the past.

But despite all that, the crisis has grown more severe and instability has increased. Bourgeois voices are raised demanding a further and more decisive turn, pressing ahead to restore capitalism's health. The European Commission, the French employers organisation, Medef, and other members of the bourgeoisie show no gratitude to Hollande for services rendered but grow yet more demanding and openly arrogant. Alongside this, the fascists' strength and influence spread and they prepare to take power. Under these conditions the bourgeois nature of Front National stands out increasingly and its kinship with fascism becomes obvious.

An aggressive bourgeois party custom-built to save moribund capital at any price.

The class character of the Front National's programme leaves no room for doubt. It is flagrantly bourgeois. At the same time the FN takes care not to place too much emphasis on its total open support for capitalism, so as not to compromise the social posture it has usurped. However, its programme and the corresponding propaganda nowhere put in question capitalism as such as a well-defined social and economic system. Its criticisms are aimed not at the system itself but solely at its current policies, against which it advocates the application of different policies of the same capitalist system.

So of course it carefully avoids seeking to overthrow

capitalism or agitating for this. Consequently it is deliberately opposed to the social revolution and looks forward to coming in power in accordance with all the rules and customs of bourgeois parliamentary politics, even if it would not hesitate to shoulder them aside should the need arise. But, like all other fascist formations past and present, they won't lay a finger on the sacrosanct private ownership of capital.

Now unlike the traditional bourgeois parties and their social democrat partners and rivals, the FN and its like do not rest content merely to present a different programme. These parties base theirs on a virulent and provocative social and political criticism of economic, social and cultural defects, not as something inherent to the capitalist system, but as the direct consequences of alleged corruption of national space and its invasion by various ethnicities and nationalities.

This is where the fascist nature of the Front National and its ilk right across Europe emerges clearly and unequivocally. Sociological and political criteria are replaced by nationalist and racist phrase-mongering. Hitler and his supporters found an explanation for the social sufferings of the masses in an imaginary Jewish plot. We know what atrocities this vile anti-Semitism led to. At present the Front National focuses its attacks on Arab-origin French workers and working people and on refugees. But of course they have merely adapted the self-same genocidal propensities to demographic and political changes and are keen to shrug off the highly-injurious association with the still vivid memories of the death camps. But as long as capitalism continues and tries to halt its decline, anti-Semitism and its fascist thugs will also remain active.

Now this nationalism and racism do not emerge – and never did historically – as excessive national sentiment somehow outside of or above classes. As they always did, they form the foundations of a policy and propaganda with a clearly-defined class basis. Its violent anti-Arab attacks are concentrated on and aimed against the most numerous and most vulnerable

section of the French working class and working people, which is those of Arab origin and/or identity. But curiously they spare rich emir parasites and, as if by magic, turn into fascinated admiration when it comes to Saudi Arabia and the Emirates, these great rentier parasites of world capitalism. (Ingrained anti-Arabism on the part of a few fanatical mystics does not alter this fundamental political fact).

This bourgeois-fascist lineage or genealogy on the part of Front National is entirely confirmed by its real attitude to so-called austerity policies. It castigates them in general and as a whole as mistaken and useless, since in their view all problems would be solved if only all foreigners were expelled, but in reality it does not engage in the slightest struggle against the anti-working class measures involved. One would look in vain for any plan or real struggle by the FN against the constant pension cuts, the systematic erosion of rights at work, or unemployment. On the other hand, it is well known that it was really the FN who thought of slapping the disgusting and contemptuous label welfare dependents on social welfare recipients, especially the unemployed, and call for payments to be stopped. If they have for now shut up on this typically ignoble fascist demand, it is because the fascist contamination is so strong that other bodies are doing their work for them (Like Sarkozy through his fascist adviser Buisson, and after him the Socialist Party interior minister Valls against Roma, or now the Union for a Popular Movement (UMP) MP Wauquiez on welfare dependency)

The programme of national isolation is a fascist policy

The fascist character of the Front National's bourgeois programme emerges most brutally in relation to Europe and its future. To strip it down, we need first to cast a brief glance at the bourgeoisie's own orientation on Europe.

Painfully, and at the cost of two world wars involving massive destruction, this bourgeoisie, or rather its dominant faction, has arrived at a significant pragmatic conclusion: that the

powerful contradiction between the forces of production, which have become European (and even global), and the strict maintenance of national divisions, is one of the causes of capitalist decline and thus a permanent source of war; that even this massive destruction, despite an unheard-of level of devastation, has done nothing to stop this decline but only slowed and prolonged it, all the while growing in extent and intensity. It was this empirical understanding which forced the bourgeoisie to undertake among other things the unification of Europe under the iron rod of its larger monopolies.

Now the whole undertaking of building Europe is completely impossible for the bourgeoisie, whose birth was linked to and completely bound up with the birth of nation states. For the same reason, the death of these nation states will for sure only come over the corpse of the bourgeoisie. Events in recent years completely confirm this truth. The more the bourgeoisie has engaged on the road to its version of European unity, the more it has stoked up its crisis, the more it has weakened itself and torn itself apart. Its very first hesitant and shaky steps towards its alleged European unification already increased the general destruction at every level and increased many-fold the difficulties all working people have suffered. Above all and despite these unprecedented ravages, difficulties of every kind continued to grow, the class struggle has intensified, doubts persist and become widespread – and the death agony of capitalism worsens.

The Front National certainly picks up in a very lively way on what is badly wrong in the traditional bourgeoisies (and its social democratic allies) attitude to Europe, not to correct it, but to denounce European re-unification as an unsuitable, not to say harmful, approach to resolving the general crisis of the system. Against it they advocate the abolition of the Euro and other attributes of unification and a frank return to national sovereignty as we used to know it.

But such a jump backwards into the past is nowadays impossible; it would create immense upheavals which could

quite possibly throw humanity a long way back. How damaging that would be was proved by the atrocities of war as long ago as 1914 and confirmed by the even worse atrocities between 1939 and 1945. Nowadays the European jigsaw of nation states existing separately from each other as independent entities is no more than an historic relic based on differences of language and culture. When we look at the material basis of life, we see economies really intertwined, an organic linking or fusion between the economic products of the various countries which has far outgrown any kind of self-contained national economies existing in parallel and lends them an increasingly integrated character at the European and even international level. Even if this unification is being done in a capitalist way, i.e. by cruelly grinding away involving material destruction, suffering on the part of millions, and above all glaring imperfections and inadequacies, it is concretely being done and there is no possible way to turn the clock back that does not involve general chaos.

This is because what is at stake here is the historic development of the socialisation of production on a grand scale, something that even the bourgeoisie has continually had to adapt to, albeit in its own capitalist way, in order to mitigate the growing and murderous contradiction between this process and the private character of ownership. The absurd, rickety, incomplete character of their European turn faithfully reflects their fear and inability to see things through to the end, and then on top of that they had to adjust to the international socialisation that has been (wrongly) described as globalisation. Their grotesque attempts to mitigate the threats of serious instability that arise in the capitalist system from this growing international socialisation by establishing official but ramshackle European, American, Asian etc. regional groupings and then the G20 are testimony to how potent this socialisation process is. These bourgeois reactions to the challenges posed by the socialisation of the world (and European) economy cannot but be timid and incomplete, because not only do they rest on the

basis and framework of capitalism, they also aspire to consolidate the system. But instead of mitigating the sources of disequilibrium and instability, they increase them and sharpen the contradictions even more. And so the bourgeoisies European adventure has considerably increased imbalances across the continent, increased economic instability and further deepened the contradictions between the various countries in the continent. The persistent isolation which has greeted French intervention in Africa (Mali and Central African Republic), then the paralysing cacophony of contradictory interests over Ukraine and Putins policies express this natural inability to achieve real European unity.

For a workers programme for Europe!

The conclusion is obvious: All criticisms of the Front National which do not expose its bourgeois character badly miss the essential point. Obviously none of the bodies such as the (Conservative) UMP, the Socialist Party (PS), etc., can do that, so their criticisms of this dangerous rival are reduced to angry shouting of a generally moral order. Their hands are particularly tied in this respect in that they all on occasion draw from the same nauseating bourgeois political arsenal as the Front National without a second thought. Their policies towards Roma and other refugees illustrate this perfectly. At a European level they are compelled to defend their own anti-working class machinery in servile and ingratiating terms against the spectre of the aggressive FN nation-state.

In fact, expecting any political organisation that is not itself resolutely opposed to the bourgeoisie to come up with a class critique of the Front National is really like trying to square the circle; its literally impossible! And the absence of such a fundamental critique on the part of organisations which nevertheless put themselves forward as opposing the capitalist system as a whole reveals how seriously they lack any such ambition.

But a few additional comments are required on the European

policy of the Left Party (Parti de Gauche), who do aspire to represent working people and so deserve a closer examination. For all our political sympathy for this organisation, or rather, precisely because of the solidarity we feel towards it, we are obliged to repeat a criticism we already made during the French municipal elections: It quite clearly does not have a working-class programme. It didn't have one during the previous elections and the lack is possibly even more glaring in relation to Europe.

Of course we do know this party's criticisms of the bourgeoisies current European monstrosity and its austerity policies. We agree with them. But it is essential to recall that even the harshest, severest and most extensive criticisms workers pour out on this Europe do not add up to a political programme. If they themselves were enough to create such a programme, you would not need a political party. On the other hand we are undergoing the terrible effects of the Europe imposed by the PS, UMP and their allies. We also know that in this area the Front National wants a return to nation-states. These are the two orientations available to the bourgeoisie. But what, concretely, does the Left Party want? In the absence of a clear and direct answer, one can only speculate.

The party's documents talk about the need to reject Europe as it is so as to open the way to put it right socially, economically and ecologically. It also demands that Europe should be re-founded on social, ecological, democratic and peaceful foundations and also wants a new model of development in Europe. It declares it wants to put an end to the Europe of finance, asserting the need to break with productivism: set up a Europe-wide ecological planning system.

The way these desires are formulated suffers from a dreadful lack of precision, expresses unforgivable naivety and at times betrays crass ignorance. It very clearly shows that instead of an exact and precise political programme, the Left Party presents a fairly confused jumble of vague aspirations and scrambled and indistinct hopes and desires. In any case, the one priority that does stand out clearly in this wish list is

to leave the capitalist structure of economy and society fundamentally unchanged, since all this party wants to do is at most alter (or re-found) it in the sense of relegating finance to a subordinate position and reorganising the economy according to ecological doctrine.

In doing so, this list abandons all the tried and tested methods of working peoples struggles such as putting social demands in the foreground and the alliance with trade union struggles. It replaces them with the cheap and tacky ideology of ecology, whose main function is to absolve the capitalist system of its innate responsibility for destroying nature and to re-direct this accusation against people in general.

Now all these specific wishes are entirely compatible with preserving the continued existence of capitalism. They do not at all demand that it should be destroyed, but merely that it should be corrected and improved. (Clearly this party's leaders do not realise that even some of these innocent wishes are in complete contradiction with capitalism as it really is. And in that case capitalism will either tolerate these garrulous but basically inoffensive charlatans or it will confront them brutally because its crisis is getting more serious. As always happened throughout history, when that occurs, the great majority of these nave quacks will choose capitulation while a tiny minority will decide to fight but, unprepared and overtaken by events, will go down to certain defeat.)

But a workers programme takes an entirely different route: It calls things by their proper name. So it starts resolutely and publicly from how flagrantly and obviously bankrupt capitalism is when it comes to providing the slightest solution to or improvement in the day-to-day difficulties working people in Europe face. The future capitalism holds for them is getting gloomier and less secure, and the system itself cannot accurately predict even the main lines of where it is going. It will not find refuge in any one of its long-past variants: certainly not its old, bankrupt, democratic version and even less whatever it can lash together in terms of the nation-

state. Such a programme would clearly enunciate the need to abolish this bankrupt capitalism and replace its pseudo-Europe with the goal of a United Workers (or Socialist) States of Europe, the only road to any real level of continental economic and social integration. We call on all worker-activists and their political organisations, especially the ones in Left Front, to adopt that sort of programme.

It is easy to see that such a programme could not be achieved all in one go, but needs to be prepared and facilitated by a whole series of obvious immediate demands which, as transitional demands, would lead to the inevitable conclusion that such a programme is needed. Besides providing a framework activists to mobilise, it is essential that, to fulfil the requirements of a genuine workers programme in leading us to socialism (actual break with capitalism, real class independence and living working-class internationalism), such a programme should contain:

1. Joint planning at a European level of the activity of all political formations really fighting for a working peoples programme for Europe, and standing international co-ordination between them.

2. It is important to state the objective of a struggle for a Working Peoples Europe, as the anti-chamber to the Workers United States, in opposition not only to the current bankers Europe but also the fascists goal of nation-states.

Several partial demands can be condensed into this one:

- a. It implies the struggle to unify legislation right across Europe which embodies social advantages and gains on the basis of the most favourable (minimum wage, pensions, social security, etc.).

- b. It involves sustained activity in relation to and alongside the trade unions with a view to extending co-operation to organise this struggle.

3. The demand to cancel the states immense debts should be prominent in the programme. It is through the reimbursement of these debts and the interest that lenders (banks etc.) regularly siphon off a significant portion of the surplus

value produced in the debtor countries. On the other hand, the obligation to repay the debt is used as a pretext to cut and destroy social rights and gains. So debt and repayment constitute the main current source of extra profit and a vital lever for exploiting the working class and working people in Europe. To make it easier to understand and popularise this demand, we should co-operate with all movements calling for a public, independent examination and general audit of these debts.

4. Reducing the struggle against unemployment to the national level is a return to past failed practices or at least represents a serious illusion now that the inter-dependence of the various countries of Europe is so far advanced and the unemployed form about 20 per cent of Europe's active population. This fact makes an active movement essential which challenges capitalism's claim to dominate and direct the economy. That is the demand for workers control of businesses threatened with closure and the establishment of a struggle for workers control to ban unemployment.

5. Finally, a real fight for genuine European democracy is vital against all the bourgeoisies despotic bodies and arrangements. A real general clean-out is needed to close them down and re-organise them (the European commissions and directorates and all bodies such as the European Central Bank, the European Parliament, etc.) to ensure that there exists a new set of European arrangements that function in a healthy way at the service of working people. The pre-condition for such a clean-out is preparing, convening and holding a European Constituent Assembly.

A workers programme of this kind puts to shame all the various schemes and horse-trading which preoccupy the leaders of the Left Front about what organisations are called and whose names is on the ballot paper as miserable squabbles of a cheap parliamentary politics unable to hide the absence of a workers programme worthy of the name. However, perhaps a pathetic result at the ballot box will shake these organisations centrist outlook and unleash a movement for their renewal. It

is a hope to cling to.

Balazs Nagy,

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