

# Why they voted leave

*Mirek Vodslon, 5 July 2016*

“Why we voted leave: voices from northern England” is the title of a documentary (<https://vimeo.com/172932182>) which is really worth giving some thought to. To be more exact, it is a militant message in the form of a documentary. In just under 12 minutes it also shows some of the problems with the Lexit (“left exit”) or “socialist Brexit” position. It was “filmed and edited by Sheena Sumaria, Guerrera Films”, is being advertised by the left group “Counterfire” and shows an anonymous interviewer speaking to five other persons, also unnamed, a Remain voter and four Leave voters in Doncaster.

The supposed need to “take our country back” or “make Britain Britain again” comes up early on. These concerns are first and foremost on the minds of two interviewees. The main reason (mentioned by one of these workers) is to control immigration.

Another two voted Leave “for change” and one of these states that his vote was not about immigration. But why is this change going to be a change for the better? They don’t say, and neither does the interviewer who apparently agrees with these two. She converses with them at length and asks them about Corbyn. Their answer is that they are or were Corbyn supporters despite him adopting the Remain position or until he did. The interviewer, like the Socialist Party and Counterfire, thinks that Corbyn’s Remain campaign was a terrible concession to the right wing of the Labour Party. The interviewer is ready to give him “one more chance” but not two.

One interviewee pleads, like Corbyn, for remaining in the European Union in order to change it. After 30 seconds, the interviewer takes over and “refutes” this lonely “Remainer” simply by asserting that she does not believe in social

reforms of the undemocratic EU because the capitalists rule the EU and have the opposite agenda. So, yes, these are voices justifying why they voted Leave, at about 20 to 1 in terms of time, without any real debate with working-class Remainers.

There really is an unorganised working-class anti-EU “movement”. The video shows that and also that it is in part “guided” by this desperate consideration: It can’t get any worse (wrong!), so I vote for whatever promises a change. The presumably socialist interviewer belongs to the movement and supports this fraction of it. An even larger part of this movement voted for change and “knew” what kind of change they wanted, the one that they mistakenly believed would make British imperialism stronger. These two tendencies, desperate adventurism and nationalism, do not exclude each other.

We are not talking here about the nationalism of an oppressed nation. These workers have been falsely persuaded that their oppression is the result of the oppression of their British nation by the European Union but, no, this is the nationalism of a medium sized decadent imperialism, part of whose ruling class dreamt of becoming “great again” by abandoning the EU and especially by getting rid of EU’s minimal social standards. Workers supporting this act against their own immediate interests. The irony on top of this bitter irony is of course that the success of that project is already accelerating both the decadence of British imperialism and the demise of the EU.

The false premise of British workers’ nationalism is the “austere” view that jobs, wages and social resources (NHS, schools, libraries, benefits etc.) – in fact the whole of the working and living conditions of workers – are self-evidently limited British national treasures. From that follows the necessity to guard these precious “possessions” both against foreign workers and against foreign powers like the EU.

These “austere” limits are obviously *the* issue that socialists

need to take up with working-class Leave voters (and with all other workers, of course). Practical goals have to be proposed and cast as demands. Those can be only international demands to break with austerity and stop competition among workers, like demands of a European minimum wage allowing a decent living standard, and generally a European minimum of decent social standards.

The EU is able to finance large European programmes. For instance, German finance minister Schäuble has just proposed a big European programme of armament. This is an ideal occasion for Die Linke in Germany, Podemos in Spain, Front de Gauche in France, the renewed Labour Party of Britain and trade unions all over Europe to mobilise not just *against* this horror, but *for* a positive counter-proposal, a European plan of public works to improve the lives of working people and give them work, especially but not only in “deprived” regions like northern England. That is, make the transition from international “protests” to an international mobilisation for demands to make Europe a place fit for working people.

Such demands can unite European workers and so make an international mobilisation possible. British workers can and must fight for such demands together with workers on the continent despite being now out of the EU by virtue, or rather by the vice, of a mendacious referendum. This has made their situation worse and solidarity with continental workers more difficult to organise, just as the “outsourcing” of a section of the workforce of a company makes it more difficult to organise the solidarity of the whole workforce. Both British and continental workers must now use their trade unions and political parties to intervene strongly in the Brexit negotiations in order to preserve as many of the conditions of that solidarity as possible and even develop them. This concerns especially workers’ rights specified in the European treaties and conventions, however meagre they may be. No British exception undercutting those rights! No restriction of

the free movement of workers across Europe, including Britain! These rights must be included in the settlement.

Unfortunately, most working class Leave voters have apparently already made up their minds that British subjection to the EU and especially immigration imposed by the EU are the problems. Coming back to the film, its thrust is to adapt to this position instead of offering an internationalist alternative to it. The interviewer may be an internationalist herself but she refuses to consider reforms of the EU and thus any real steps along a path of an international transition to a socialist Europe. This disarms her when it comes to arguing for internationalism and this may be why she does not even try to take up the subject of internationalism with her polite interviewees. Had she tried some abstract internationalist proclamations on them (called "socialist" or "left" "argumentation for Brexit" by some ultraleft groups), she might have reaped polite disinterest or even a remark that such proclamations have no connection with their plight.

Instead, she offers the heartbreaking spectacle of a socialist confirming British nationalistic delusions with the following idea: "Austerity is coming from the EU because the EU governs governments". I beg to differ. This is one of the lies propagated by the class enemies who led the successful Brexit campaign. Efficient lies must be half-truths. In his case, it is just one fourth of the truth. First, the EU is a conglomerate of national states who have the last word in it, which is why the EU is currently paralysed on several questions. Second, the EU Commission does *appear* to govern governments and this appearance *has* been used to shield these governments from their responsibility for imposing austerity. This is the partial truth in the lie. The main part of the truth is that ever increasing "austerity" is an absolute necessity of contemporary capitalism which is why it is being imposed by all its political representatives, national and "European" and why the working class cannot wait much longer

to get rid of capitalism. No less important is the fact that capitalism pushed back into the narrow limits of the British national state will have to impose even more severe austerity, and is already planning to do so.

The interviewer having herself adopted some irrational beliefs instilled by the bourgeois Brexit campaign, it is no wonder that she tends to gloss over the irrational or even reactionary aspects of her interlocutors' opinions in order to make these opinions *look* like expressions of some hypothetical kind of class consciousness that could do without internationalism. Except that this hypothesis is refuted not just by theory, but also by the long experience of working class movement.

These contortions are required to try to underpin the main thesis of the film, which is: the Leave vote of workers was a class vote. What the film really shows is that the vote of the five "Leavers", including the interviewer, was not about the *struggle* of their own class. It was desperate and in part it was about slogans adopted by a fraction of the enemy class: "national independence" of Britain, mostly in order to curb immigration. If these five voices did cast a class vote, then it was the vote of a class that despairs of herself and has given up being a subject with a goal in life. So, by what it really shows, the film warns us of the possibility that *this sort* of working-class consciousness might prevail. If it does prevail, it will pave the way for barbarism to engulf humanity. Instead of glorifying it, socialists need to think hard how to rebuild real, organised, socialist class consciousness, even if it begins – as it obviously does – as that of a class which must first regain confidence and test seriously if it can defend or recover decent working and living conditions without overthrowing the capitalist class and its state.

To wrap it up, the interviewer spends time reminiscing on the defeat of the miners' strike of 1984-1985, the following

deindustrialisation, and the fall of thousands into unemployment and despair. The lesson is that class struggle, in this case a defeat decades ago and subsequent defeats on top of that, are among the deep causes that created the contemporary conditions in which parts of the working class arrive at such utterly wrong conclusions as those expressed by four of the interviewees and the interviewer herself. No less important a cause has been the prolonged absence of a socialist alternative, but the film does not even touch on that. Whatever the causes, wrong conclusions from past struggles remain wrong.

The interviewer wished to correct the view that working-class Brexiters are all racists. She succeeded in that. Even one of the two working-class British nationalists interviewed is no racist, i.e., he does not derive his identity or that of his enemies from skin colour, skull metrics or pedigree. The other British nationalist is a waste collector, was interviewed at work on the road and had no time to explain himself. Both are certainly afraid of their "foreign" class brothers and sisters and want to keep them out. They are xenophobes.

The strange insistence that most working-class Leave voters are no racists draws attention away from the terrible fact that working-class xenophobia has become a mass phenomenon. Not just in Britain, all over Europe. Trying to sweep that fact under the rug is plainly irresponsible and self-delusional. Nationalism and xenophobia will not go away simply because workers are now being taught a lesson about the negative effects of Brexit which are already setting in. On the contrary, further negative experiences threaten to make xenophobia fester and become fascism.

The question is, how to prevent that? British-nationalistic and xenophobic workers are not likely to be among the first who will be won to a socialist programme. They have some serious rethinking to do because there can be no programme of the working class which is both socialist and nationalist, or

both for workers' solidarity and for excluding foreigners from it. It will take time, fresh positive experience of struggle and above all help from other sections of the working class.

There are now two ways to deny them that help. One is to blame them for the living conditions to which capitalism condemns them and which engender despair and backwardness, and treat them all as enemies. Most are not, most have not yet joined fascist squads, it is still possible for socialists to talk to them, as the film suggests. The other way to fail them is to treat their convictions as a minor difference. Pat them on the shoulders and say: "Well done, you voted for change. You also voted against immigration but you meant no offence, did you? Cheers, mate."

Socialists, revolutionaries, especially Marxists who supported the "socialist Brexit" or Lexit adventure, need to do no less rethinking than these workers: about their negative role and about how on earth they could make such an enormous mistake. What is wrong with their "Marxism", their organisations and their respected "Marxist" leaders who led them into this impasse? I do hope that this reflection starts now. Simply proceeding with whatever each group thinks is next on the agenda is not an option. Or if it is, it is the option of ultimate degeneration and demise.

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# Freedom for the Peoples of Africa! No to intervention!

By **Balazs Nagy** February 2013 (First published in *Workers International Journal* No. 1)

[threecolumns]It would be very wrong to judge France's military intervention in Mali on the basis of the deafening and unanimous press and television chorus. They think this act of war was inevitable and celebrate it. It galvanised them unhesitatingly and pompously to laud President Hollande as a great leader – the very same politician they used to dismiss as flabby.

But it would be even worse to put any trust this "leader's" own pronouncements, or those of his aides and their allies in Europe and across the world.

And yet ... you cannot actually blame Hollande and co. directly for the long-drawn-out deterioration in Mali and the region, culminating in the present utter decay. But nor can you exonerate them either, since as loyal inheritors of the whole mess they took it on entirely and without a second thought. And in that specific sense the intervention was indeed as inevitable as the – joyful but perhaps over-optimistic – claims of “victory” and a job well done.

Despite the – to say the least – simplistic presentation of the situation in the Sahara and the Sahel as goodies vs. baddies, reality turns out to be incomparably more complex. Understanding it requires a brief review the more outstanding aspects of the historical development which prepared, shaped and conditioned the political and social scene – and the actors – which led to the current situation.

### **A glance at history**

For a start, the immense revolutionary wave which swept across Europe in the second half and aftermath of World War II generally speaking hit the African continent a dozen or so years later. Within Europe, the leaderships of working class parties did everything they could to channel revolutionary movements into shoring up the bourgeoisie through conventional democracies. In contrast, French (and other) imperialisms had been deeply shaken and weakened by the war and were unable to withstand the colonial peoples' irresistible independence movement. After a shaky early start, first Tunisia and Morocco (in 1956) and then the Algerian people won independence in 1962 after eight years of gruelling armed struggle. The revolutionary shock wave travelled south, and De Gaulle, more clear-sighted than other leaders of an exhausted possessing class, was forced to accept the obvious need to re-vamp old-style imperialism and grant independence to a series of countries in the region – almost all of them by 1960 (Senegal, Mauretania, Mali, Burkina-Faso, formerly Upper Volta, Niger, Chad, Ivory Coast – Guinea from 1958).

Hopes of a promising new start roused and inspired these countries. Borrowing from Algeria and even Tunisia in their search for a path towards a system leading to socialism, Guinea, Senegal and Mali all chose more or less the same route. After Bourguiba in Tunisia and Ben Bella in Algeria, Sekou Toure in Guinea and Modibo Keita in Mali and their governments carried out a series of nationalisations of property of the colonial power and its nationals. On this basis they initiated a policy of taking charge of their respective countries. Distrustful of the continually obstructive colonial power, they turned squarely towards the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe for desperately needed support and assistance. Senegal, too, worked towards a kind of socialism, but its president L. Senghor, whose attachment to the republican bourgeoisie in France was well-known, rejected the orientation towards the USSR, preferring a kind of panafricanism and so-called "third worldism". The national struggle, first for independence and then for this take-over by a kind of "anti-feudal" socialism by Modibo Keita in Mali was particularly powerfully nourished by young people, who had previously languished in the kind of semi-slavery affecting a quarter of the population of the Sahel.

But these initial hopes and efforts and fruitful initiatives quickly came to grief on obstacles born of these countries' extreme poverty and the cruel shortages of resources imposed on them by the former colonial power. On the other hand, the inadequacies and material shortages in the so-called "socialist" countries, trapped in the impoverishing constraints of "socialism in one country" and hampered by an oppressive Stalinism increasingly in debt to its capitalist creditors, meant that they could not provide the necessary assistance even if they had wanted to. Far from it. And so, disappointed and discouraged, most of these Arab and African "socialist reformers" turned back to the former coloniser and towards a policy of oppression. This was all the easier since their origins and education separated them from the working

masses, and in any case they could model themselves on how it was done in Eastern Europe. Not everybody can boast the strength of character or consistency of view of a Keita, a Lumumba or a Sangare. Nor is it a co-incidence that these three were all assassinated.

As for the leaders of the powerful workers' movement of the day in Europe, they did everything they could to bog these movements down in the swamp of deepening degradation, particularly since they everywhere resolutely drew this entire workers movement into the false and fatal path of "parliamentary cretinism" and collaboration with the bourgeoisie.

But from the outset, this bourgeoisie went in completely the opposite direction, determined to maintain and even reinforce its prerogatives and arrangements as a class. Forced to abandon the colonial methods of its imperial system, it adapted to the new situation through the bonapartist rule of De Gaulle. Run in secrecy by his secretary, Jacques Foccart, the General's shadow organisations worked feverishly to re-organise France's political, administrative and military networks and adapt them to the new political configuration. And so the wild beast of colonial imperialism clothed itself in the post-colonial lamb's skin of "co-operation". And that is how a whole system was forged, the sadly famous "Françafrique" which (under all Presidents!) continued the old imperialist practices under the cover of close collaboration with the African countries and lightly disguised within the forms required by the "independence" of the respective states.

A whole series of military coups very quickly expressed and made manifest the limits of "independence" in most of the African countries concerned. Even in countries which had been better prepared by a long struggle, the dissident colonels Ben Ali and Boumediene resolutely put an end to the democratic scruples of Bourguiba and Ben Bella. Everywhere the military putschists installed a dictatorship resting on an oversized

army and a single party, African regimes corresponding to the “Françafrique” system and symmetrically replicating it. Almost everywhere, independent regimes of the older generation of more radical bourgeois fighters gave way to corrupt regimes of dictators. Where the old guard did stay in power, their degeneration became inevitable.

This series of African countries was independent but had been impoverished and systematically, mercilessly, plundered in the course of the long preceding period of colonial rule. In the way of things, “co-operation” between them and a highly-developed great power like France simply maintained and exacerbated the monstrous economic and social inequality between such “partners”. A hungry wolf in a sheep-fold comes to mind. It is very characteristic that from the end of World War II onwards the straitjacket that was the Franc zone tied the African countries to close dependence on France. On 25 December 1945, a special Franc of the African Financial Community (CFA) was created for use in these countries (including some further south) and its value was set outrageously low by the French government: 1 CFA Franc was only worth 0.02 metropolitan Francs. (N.B. following Sekou Touré of Guinea, Keita of Mali also took his country out of this Franc zone system in 1963. But faced with economic difficulties, he had to re-join it, shortly before he was overthrown).

These decisions to leave were fully justified, since the CFA Franc embodied the crying inequality between these economies – often kept excessively backward – and bourgeois France, one of the most highly-developed countries. Trade imposed by this “benevolent” France provided the latter with agricultural products and raw materials of all kinds at derisory prices, even below world prices which themselves are traditionally low. Conversely, her own industrial products were sold off virtually risk-free at guaranteed high prices on these markets. So this system not only maintained flagrant

inequality, but intensified it intolerably. Need we add that this imposed and legalised inequality has continued right up to the present? To be more accurate, it was pushed by the Balladur government (under President Mitterrand in 1994) to the point of an explosion when the CFA Franc was devalued by 50%! The French bourgeoisie carefully retained this shamefully super-exploitative rate when the euro was introduced: in 2011, 1 euro equalled 655.957 Francs CFA. And they insult our ears with fairly stories about the end of imperialism!

In this re-vamped framework of imperialism, these countries were put under pressure – both directly and through successive dictatorships – to abandon dreams of progress. But worse was to come. Within the modified political configuration of the imperialist system, they still had to maintain their traditional role as providers of very cheap agricultural products and raw materials. Open, violent force had been replaced with sly economic constraint. In this sense, these countries objectively contributed, kicking and screaming, to the ability of a thus reinvigorated world bourgeoisie to take on and sustain its “thirty glorious years”. And so the relative “social peace” that prevailed in the course of that expansion secured by that same bourgeoisie’s pact with powerful (reformist and Stalinist) bureaucracies, which kept the workers movement under lock and key, was largely paid for by super-exploitation of the former colonies. It led inevitably to colossal indebtedness on the part of these poor “independent” countries, over which even the bourgeoisie’s various nerve centres shed copious crocodile tears.

### **Economic, social and political deterioration**

The situation got even worse when the bourgeoisie set its neo-liberal agents to work to reduce these debts overall. Starting in the early 1980s, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank forced all the countries concerned to adopt massive “structural adjustments” in the form of drastic budget and expenditure cuts and extensive privatisations in return

for “aid” in reducing these debt levels. French (and other) firms bought up a great number of local enterprises for peanuts, while huge companies like Total, Areva and a multitude of others made themselves at home. Catastrophic results quickly followed. (It is a remarkable fact that what is going on in Europe at present is not some novelty arising out of the crisis; the Latin Americans had painful experience of it even before the Africans).

In Africa, too, the first victims were the education and health systems, whose often remarkable initial achievements had been a source of legitimate pride to these young nations. Ever tighter budgetary constraints laid waste to these promising beginnings.

Merciless cuts in expenditure also deprived agriculture – bankrupt state farms as much as independent farmers ruined by lack of access to credit – of all aid. Across Africa, already low rural wages saw a general fall of 30% in those years. Mali’s agriculture, for example, which at the end of the 1980s contributed 67% of the country’s exports through cotton production, saw the latter smashed up and the peasantry crushed. Moreover, from the 1960s onwards a series of terrible droughts hit the whole region, resulting in a regular desert encroachments. The funds needed for big irrigation networks and effective water supplies were cruelly lacking, as were the cheap credits essential for small farmers.

These calamities led on the one hand to the terrible famines which periodically descend on the region and on the other to the massive rural exodus which drives tens and hundreds of thousands of people into the terribly overpopulated slums in the cities. The inhabitants of Nouakchott in Mauretania, extremely poor as they are, describe the slums in “their” shanty-town as “rubbish dumps”. As for famines, the hypocrisy of successive food-aid campaigns launched and supported by the bourgeoisie and beloved of right-thinking petit-bourgeois barely masks neither the formers’ direct responsibility for

these disasters and their organic inability to do much about them, nor the latters' deferential complicity. Having said that, no one would want to prevent good souls from helping the starving, but reality puts us on guard against this rather unreliable substitute which in no way attacks the root of the problem.

Chronic unemployment also affects the whole population, which has undergone geometrical growth in the period in question. By 1989 it exceeded 22% of the active population, including more than half of young people in Algeria, for all that this country is better off than Mali or other countries in the Sahara or the Sahel. A significant proportion of the population has persistently sought a way out of this social catastrophe in emigration. This explains the very high number of Malians (2 million) living in France around 1990, as many as a quarter of the whole population of the country! But vigilant France kept a close watch on the situation, and Charles Pasqua – a worthy successor to “Françafrique's” organiser Foccart – started forcibly repatriating hundreds of thousands of Africans. His successors, also under all Presidents, have virtually institutionalised this into a regular procedure. Following the regular expulsions organised by Guéant, Manuel Valls has most recently filled an aeroplane with several dozen immigrants. A veil is drawn over how they carry this out. Be that as it may, journalists estimate that there are currently still 120,000 Malians living in France. But who knows exactly how many of these working class pariahs there are who have escaped utter poverty over there only to be hounded and persecuted here for the lack of an all-important piece of paper?

While the people – especially the young – are fleeing the country, businesses large and small, French and other, are settling in there as a kind of Eldorado to exploit the natural wealth of the country and its cheap labour. Apart from the odd kick-back, these businesses *repatriate the whole of their*

*profits* and operate above the law. According to studies by comrades at *Survie* (a French NGO founded in 1984 to fight hunger and corruption in the “third world” ), France’s trade surplus with Mali was over 300 million euros in 2010-2012, five times more than the derisory public “aid” she grants to that country!

Alongside these destructive activities went a long drawn-out process of reducing these states to subservience, adapting them more and more to the needs of capitalists in the French “protector”. Metropolitan agents of “Françafrique” carefully guided this convulsive change by remote-control. Enriched local cliques devoured each other in order to establish, in an endless series of coups, which one would seize control of a state which itself was reduced little by little to its repressive apparatus. Having laid its hands on the manna from the “co-operation” community and other so-called “development” loans, the winning group would set out to fulfil its role as a substitute for the former colonial power. As poverty grew in these states, their role was more and more reduced to one essential: securing, preserving and reinforcing power in order to consolidate France’s economic and political position and influence while maintaining a repressive regime against working people. Those currently holding power, such as the puppets Deby (Chad), Compoaré (Burkina Faso) and Touré (Mali) have nothing in common with the independent figures of the first generation of leaders. They are even the opposite of someone like Keita, for example. The most important, if not the only, means they use to achieve their objectives has been and is the army. Now, the rapid overall worsening of the situation has provoked a series of coups in which the impoverished masses’ role of detonator has become increasingly visible, reflecting the economic and social deterioration that has been eating away.

### **Unpicking the tangled politics of North Africa**

Above all we must reject the simplistic way the

interventionist power presents the context and conditions in this part of Africa. Even if – and this goes without saying – it is so constantly and noisily parroted in the media that certain political tendencies and individuals, while uttering reservations about “neo-colonial ulterior motives”, nevertheless give this military action guarded support as a necessary “pre-requisite”. These include the French Communist Party parliamentary deputy François Asensi (*L’Humanité* newspaper 18 January 2013) who swallows the intervention whole but hastens to add: “...France must state clearly her aim to rebuild a democratic state”. He actually seems to think that is possible on the basis of this intervention!

Despite all the resounding statements and those who are taken in by them, there is no way that trends and programmes in this region of Africa, or the political formations and groupings to which they give rise, can be reduced to isolated groups of Islamic fanatics on the one hand and loyal government supporters on the other. Reality is much richer and more complicated. Before even attempting to sketch a few lines, with no claim at all to presenting the whole picture, it is enough to describe the interventionists and their accomplices as the famous bull in a china shop, especially given the brutal military aggression and lack of concern for “details” that are innate and natural characteristics of so-called “neo-colonial” imperialism.

As described above, after a very short period of national awakening in the aftermath of World War II, successive economic setbacks in the newly independent countries turned into a sustained social regression. The vast majority of the popular classes (workers, farmers, stock-breeders, pastoralists, etc.) have become considerably poorer, particularly the many peoples and ethnic groups at the bottom of society. Their degradation provided the ground for the astonishing explosion of a whole series of programmes and the most varied social and national movements. It is impossible to

list them all here, but in general they rested on previous currents and movements, some of them going back to the nineteenth century. Several great traditions of thought and social movements have remained alive to this very day. In the majority of cases, social and national demands have overlapped inextricably. The roots of some movements are to be found in the distant past.

The European workers' movement of the twentieth century in particular inspired by example a powerful trade-unionism among workers in these countries, as well as the appearance of labour and communist parties. The present-day UGTT union confederation in Tunisia, which opposes the Salafists, is one of the fruits of this co-operation whose powerful resurgence can be considered as an important opposition factor to the government of religious people, but also of a positive political change. We also know that Sekou Touré of Guinea (secretary of the CGT federation of black Africa in 1948!) rested on the Guinean trade unions for support in the national independence movement and spiced up his conceptions with socialism of a kind. The Algerian independence movement was also in large part influence by the French workers' movement.

It would therefore be unforgivable to look down on the movements for the social and national liberation of these countries from the heights of some imagined European supremacy. Often centuries-old traditions and a wealth of ancient experience also nourish the struggles of workers and people in Africa and its northern part. These movements exist, despite the extremely difficult situation they are in because they pay the price of the backwardness imposed upon their countries, suffering from isolation and repression which are bound to mark the immediate future of the region.

This social and national situation was essentially what we had in mind when we published the press release from the comrades at "Survie" in issue no. 1 of our journal, expressing the desire to "look at certain important aspects of the rebellion

in a different light". Of course the comrades from "Survie" not only bravely condemn the intervention, but are also well-known for having brought together a mass of precious facts in relation to this part of Africa. But in the indignation which informs their timely and correct condemnation of the intervention, we believe they erred in losing sight, behind the inflated bubble of religious fanatics, of precisely these movements and their national and social base. But that is precisely the direction in which to look for the key to the situation, and a way out, and not at all the "armies" of corrupt regimes or their UN protectors. The "Survie" comrades talk about French intervention as "significant pressure on the Malian authorities" as if the latter actually existed independently of the former. They also say France "must respect UN resolutions as soon as possible".

But in the first place, rather than acting as "pressure", French intervention is **necessary to save** these "authorities". And not only the Malian authorities, but all the rest in the region, too! The comrades should not just see French (state) authorities, but also those of these countries, these African states, as the agents and representatives of a quite definite social class – the bourgeoisie. With the significant difference that the latter do not exist and act on behalf of their own bourgeoisie, since even the feeble shreds of that native class are merely a subaltern appendix of the metropolitan (and world) bourgeoisie. These states, therefore, exist and act as the local organ of the latter, even though they are endowed with the fig-leaf of independence.

From the 1980s onwards, when the capitalist-imperialist system started moving over to so-called ultra-liberalism, this remarkably intensified the exploitation of these countries and revived all the traditions of struggle, and their direct and indirect heirs started moving. The great liberating risings of 2011 which journalists called "Arab revolutions" are also manifestations of these struggles, at the same time acting as

a significant precursor to the European and world revolution that is gestating. The outstanding role of the UGTT union in the Tunisian revolution and the overthrow of the regime – even though it was itself contaminated by the latter – is well known. Less well known, perhaps, is the decisive action the Egyptian working class developed in its revolution, organising strikes and renewing its unions. Today its sporadic but incessant struggles constitute a significant element in defending and advancing that revolution. As for the UGTT, we can all see its decisive participation in the current mobilisation.

While the “Arab spring” is an integral component of the European revolution currently gestating and undeniably contributed to the still stuttering awakening of young people in Europe, it also lived on in the convulsive but still disorganised movements of the despoiled and deracinated masses of that region, of which islamist movements form a large but unfortunately distorted and adulterated part. Be that as it may, certain ancient and modern political movements and organisations have raised their heads again, often inspired by the European workers’ movement of former days, but also by their own old traditions, and – closer to home – by the revolutionary overturns of 2011.

**“A people which oppresses another cannot emancipate itself”(Engels)**

For centuries the immense Sahara and the Sahel regions of north and west Africa have constantly been disturbed by movements and rebellions of this or that nation or ethnic group living there. Its artificial division into separate countries by colonial powers only served, in the majority of cases, to reinforce national oppression by devastating and wrenching apart ethnic or national units. During independence, some of these peoples, like the Kabyles in Algeria and their Berber relatives, the Touareg in Mali (and more or less everywhere) hoped to achieve national recognition in return

for their participation in the anti-colonial struggle. But right from the outset, all of the newly independent states, based on the primacy of the dominant ethnic group (or tribe), refused to allow any concessions at all, still less any form of autonomy, to ethnic or national minorities. This serious defect left a profound scar on the democratic awakening of the bourgeois revolutions which shook these countries, even those who ventured furthest into a kind of proto-socialism. We do not have the space here to examine all these national movements in detail. Nevertheless the most important ones must be mentioned.

Categorically turned down by the new Algerian government, the Kabyle people started a prolonged struggle for autonomy. Not only was this refused from the very start, but the Kabyle people suffered repeated bloody repressions and a national oppression which continues to this very day.

Far away from there, in another region steeped in prolonged national-ethnic struggle, Casamance in Senegal has battled against oppression. The region has been demanding autonomy ever since Senegal achieved independence. However, despite L.Senghor's evasive promises, it has not been forthcoming. The region went into open armed struggle in the early 1980s, when Senegal was trying to ward off a massive debt crisis (almost 2 million dollars). The cultivation of ground nuts appeared to offer a way out, but when the government assigned land to colonists from the north for this, the inhabitants of Casamance, traditionally rice-growers, revolted. Ever since, cease-fires have alternated with fresh confrontations and the conflict has persisted, particularly since the Senegalese state, exactly like all the others also in its constantly growing poverty, has shown itself less and less able to resolve the situation and has even imposed further burdens on the region.

When one considers the vast Sahara and Sahel territory from the point of view of the many different peoples inhabiting it,

what becomes evident is a profound interweaving of the social degradation of the peoples – often linked to sudden changes in their mode of life also imposed by the neglect of nature – and the subordinate or even oppressed character of their ethnic or national lives. History teaches us that those who try to separate them from social difficulties, or with more reason to oppose them, have paid a high price.

For a long time now the nomadic Saharoui of the western Sahara have undergone a veritable calvary. While they struggled for autonomy, Franco's Spain would not allow them any rights. In 1975, following a call by King Hassan of Morocco, hundreds of thousands joined a "green march" to invade what they thought was "Moroccan Sahara". In reaction to this the Polisario Front, founded in 1973 by young Saharoui students, proclaimed the "Democratic Arab Saharoui Republic" under Algerian protection. The Algerian and Moroccan armies have confronted each other in a rivalry that has nothing to do with the interests of any peoples whatsoever. Algeria has protected the new Saharoui republic since Spain left in 1976, whereas she has never allowed Kabylia or the Touareg movement the slightest degree of autonomy.

Following a cease-fire in 1991, Morocco has controlled 80% of this territory, leaving 20% to the Polisario Front. But despotic King Hassan has installed a 2,500km (!) security belt called the "Moroccan Wall". (This is the nth "wall" built to contain some people to disfigure the world and bring the powerful into disrepute!) As for the new Saharoui Republic, what with recognition by a few countries and rejection by the majority of others – including the UN! – it has no legal existence at all.

The Touregs' problem is even more complex. Because of the arbitrary and fantastic division of this great region by the great colonial powers, the almost 2 million Touareg find themselves artificially split up between five different countries. They are just one of many peoples who, carved up

between several countries, have no right to a legal existence and are often persecuted. When discussing them, one inevitably thinks of the Kurds or the Palestinians in the Middle East. If you want a shameful image of imperialist reality dragged down to the level of simple banality, then look no further. The Basques divided up between the north of Spain and the south of France might have a thing or two to say about this, or the Irish, with the north of their country still under the iron heel of Britain.

On the other hand, the break-up of several multi-national countries and the revival of virulent national feelings also testify to the growing contradiction between capitalism-imperialism and the facts of national existence. (To say nothing of the inability of the Stalinist bureaucracy to solve this problem in the former USSR and its criminal role in the break-up of several multi-national states it used to govern, like Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia).

Be that as it may, the Touareg people were among the losers in the post-war anti-imperialist wave of liberation. In a way, their fate contains just about all the problems of the national question in this part of the world in compressed form: – the capitalist nature of the states in which they live and the role played in this by religion, particularly Islam.

It is really remarkable that even the leaders of the first wave of bourgeois-democratic revolution just could not grasp this problem at all. And so as early as 1963 Modibo Keita severely repressed and Touareg revolt in Mali. He was helped by his Algerian colleague Ben Bella, who handed over to him the Touareg leaders who had fled to Algeria. One Touareg author wrote: "The thousands of deaths caused by repression were met with general indifference".

But we lack the space here to tell the full story of the many rebellions by this people, their lengthy negotiations with this or that state in the region, and the massacres and

flights of thousands of their members which punctuate the life of these states which have degenerated into vassals of imperialism.

As a result of general economic decline and collapse and the consequent successive setbacks to the Touaregs' national struggles, they toughened up their behaviour and adopted a more radical attitude. All states in the area felt the effects of imperialist super-exploitation, but the Touareg people suffered it twice over (and they were not alone in that). Besides the dismantlement of services, there was no investment to assuage sufferings which were made greater by massive unemployment exacerbated as the introduction of lorries and the severity and frequency of drought put an end to caravans. Hundreds of thousands of them fled Mali and lived under extremely precarious conditions in Niger, Mauretania, Algeria, Burkin-Faso, etc.

As we know, after the overthrow of Ghadaffi, who enlisted many of them among his "protectors", a significant number of these armed men returned to Mali. But this detachment did not start the armed struggle of the already strongly-radicalised Touaregs. All they did was to contribute a considerable force to a movement which had been present for a long time but, hardened by serial disappointments, was only waiting for the right opportunity. The extreme fragility of the Malian state, made worse by army Captain Sanogo's attempted coup fell apart, furnished the signal and the opportunity for attack. The "Azawad Liberation Movement", formed some months previously, allied itself with armed islamist groups to bulk out its numbers. And so they were able quite rapidly to pulverise the Malian army and occupy the north of the country as far as the River Niger.

Of course this was a mistake, but a very understandable one, as the Touareg movement was very contaminated by its own islamist faction. Mistake though it is, this movement as a whole should not be confused with its islamist faction "Ansar

Eddine", even if the latter has undoubtedly pushed the movement a long way in a radical direction. But it should never under any circumstances be identified with it, as French imperialism and its lackeys strive to do.

Contrary to all the claims of the propaganda machine, political islam – even the most radical kind – is not a recent foreign import to Africa. Even in the nineteenth century, locally-based islamists inspired great anti-colonial struggles. Exploited peoples sought refuge and consolation against all kinds of oppression in religion. Since Engels wrote *The Peasant War in Germany* we have known that religion serves to encourage and stimulate the resistance and struggle of oppressed classes when they are still insufficiently developed or – we may add – when their elder sister, the world working class, is on the back foot constantly.

If Islamism has in recent years – sometimes aggressively–taken the place of secular leaderships of social and national movements, it is a consequence of the considerable weakening and retreat of the international workers' movement. Over the last fifty years or so, the emphatic way social democratic parties have gone over from being supporters of the bourgeoisie to being its direct and settled political representatives has been one of the most outstanding features of this historic collapse. The other is the destruction of the Soviet Union and the dominant role played by the Stalinist bureaucracy played within it, followed by workers massively deserting communist parties and their inevitable retreat. A whole series of communist and non-communist parties and groups which used to lead social and national struggles have been marginalised across the world as a result. In their place, religious islamist movements have emerged from Afghanistan to Morocco, by way of Palestine, Egypt, Tunisia, etc.

Obviously this "opium of the people" works like any other drug. While bringing temporary consolation and relief, it cannot cure the ailment but poisons the organism even further.

The muslim religion (like any other) brings no improvements but on the contrary preserves the backward and desperate situation working people are in, as we see very clearly in Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Tunisia, too. Moreover, this religion contain within itself, as the cloud carries the thunderstorm, its radical Salafist wing with its medieval customs. The people of Tunisia have recently started to struggle even more powerfully against this "opium", as have the people of Egypt. We should also note that there has recently been a significant internal split in the Touareg salafist group "Ansar Eddine".

### **The situation is bound to get worse**

Only recently forced to accept cuts in its material resources, the French army has become trapped in an inextricable tangle of intertwined difficulties which it cannot overcome. It is no coincidence that Hollande's European and American allies have very parsimoniously calibrated their own symbolic rather than real "contributions". They obviously have a better grasp of the implications and extent of their devastating setbacks in Iraq and Afghanistan. They are more than happy to let the French bourgeoisie and its puppet Hollande have the more than dubious glory of pulling their shared chestnuts out of the fire. In fact the French "Socialist" Party has suddenly revealed itself to be the advance-guard not just of its "own" bourgeoisie but of world imperialism as a whole. Only recently the US vice-president conferred a metaphorical knighthood on Hollande, confirming him in this role with a lordly "well done!"

Obviously the forward patrols of world imperialism didn't have a clue what they were getting into. Incredible but true: neither the army nor its political bosses had any idea of what a simmering cauldron they were involving themselves in. Hollande kept saying they only wanted to stay in Mali a few days, then various unpleasant experiences made them change that to "... an indefinite period". It was brought home to these ardent interventionists that they would have to re-make the

state and army, not just in Mali, but more or less across the whole region – a massive task far beyond the capacity of the French state.

The colossal expenditure such an undertaking entails massively exceeds the meagre resources of a French bourgeoisie mired in persistent crisis. There will be a growing contradiction between the no-doubt long-term financial cost of these involvements and their categorical refusal to allow even the slightest relief of the ever-increasing burdens placed on working people. Obviously, the latter will not tolerate the government making them bear not just the cost of the crisis, but also of the considerable expense of patching up the system oppressing their African brothers. If you believe the French Ministry of Defense (and their figures are almost certainly an under-estimate) the cost of the army alone up to 5 February 2013 is 60 million euros.

This will hardly scratch the monumental cost required by a situation of total breakdown. Everything has had to be re-created: all the machinery of administration, not to mention the health and education systems – all far beyond the reach of a French exchequer swamped and riddled by debt.

As for the army itself, it is quite unable to tackle even such priorities as safeguarding the civilian population. Journalists report several massive lynchings perpetrated by the depraved Malian army, protected by its French army “big brother”.

These facts demonstrate not only the hatred and lust for revenge the country’s ruling strata cherish for all Arabo-Berber peoples, but also the appalling values and moral standards of the French army, which must have looked demurely away while these lynchings were being committed, as it did a few years earlier in Rwanda, so as not to notice the massacre of the Tutsi people. And as the Dutch UN Battalion did in former Yugoslavia, which let General Mladic’s soldiers execute

7000 Bosnians in the town of Srebrenica without lifting a finger. Such are the execrable political and ethical standards of both these armies and the UN, swathed in hypocritical high-flown phrases.

There is not the slightest doubt that this intervention will get even more catastrophically bogged down than that in Afghanistan. The inevitable consequence will be that the situation in Europe and internationally will get even worse, with the recrudescence of an even fiercer international class struggle. For what is happening in and around Mali and concretely also in the mobilisation of working people in Tunisia and Egypt prefigures not only a considerable deterioration in their conditions of life but also, and above all, the mobilisation and emergence on the scene of masses of working people, broadening their activity and toughening up their struggle.

But when one reads the statements of those groups and parties which oppose French intervention, one is struck by their purely declamatory character. Of course given the massive number of dupes, the very fact that they condemn it at all is commendable, and we stand with them. But even when they resolutely condemn the military intervention, they confine themselves to verbal protest. To put it another way, almost all of these organisations (Communist Party, Left Party, Left Front, New Anti-Capitalist Party, etc.) adopt a position more or less clearly *opposed* to military intervention but steer well clear of stating the orientation or outcome they are *for*. I.e., these political formations adopt the profoundly negative attitude of rejection. At most, these comrades add a generalisation devoid of meaning, i.e. that what is needed is to solve the (economic, social, national) problems these countries face. This great general truth is hardly brilliant in its originality, so much so that even the government has given up repeating it.

**We need a clear orientation!**

To tell the truth, most of these organisations and groups do point to what they think is a way forward. They say – indeed, often demand – that military intervention must be left to African states – Mali and her neighbours, under UN patronage. It is quite obvious that they think this would be a suitable solution since (and this is how shallow their thinking is) it would be a better fit with the African ethnic image and the sacrosanct authority of the UN. They are completely unperturbed by the fact that Hollande and his government have spent long months trying to achieve precisely that arrangement.

Such a “solution” amounts more or less to re-establishing the status-quo, i.e. the situation preceding the debacle of the Malian state and army. But trying to apply it without the French army is simply a bad joke, since the preceding state of affairs was precisely what brought about that debacle and ended up with the present disastrous situation. The French army intervened precisely in order to save the apparatus of the Malian state from complete collapse. Despite appearances, it was not directed against those Islamic terrorists. That pretext was blown up by propaganda to keep everybody happy. In truth they did it to shore up a native administrative apparatus in mortal danger – as it happened, from the islamist attack. The delight the population of Mali showed and which was obligingly filmed by French TV was less at the arrival of a foreign French army than at getting rid of a cruel medieval dictatorship. To present it as enthusiasm for the arrival of a foreign army is to indulge in the same degree of mystification as the attempt to interpret the vote *against* Sarkozy as support *for* the plans of the Socialist Party.

So the French army stands there nakedly exposed as the only cement that can hold this feeble state together, or any of the others that share the same congenital weaknesses. In that sense it is not only the chief factor in that African Union, but also the only one that can put up any opposition and

organise any resistance to its ineluctable decomposition. It is high time for the parties and groups and their leaders who speak in the name of the working class to break with the backward and grotesque way of thinking which takes African states as if they were an emanation of their peoples and formed a group by its nature independent of imperialism. Whereas in reality they form a quite specific – subaltern but essential – part of the mechanism of imperialism's world system, officially run by the omni-substitute, the UN.

The clear regression in these states in relation to fundamental problems of African society is the logical consequence and obvious indication of the manifest setback to the attempt by the bourgeoisie – even what were at first its most radical elements – to solve elementary tasks of the bourgeois revolution. The way these regimes are currently decomposing is a striking proof from the negative side of Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution; specifically, that in our imperialist epoch the bourgeoisie of any country at all – even a backward one – is organically incapable of solving the tasks posed by such a revolution. Every orientation towards a so-called popular front, every policy of alliance with a wing of the bourgeoisie, has led to setbacks. That is the cruel lesson of events.

Thus, in the absence of a clear orientation towards the theory of permanent revolution and its application in order to mobilise the workers of the whole region, a catastrophic situation has got even worse even quicker. Indeed the choice put forward in the past by Rosa Luxemburg and taken up later by Trotsky: Either the working class succeeds in overthrowing capitalism and opening the road to socialism, or humanity will fall back into barbarism – is today an immediate practical question.

In this respect, this part of Africa at least (like the Middle East) is a little ahead of Europe. That continent, too, is from now on confronted with the same direct choice. It is only

the many and various reserves at her disposal which still retard the explosive maturing of the same historical dilemma, as well as the general lack of preparedness on the part of the workers' movement.

The working class in the region of Africa under discussion already has several political organisations, even if they are still weak and enjoy only minority support. But that can change quickly, not to mention the unions which, like the UGTT in Tunisia and in the big cities in the region, are sometimes powerful.

Without going into detail, there are a fair number and variety of organisations which described themselves as Marxist and/or working-class, and they have the capacity to work together for a united struggle in the region. The first pre-condition for such a struggle and for their own development is undoubtedly their ability to take fully into account the orientation offered by the permanent revolution and on that basis work out and apply democratic slogans for revolutionary change.

Revolutionary and working class organisations in Europe can and should do everything they can to help clarify this essential issue. That way they will be able to find their way back to their proper role, making the link with their history and tradition of supporting brothers and sisters in Africa. A precious contribution to this would be to adapt and develop the Fourth International's Transitional Programme, the only one to express concretely the orientation of permanent revolution. Although it needs changing in places, as a whole it remains valid. It is the one and only path to solving weighty problems which can at the same time correct wrong orientations and go beyond passive contemplation of events when African activists need clear and active support.[/threecolumns]

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# What next for Greece (and Europe)?

[threecolumns]THE SYRIZA-led Greek government made a bid to reverse the appalling and humiliating conditions laid upon the country by the Troika (European Commission, European Central Bank and International Monetary Fund).

The fiasco that followed deserves careful consideration by all trade unionists, socialists and working people more broadly.

SYRIZA is a coalition built around forces coming from the Euro-Communist sector which several decades ago split from the old KKE (Greek Communist Party). They promised a new kind of “left” politics, breaking the mould of sectarian wrangling over ideological shibboleths. (In the process they junked a number of political principles also, in particular the understanding of the basic conflict in society between capital and labour).

With the shock of the country’s bankruptcy and the fateful “Memoranda” reverberating around Greek society, with masses of people going, in real confusion, into semi-permanent occupation of the city squares, it was the coalition which became SYRIZA which captured the popular mood.

They drew from the intellectual tool-kit of Keynesian theory the idea that the economy could be launched into a new period of growth by the correct policies on the part of governments and the EU.

They presented the matter as an intellectual debate with an “elite” seduced by neo-liberal dogmas which had somehow reached political power pretty well everywhere, whether in the

hands of formerly “socialist” or frankly conservative politicians.

Enough popular support mobilised for a “better” capitalist policy, in the SYRIZA view, could reverse the situation and kick-start growth and protect living standards.

There are also attractive sides to what SYRIZA was offering: an attempt to find what united people instead of what divided them, a listening ear to what people were saying rather than the sectarian propagandist broadsides, a very practical approach to dealing with the mass poverty and collapse of welfare structures which followed government acceptance of the Memoranda.

The Solidarity Clinics and cost-price farmers’ markets and food and toy banks in working class districts were both very much needed and started to generate a cadre of party activists. The Solidarity For All welfare network at the same time created a framework for an international solidarity movement with the people of Greece.

From a ramshackle coalition of left groups, SYRIZA became an organised political party with a political programme of socially progressive measures and the aim to reverse the Troika-imposed economic destruction of the country (The Thessaloniki Programme).

On this basis the party provoked a general election in February of this year in which they won enough seats, together with a small conservative anti-austerity grouping, ANEL, to form a government. (Certainly not a single one of the groups claiming to be Marxist revolutionaries could have come even close to dislodging the vile bunch of puppets masquerading as a Greek government up to that point).

The problem is, the leaders of the European Union are not simply an accidental grouping with this or that ideological outlook. They are the political representatives of a

particular social class – the bourgeoisie. In capitalist society, this is the class which owns (and actually personifies) the big concentrations of capital.

**“You might as well have sung the Swedish national anthem”**

It is their position as the public spokespersons and administrators of capitalist society which gives these monsters their utter conviction that they are right and that the biggest popular majority vote in the world is wrong. How do these masters of the work know they are right? The money tells them. They put into words and action what finance capital actually means.

In the current issue of the British Labourite magazine New Statesman, the main Greek negotiator trying to persuade in the bourgeoisie to make some concessions, Varoufakis, describes:

*“... the complete lack of any democratic scruples, on behalf of the supposed defenders of Europe’s democracy. The quite clear understanding on the other side that we are on the same page analytically – of course it will never come out at present. [And yet] To have very powerful figures look at you in the eye and say ‘You’re right in what you’re saying, but we’re going to crunch you anyway’ ... there was point blank refusal to engage in economic arguments. Point blank. ... You put forward an argument that you’ve really worked on – to make sure it’s logically coherent – and you’re just faced with blank stares. It is as if you haven’t spoken. What you say is independent of what they say. You might as well have sung the Swedish national anthem – you’d have got the same reply. And that’s startling, for somebody who’s used to academic debate. ... The other side always engages. Well there was no engagement at all. It was not even annoyance, it was as if one had not spoken.”*

To try to “make the other side engage”, the SYRIZA government sought popular support in a referendum. Already repayment

deadlines had been missed without any new agreements being reached, and the supply of liquidity to Greek banks was switched off. The referendum was held under conditions of a fiscal blockade which threatened to gradually strangle the country as effectively as any naval blockade in history. Nevertheless a 61% vote to reject the Troika's exactions represented a high-water-mark in SYRIZA's popular support.

But it only made the EU "institutions" more intransigent. Prime Minister Tsipras himself now went to the EU with a set of proposals which represented abject surrender.

He promised to reform the tax system, accept increases in Value Added Tax (VAT), increase the pension age, increase employee pension contributions, cut back on early retirement and do away with benefits for the very poorest pensioners, sell off remaining state assets, cut state spending and take steps to destroy trade union rights.

But it now was not enough for the European bourgeois leaders. They were furious that the Greeks had had the gall to elect a government which rejected their measures for Greece; they resented the fact that the SYRIZA government cracked open a chink in the curtain of capitalist "austerity" and gave working people even the hope of something different. This had to be stamped out completely.

They insisted on a much clearer set of commitments on all these issues, spelled out in chapter and verse, and the right to have their creatures sit in on the drafting of the legislation to be rushed through the Greek parliament (using the votes of opposition parties, who of course had always supported these measures).

Why do the bourgeois leaders of the world who pull the strings which move the EU institutions – including Europe's national governments and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) insist on nothing less than abject surrender?

Why would they risk the possible repercussions, which could include Greece defaulting on her debts and even the break-up of the euro currency bloc? We know this from the fact that the IMF (no doubt egged on by the US government) warns that Greece's debt burden is devastating and beyond recovery.

It is their own crisis of the capitalist system which urges them on regardless of the consequences. The upheavals in the world of finance which surfaced after 2007 were a huge systemic shock, but they were a real expression of the underlying crisis of imperialism.

By some estimates, the total amounts lost in, around and following the crash were truly massive.

On October 1 2012, the Wall Street Journal summarised the assessment of the former chief credit officer of Standard and Poor's rating agency Mark Adelson:

*"An attempt at sizing up the economic impact produced varied and sobering results, with losses attributed to decline in world gross domestic product and household wealth, and other measures focused on the financial sector including bank write-downs and the increase in government support.*

*"The \$10 trillion to \$12 trillion drop in value of world stock markets and the \$5.7 trillion to \$12.8 trillion plunge in US output in the decade to 2018 give the best overall look at the costs, however, he said. "These numbers suggest total costs likely to run \$5 trillion to \$15 trillion ..."*  
*(<http://blogs.wsj.com/economics/2012/10/01/total-global-losses-from-financial-crisis-15-trillion/> )*

The only solution which the capitalist masters of the world can find is to turn on the masses of working people and strip them of all the progress they have gained in the past.

By the way, the "bailout money" from the institutions mainly

does not end up in Greece. As economics correspondent Philip Inman wrote in the UK Guardian newspaper on 29 June 2015:

*“Only a small fraction of the 240 billion euros (£170 billion) total bailout money Greece received in 2010 and 2013 found its way into the government’s coffers to soften the blow of the 2008 financial crash and fund reform programmes. Most of the money went to the banks that lent Greece funds before the crash. Unlike most of Europe, which ran up large budget deficits to protect pensioners and welfare recipients, Athens was then forced to dramatically reduce its deficit by squeezing pensions and cutting the minimum wage”.*

Capitalist society works through the creation of surplus value by labour and the “valorisation” of that surplus value, its conversion into new capital re-invested into new ventures for yet more profits.

This social formation – capital – which historically played a progressive role in the development of the productive forces, has now for a century been at the heart of the economic crisis as a barrier to their further development. That crisis rumbles on; it has not been overcome. In the attempt to solve it, the bourgeoisie must try to increase the portion of surplus value which it pockets at the expense of the portion which is claimed by the working class and working people more broadly.

Working class struggle has wrested significant concessions from the ruling class in terms of wages, welfare and pension rights, and normal expectations that the state will provide health, education and legal rights and facilities and the chance of a decent home in a reasonably healthy environment.

All these things were enshrined in political and legal arrangements through which workers and others could assert their needs.

So in order to be able to strip working people of the share of

surplus value which they have been able to take previously, either in the individual wage packet or as a “social wage”, the bourgeoisie has to attack, undermine and de-nature all these arrangements, which include socialist (or Labour) political parties and, where they can, trade unions.

And this has been the basis for the degeneration of reformist socialist parties across Europe. Greece’s PASOK, the German SPD, the Parti socialiste in France, Labour in the UK and all their like have been politically hollowed out and de-fanged over decades.

But the decline of reformist parties has not been matched by a collapse in the illusions and expectations of masses of people in Europe.

Despite nearly forty years of continuous attack, despite the massive and savage increase in productivity and the closure of many industries relocated overseas, in many respects the assault of capital is only beginning.

One has to envision the depth of what the new Conservative government is planning in the UK to have any grasp of the scale of social conflict the bourgeoisie is proposing across Europe: savagely stripping away the vestiges of a welfare system; systematically re-engineering the health and education services to turn them into objects of profit for business; massively depriving people of access to a decent home; ongoing destruction of the whole legal system which provided some sort of safeguard for the poor and the weak; an onslaught on human rights legislation.

“Austerity” is a word often bandied about, but it hardly covers what is actually proposed. The way working class life and communities have been under-mined and the decay and collapse of social-democratic and “Communist” political parties has led to a tendency to accept that “there is no alternative” and often a backward scapegoating of claimants,

the unemployed and migrants.

Individualism has made progress among working people who a generation ago would have stood (and did stand) firm in defence of class rights. Old working class areas of the UK have shown an appetite for voting along nationalist lines. Social fragmentation weakens the possibility of resistance and undermines traditionally powerful methods of struggle.

In the economic and social witches' brew that is Europe, the initial steps in the political recovery of the masses has been marked by these factors.

Loudly denouncing the sell-out on the part of social democracy, the leaders of the new formations such as SYRIZA, the section of the French Communist Party which re-engineered itself as the Parti de Gauche, PODEMOS, Die Linke and the rest demand very little that is not – traditional social democracy, pure and simple!

As (generally) followers of the late John Maynard Keynes, they do not call for a socialist revolution, but capitalism with its contradictions contained, smoothed over, managed and regulated by state intervention.

Their critique is not of capitalism as such – they are indeed not at all interested in abolishing it – but of “neo-liberal ideologues” who have allegedly inspired all the problems we face for some subjective reason.

Nevertheless, precisely because of this actually very moderate outlook, these parties are the vehicles through which the working people of Europe have started their political revival.

People are obliged to enter the path of struggle, but their first steps are hampered by profound illusions on the one hand and a profound disillusionment caused by the collapse of the Soviet Union and of hopes of a socialist future on the other.

They will have to overcome both handicaps, but that will only be achieved along the road of resistance they are increasingly adopting.

The challenge for Marxists is to identify and put forward proposals for action which lead the way to a confrontation with the system as a whole.

The future revolutionary leadership of the masses will be built in the unity and mutual struggle of the Marxists and the forces who come forward to conduct the present fight which is focussed most sharply on Greece.

This leadership will have to free itself from illusions that working people “share” any “values” with a bourgeoisie whose true values are exposed every minute in their relentless drive to impoverish, disarm and disempower us.

Bob Archer – July 2015 [/threecolumns]

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## **Out now! New edition of the Journal, July 2015.**

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WRP(N) fights for its constitutional rights  
Namibian miners demand “end evictions!”

### **Programme of the Fourth International:**

The Theses of Pulacayo (1946)

### **Europe:**

What next for Greece – and Europe?

# 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](http://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 espanyol
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, Espana
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, depute Die Linke, Germany
36. Annette Groth, depute 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 Khalfa, coprésident de la Fondation Copernic, France
40. Aminata Traore, ancienne ministre de la culture du Mali
41. CARMEN LAMARCA PEREZ, catedratica de Derecho Penal Universidad Carlos III de Madrid, Espana
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 organizacion vasca, Alternatiba y de la coailicion 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 Español
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
88. Rossen Djagalov,member of editorial board, LeftEast website/ Assistant Professor, Koç University, Istanbul, Turkey
89. Paul Mackney – Co-Chair, Greece Solidarity Campaign, UK
90. Katz Claudio, economist, profesor, Argentina
91. Monique Dental, présidente fondatrice Réseau Féministe "Ruptures" France
92. John Weeks, economist. He is a Professor Emeritus of the School of Oriental and African Studies of the University of London, UK
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
103. Attac Castilla y Leon . España.
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, economiste, professeur emerite des universités
108. Teresa Gómez, economista, 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
112. Teivo Teivainen, Professor of World Politics, University of Helsinki, Finland
113. Yannis Thanassekos, Professeur de Sociologie politique, ancien directeur de la Fondation Auschwitz, collaborateur scientifique à l'université de Liège, Belgium
114. Enrique Ortega,, professor-movimiento por la defense de agua, Espana
115. Dr. Karl Petrick, Associate Professor of Economics, Western New England University, UK
116. Rosa Moussaoui, grand reporter à L'Humanité, France.
117. Eric Corijn, Professeur Etudes Urbaines, Vrije Universiteit Brussel
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
121. Yves Sintomer, Membre de l'Institut Universitaire de France, Professeur de science politique, chercheur au CSU-CRESPPA (CNRS/Université Paris-Lumières), France
122. Prabhat Patnaik, Economist, New Delhi.
123. Roger Silverman, Workers' International Network, UK
124. Des Gasper, professor of public policy, The Hague, Netherlands

125. Dr Julian Wells, Principal lecturer in economics, School of Economics, History and Politics, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, Kingston University, UK

126. Lluís Alòs i Martí, professor economia, Barcelona

127. Benoit Hazard, Anthropologue, Institut interdisciplinaire d'Anthropologie du Contemporain (UMR Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales/ Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique), France

128. Bruno THERET, Bruno Théret, économiste, Directeur de recherche émérite au CNRS, université Paris Dauphine, France

129. Steve Keen, professor Head, School of Economics, Politics & History, Kingston University London, UK

130. Jennar Raul Marc, écrivain, France

131. Franchet Pascal, vice-président CADTM, France

132. Adda BEKKOUCHE, Juriste, France

133. Marie-Dominique Vernhes, Rédaction du "Sand im Getriebe" (ATTAC), France

134. Claude Serfati, Economiste, France

135. Samy Johsua, professeur émérite Aix Marseille université

136. Dr. Antoni Domenech, Full Professor of Methodology of Science Faculty of Economics, University of Barcelona, Espana

137. Bibiana Medialdea, economist, Espana

138. Judith Dellheim, Berlin, Zukunftskonvent, Germany

139. Dra. Patricia Britos (Universidad Nacional de Mar del Plata, Argentina)

140. Syed Abdul Khaliq, Focal Person, Executive Director Institute for Social & Economic Justice (ISEJ) Pakistan

141. María Elena Saludas, ATTAC Argentina / CADTM – AYNA, Argentina
142. Gerard PERREAU BEZOUILLE, Premier Adjoint honoraire de Nanterre, France
143. BENHAÏM RAYMOND, CEDETIM, ECONOMISTE, France
144. António Does, Professor Auxiliar com Agregação do Departamento de Sociologia do Centro de Investigação e Estudos de Sociologia (CIES/ISCTE-IUL), Portugal
145. Annie Pourre, No Vox International, France
146. Pedro Ibarra catedrático ciencia política Universidad país vasco, Espana
147. Dan Gallin, Global Labour Institute, Geneva, Switzerland.
148. Cossart Jacques, économiste, France
149. Richard Danie, responsable syndicale FGTB, Belgium
150. Rome Daniel, Attac – Professeur d'économie gestion, France
151. ANGEL GARCÍA PINTADO (escritor y periodista), Espana
152. Gotovitch José, historien, Professeur hon. Université Libre de Bruxelles, Belgium
153. Nacho Álvarez, Professor of Applied Economics, University of Valladolid, Member of Podemos, Espana
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
158. Jean-Claude SALOMON, DR honoraire au CNRS, conseil scientifique d'Attac, France
159. Dr. Oscar Ugarteche, Instituto de Investigaciones Económicas, UNAM, Ciudad universitaria, Coyoacán, México DF 04510, Coordinador OBELA, Mexico
160. Alberto Montero, economistas de Podemos, Espana
161. Dr Vickramabahu, new same society party- NSSP, Sri Lanka
162. João Romão, Music Sociologist, University of Leipzig, Germany
163. Michel Rousseau, Euromarches, France
164. Julio Alguacil Gómez. Profesor de Sociología. Universidad Carlos III de Madrid, Espana
165. Fernando Rosas, professeur universitaire, Portugal
166. Dr Neil Lancaster, Senior Lecturer, Department of Accounting and Finance, DE MONTFORT UNIVERSITY, LEICESTER, UK
167. Rosaria Rita Canale, Associate professor in Economic Policy, Dept. of Business and Economics, University of Naples "Parthenope", Italia
168. Antonio Baylos, Professeur du Droit de Travail. Université Castilla La Mancha, Espana
169. Abdallah Zniber, ancien président du réseau Immigration Développement Démocratie (IDD) – France
170. Eric Fassin, sociologue, Université Paris-8, France

171. Paul Ariès, politologue, rédacteur en chef du mensuel les Zindigné(e)s, France
172. Nuno Rumo, Democracia e Divida, Portugal
173. Roland Zarzycki, Not Our Debt, Poland
174. Nicolas Sersiron, Président cadtm France et auteur, France
175. Noemi Levy, phd in economics. Chair professor Noemi Levy, UNAM. Economic Faculty, Mexico
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.
181. Ciriza Alejandra, Dra. en Filosofía por la UNCuyo. Investigadora Independiente del CONICET, INCIHUSA CCT Mendoza. Directora del Instituto de Estudios de Género (IDEGE) de la Universidad Nacional de Cuyo, Mendoza, Argentina.
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 Tavaschi , senior lecturer ,Queen Mary University of London, UK

187. Wilfred Dcosta, Indian Social Action Forum – INSAF, New Delhi, India

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, Espana

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, ecrivain, 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 (Euroestafa), 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 Torrelli, 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, España

300. Manuel Giron, catedrático, Alicante, España

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# **AN APPEAL TO THE INTERNATIONAL LABOUR COMMUNITY FROM THE WORKERS OF DITA FACTORY, TUZLA, BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA**

We, the workers of Tuzla-based detergent factory DITA, have been fighting a wave of corrupt privatisation, exploitation and asset stripping that is destroying the industry of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

For over two years now, we have guarded our factory around the clock to prevent the removal of machinery and assets.

The process of privatisation of DITA was carried out in collaboration with corrupt politicians, judiciary and banks,

which failed to carry out due diligence, and provided toxic loans to the new owners – money that never reached the factory.

Our country is suffering from lack of rule of law: criminal elites have pushed through amendments to the criminal code that mean there is no court that can try financial and trade crimes.

This legalised theft has denied us our basic human rights: we are over 40 monthly salaries in arrears, all of which left us hungry and destitute; we have been forced to watch our family members die because we could not afford medical treatment.

Now bankruptcy proceedings have begun. We are resolved to maintain the occupation of the factory and are refusing to recognise the authority of the trustee managing the bankruptcy unless the interests of the workers are protected, or new investment to reactivate the factory is found.

We are now at a critical point. Without outside support it may only be a matter of days before we are forced to build barricades and resist enforcement from special police forces.

We appeal urgently to the international Trade Union movement for moral and material support.

DITA factory workers, Tuzla, 16 April 2015

Emina Busuladžić, Head of the Strike Committee

Dževad Mehmedović, Shop Steward for the Union of Non-Metal Workers

Contact: [busuladzic.emina@gmail.com](mailto:busuladzic.emina@gmail.com)

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# 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.

Dzemat 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/>

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## Political victory for Polish Miners

The Polish miners' strike ended last Friday evening (they went back to work on Monday) with a political victory and an economic compromise. The managing director has left, the sacked trade unionists have been re-employed.

Information and video published on the Syndicat Solidarnost Tuzla website and the Zagreb Workers Front website (see: <https://www.facebook.com/Radnicka.Fronta/posts/915345861833247>)

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# Miners Strike and repression in Poland

*Jan Malewski, 13 February 2015 (Translated from <http://www.europe-solidaire.org/spip.php?article34332> )*

Polish miners at the Jastrzebie Colliery Company (JSW) have launched an appeal for international solidarity signed by Bogusław Zietek, president of the “August 80” trade union (1). We would be grateful if you could disseminate it as widely as possible.

The strike started on 28 January when the managing director of JSW, Jarosław Zagorowski, sacked 9 trade unionist at the “Budryk” mine for organising a solidarity strike with the miners at another company, KW (Kompania węglowa [“mining company”] Europe’s biggest mining business, which wanted to close four pits and sack the miners. This strike, was successful, with the backing of the whole population. The four mines were not closed and there were no sackings, according to the agreement with the government signed on 17 January. At that time the government made a commitment that there would be no reprisals against the strikers and those who solidarised with them...) The managing director has also suspended the collective agreements signed two years ago when JSW was converted to a PLC with shareholders. Among those sacked was Krzysztof Labadz, leader of the “August 80” union and of the 46 day-long strike in 2007-2008.

All trade unions supported the strike – “Solidarnosc”, ZZG (the mining branch of OPZZ), FZZ (Forum of trade unions), WZZ “Sierpen 80” (“August 80” Free Trade Union), “Kadra” (Cadres), etc. etc. There is a united strike committee made up of the

five main unions in the region.

Negotiations were carried out via a mediator, a former deputy prime-minister, but the managing director was not there and the company was reluctant. Besides reversing the sackings (agreed in principle during negotiations but not signed) and respecting the collective agreement (partially agreed but not signed), demands included the sacking of the managing director Jaroslaw Zagorowski, who the miners no longer want to see and who they accuse of trying to bankrupt the firm so he can buy it back cheaper.

On Wednesday police fired 37mm rubber bullets on miners gathered outside the JSW company HQ, injuring 20, some of them seriously. As the police fired, miners shouted "Are you trying a re-run of Decmber 1981?" (General Jaruzelski's coup d'etat). A video of the rally the police fired on shows that they did so without any valid reason against a gathering of miners who were singing (2).

The confrontation actually does look very serious. Miners' families (women and children) demonstrated on Thursday, saying that even if they went hungry they would hold out to the end.

19 miners are on hunger strike. According to management, there are more than 5 000 confirmed strikers, but the mines are at a standstill (a lot of miners have taken annual leave days, since they cannot manage 16 days on strike ...)

The court at Gliwice has just declared the strike illegal and threatened to make the strike leaders (including the 9 sacked trade unionists) pay JSW's "losses", which the company states amount to several million euros ... Krzysztof Labadz is among those worst affected ...

On Thursday, Boguslaw Zietek told the Polish Press Agency "We live in a country run by bandits, thieves and Mafiosi who are more powerful than the government". That gives a pretty accurate picture of the mood.

Jan Malewski

1. See [1] on Europe Solidaires Sand Frontieres (ESSF article 34331), Un appel urgent des mineurs polonais : Ne tirez pas sur les ouvriers !.
2. See <https://www.facebook.com/video.php?v=669643963153352&set=vb.100003232629300&type=2&theater>