

Brexit, Grexit, Frexit...

23 juin 2016 :

**VOTE TO LEAVE
THE EU ! ***



* Votez pour quitter l'Union européenne !

MEETING INTERNATIONALISTE Paris, 28 mai 2016

Paris, Saturday May 28th, 2016

INTERNATIONALIST RALLY

Londres, Athènes, Berlin, Lisbonne, Bruxelles, Rome, Madrid, Paris...

**RUPTURE
avec l'Union européenne !**



MEETING INTERNATIONALISTE Paris, 28 mai 2016

«La réforme du droit du travail est le minimum de ce qu'il faut faire»
(Jean-Claude Juncker, président de la Commission européenne)

**RETRAIT des lois, plans, mémorandums,
dictés par l'Union européenne
et les gouvernements**



MEETING INTERNATIONALISTE Paris, 28 mai 2016

“We support the British Workers who will vote to leave the European Union in the 23 June referendum!”

Full report of the rally

1,200 workers, activists and youth were at the rally. The rally was co-chaired by Heinz-Werner Schuster and Daniel Gluckstein. In France, the rally was supported by the Democratic Independent Workers Party (POID), among others.

Heinz-Werner Schuster,



Ver.di trade unionist, member of the Düsseldorf SPD Labour Commission (Germany), initiator of the appeal by labour activists from 23 countries of Europe, entitled *"We support the British workers who will vote to leave the European Union in the 23 June referendum!"*

Dear Comrades,

This rally gathers workers and youth from all over Europe, either by their presence in this hall or by the messages they have sent. It is being held on the basis of the appeal to trade unions, Labour Party branches and CLPs and those British labour activists who, despite the instructions issued by the Labour Party leadership and the leading circles of the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC), have decided to call for a vote to "leave" the European Union on 23 June!

With this meeting we show our determination to break with the European Union, its diktats and its institutions. And that is why we address from this podium our greetings and solidarity to British workers and their organisations who are fighting for their country to leave the EU.

This rally is not being held out of time and space. It is being held in France, in Paris. That is why it is also a demonstration of our support to the struggle of the French working class against the Hollande-Valls government and its counter reform of the Labour code (El Khomri Bill), implementing the EU directive and the "National Programme of Reforms in France", within the framework of the "European semester". That is why it is correct and important that the internationalist rally takes place here, today.

On February 17th, 31 trade unionists and members of the Labour Party published a statement in favour of the Brexit in the "Guardian". We then

opened up discussion on this call. For they expressed there, what we see every day in our battles: the EU is irrevocably committed to privatisation, to the destruction of social gains, to low wages and to the erosion of trade union rights. That is why the capitalists in the EU are unconditionally in favour of the EU.

But we made another observation: top leaderships of our organisations are also unconditionally in favour of the EU. They are constantly telling us that the EU offers a haven of peace, forgetting to mention that the EU is indissolubly linked to NATO, under the leadership of US Imperialism and without mentioning the wars waged in Yugoslavia, the Near and Middle East and on the African continent.

And it is in the name of "Social Europe" that these leaders defend the EU and its institutions, a totally anti democratic construction with the sole objective of defending the "single market" against the will of the majority of workers and peoples.

We all know it: if the weakest link in the chain of worker rights and guarantees is broken, it will then be the turn of all the others, who are confronted with this struggle in every country.

After the "deal" between Cameron, Tusk and the European Council on migrant workers in the EU, to deprive them of the rights the British labour movement has conquered, some are talking of the end of "free circulation" of workers in Europe. And of course the German Social Democrat Minister of Labour takes up this "deal" against immigrants in

the framework of his offensive against collective bargaining agreements.

But for capital, it is not a question of the "end of free circulation", but simply of a legal adjustment of "fundamental freedoms within the "single market", which we all know, knows neither free circulation of workers in Europe, nor unlimited right to strike.

The door that the British labour movement can break open, frightens people for "one does not know what might happen". It frightens too all those who claim formally to reject the EU.

On the "left", we are told that our struggle for breaking with the EU would amount to covering the City of London and part of the British bourgeoisie and turning the working class away from its fight with Cameron.

This left wing verbiage hardly hides a total revision of the position on breaking with the EU, a left wing

cover for the leaderships, with the argument of right wing votes. But it is indeed the policies of the EU and the different governments, covered by the leaders of organisations, claiming to speak for the Labour Movement, that opens the door to right wing demagogy. So comrades, let us help the British labour movement so that it is victorious in the 23 June referendum. This would no doubt open up a new prospect for liberating Europe from the Golden Rule diktats, from the anti social policy ruining pensions, schools, the health system, encouraging reduction of "labour costs" by lowering wages, destroying collective bargaining agreements and labour codes.

The new perspective would be that of the interests of workers and peoples across the whole continent, within the framework of a Europe of free peoples, cooperating freely with full respect for their national sovereignty.

Steve Hedley,



RMT Senior Assistant General Secretary

First of all, I would like to pay tribute to the French workers who are conducting a magnificent strike movement at the moment. It's an inspiration to absolutely everybody across Europe.

Secondly, I would like to thank the organisers for inviting us to this conference, we really did not know that so many people across France and Europe support Britain leaving the European Union.

We in the RMT are a union of 80 000 workers that covers train workers, Tube workers, port workers and seafarers.

We oppose racism in all its forms, we are for a peoples' Europe and a peoples' world, a socialist Europe and a socialist world.

You may have seen the Brexit campaign led in Britain by racists like Farage, and racists like Boris

Johnson and the right wing of the Tory Party. We have no association with these people at all.

These people are sometimes like a stopped clock. They are right twice a day, but for all the wrong reasons.

We want to come out of the European Union because we want to protect Workers rights.

Of course, in Britain, Thatcher and the conservatives, and after that the Labour government brought about privatisation.

But what the European Fourth Railway Package does is to institutionalise privatisation.

Even if we had a Left wing government elected in Britain tomorrow, if Jeremy Corbin was Prime Minister, he could not renationalise the railways and stay in the European Union.

We have seen the obscene spectacle where Portuguese workers, our brothers and sisters, are working in British ships in Southampton being paid

less than 3 pounds an hour, which is less than half the national minimum wage.

At least, it's what the EU is all about. It's a bosses club, a rich men's club that want to destroy workers' rights and workers terms and conditions. We welcome any worker from across Europe and indeed across the world. We have far more in common with workers from everywhere than with our bosses, and we want those workers paid on the same terms conditions and pay as British workers. Our opponents want to say that we are racists for demanding the workers to have equal rights. That is a slur that is not the truth.

It's part of a projected fear to contaminate workers and ethnic minorities in Britain and their voting to stay in the European Union. The liberalisation package that the EU is demanding by 2020, which is the reason why France is on strike at the minute, would be applied in every European country.

We have the obscene spectacle of an American company, Uber, registered in Holland, taking the

Spanish government to the European court because, they say, they are restricting their trade. And of course, this will be the template for every other multinational that wants to drive down terms and conditions. If a government tries to protect its workers, this company will bring this government to the European court. This will be enshrined in the TTIP agreement, which is now being negotiated in secret, behind our backs.

The chief negotiator for Europe said plainly that she was not responsible to the European people, but was responsible to the unelected European commission.

I would like to end by saying that this year is an historical year for me as an Irishman.

One hundred years ago, a couple of thousand Irish people rose up in 1916 and shook the chains of the British Empire.

It's my fervent hope that in 2016, the peoples of France, of Germany, of Spain, all the peoples of Europe, will raise up against the dictatorship of the EU. Long live the Workers!

Claude Charmont,



Trade unionist in the Seine and Marne district

Comrades,

I am a trade unionist in the Seine-et Marne, in the Paris region (Ile de France). In the Seine et Marne there is something special, we have the only refinery in the Paris region at Grandpuits.

Comrades, refinery workers have been out for eleven days now, on a united strike – CGT and FO – since the 17 May. Yesterday they decided to prolong the strike for a week, until Friday 3 June.

They started by stopping any products or vehicles going out or coming in, except those linked to security measures or maintenance work (by road, as well as by rail or pipe line whose valves were shut off).

And from the 23 May they ceased all production. In my capacity as an elected trade union officer, I visited the Grandpuits site. At their staff assembly several things struck me:

-First of all the demands were very clear. The FO-CGT joint leaflet dated 17 May was headlined "*neither amendable nor negotiable*". At the staff assembly, there was one demand: "Withdrawal of the Bill"!

-The government resorting to the 49-3 Article of the Constitution was seen as pure provocation. What's more in their leaflet the CGT and FO write – and quite rightly so: "*Article 49-3 cannot replace the opinion of a French population of 66 million*".

Finally I was struck, and I might say particularly, by the unity of action of the CGT and FO. All the more so, as in many companies they have not often been on the best of terms! The FO and CGT District General Secretaries came to support the workers. At every staff assembly, 17 May, 20 May, 23 May, every time there was a majority in favour of the strike (almost unanimous among posted employees) in spite of the presence of members of management and in spite of the 27 May and leaflets against the strike distributed by the CFDT and CGC.

Before concluding, I would like to tell you about the discussion among strikers which, I think, has a broader meaning. The strikers receive visits from citizens who come to support them, from students who want to help them, they receive solidarity messages. And they remember the 2010 strike over pensions when they got financial support to help them stay on strike ... and they say: *"We are pleased with the support we get"* but others add: *"Support is good, but one should not strike by proxy"*.

Comrades, they are right, the best support to the

refinery workers' strike will come from strike elsewhere! The best support, is the rail workers strike! The best support is the strike in the Nemours glass factories started by the CGT and at the Nemours hospital by the CGT and FO'. The best support is strike till withdrawal!

Comrades,

Wage earners throughout the country are called out on an inter-professional national strike and a national demonstration for the withdrawal of the El Khomri Bill on 14 June. Comrades, it must be said clearly. If the government refuses to hear the strikers and demonstrators, then it has to be a general strike till withdrawal! That is the position adopted by my Union at District level.

Comrades,

The CGT and FO trade unions at the Grandpuits refinery end one of their common leaflets with these words: *"We are the people!"* So, for the voice of the people to be heard by this minority government, yes, strike till withdrawal!

In Britain as in France, the voice of the people must be heard, *leave* must overcome!

Panagiotis Tassopoulos,



**Student, LAE (Popular Unity) member,
Greece**

Dear friends and Comrades,

First of all I should like to thank you for the honour you have done me, being here today among you. I should introduce myself. My name is Panagiotis Tassopoulos. I come from Greece. I am one of the thousands of young people who fight in Greece. I fight austerity. I fight against the poverty that the people suffer. I fight for my children, for your children and for the generations to come. Why do we take part in the initiative of British workers to leave the European Union in the referendum that is to take place in June?

Dear friends, Comrades, we have come to Paris to say No to referendums, No to memorandums, No to austerity, No to the EU. In Greece, we said NO to our referendum 10 months ago. A referendum which, with 61.5%, gave a clear reply to Junker, to the EU, to the IMF to all those who supported our submission to the memorandums and austerity. This No from the youth and the people, Tsipras and his government have transformed into a Yes. i.e. in contradiction with the mandate given by the people, they have said:

Yes to market domination, yes to overtaxing the people, yes to privatisations, yes to lowering

wages and pensions, yes to the suppression of all social gains, yes to unemployment, yes to the emigration of young people of my age to other European countries and the United States.

At present the Greek government is taking other austerity measures worth 5.4 billion euros, and is selling off everything that belongs to the State. i.e. it is continuing the catastrophic policy of preceding governments. That is why we continue to fight any government that implements these policies.

The fight goes on.

The fight continues today in France.

And in Britain.

We believe, we hope that your struggler will strike a blow at this instrument of imperialism, the EU. It will then will help all the peoples of a united Europe of workers and peoples.

To conclude I would like to give you some figures that are the results of the last three memorandums from 2009 till today.

- Investments of 49.6 billion euros have fallen to 10 billion Euros,
- Unemployment has gone up spectacularly from 9% to 26.6%
- More than 80.000 companies have closed down,
- Taxes have increased today by 180% for each household
- Since then, there have been 10 000 suicides in the country

Is that the Europe that some have dreamt of?

We do not want that Europe! That is why we say:
Break with the European Union!

Elisa,



Student from Nanterre University

Hello,

I am a student at the University of Nanterre and like hundreds of thousands of young people for the last three months, I have been taking an active part in mobilisation, alongside workers, for the withdrawal of the El Khomri Bill.

We reject the legalised precariousness that the El Khomri Bill and the Hollande-Valls government want to force on us, because like all other young people in this country we want real university degrees, a real job, a real wage.

I am an active member of the Youth Revolution (Jeunesse révolution) group at the University of Nanterre. Next week-end the first National Conference of Youth Revolution will take place in Paris.

But because we are very attached to respecting mandates I have to say that conditions being as they are, I have not been mandated today by Youth Revolution and what I say here, only reflects

discussions I have had within my group and with dozens of students at my university.

On 9 March, we were hundreds of thousands of young people and workers, all united on the streets across France, all united to demand the withdrawal of the El Khomri Bill.

But we have to admit that for three months now, that strong will of millions of workers and youth has come up against obstacles.

I address our comrades in Britain, in Germany, Greece, Italy and Belgium: you should know that for months now, we have been the objects of police repression, at a level unprecedented for years.

In Nanterre, 47 secondary school pupils have been detained.

In Rennes a student has lost an eye from police shooting. In Paris, secondary school pupils from the Voltaire Lycée, arrested at random, are today under threat of heavy prison sentences...

And now the Hollande -Valls government sends the police in against picket lines and trade unionists!

And there are dozens of other damning incidents of the same type.

Tell this to the young people and workers in your different countries: in France a government which has the nerve to call itself "left wing" uses tear gas and bludgeons us just one reason, because we are using our right to come out on strike and to demonstrate!

Violence, is also the violence the government resorted to, in forcing through this bill with Article 49-3 of the constitution, a flagrant denial of democracy. This has outraged all the youth.

But the unprecedented brutality with which we have been confronted, has yet failed, up till now, to get rid of the conviction we all share: the El Khomri reform of the Labour Code only serves the interests of bosses and not the interests of youth. This Bill is neither amendable nor negotiable and it must be withdrawn!

So how do we obtain the withdrawal that we all want?

We mustn't hide the fact that on top of the obstacles raised by the government, real confusion is organised among the youth. A few days ago, secondary school pupils, members of Youth Revolution raised the question: in which procession will we be demonstrating?

With the trade unions? With the groups called "autonomous" at the head of the demonstration? These are questions we are all asking.

Should we demonstrate in the procession composed of the youth organisations? Organisations whose leaders explained as early as 11 April, that the government was stepping down, that they had obtained we don't know what, while the mandate of hundreds of thousands of young people was "withdrawal, full stop, that's all"?

Should we demonstrate in the procession called "autonomous"? A procession whose leaders claim that the youth could fight the government without uniting with the workers and their trade unions?

I repeat this: on 9 March these questions were not on the agenda.

Because we were hundreds of thousands out on the streets, united, the youth, the workers, the trade unions, with only one slogan: right now, straight away, withdraw the El Khomri Bill!

That is what frightens Hollande and Valls. They are frightened by the unity of the workers and the youth grouped in a block with their organisations demanding the withdrawal of the Bill, demanding strike up till the Bill is withdrawn!

So let's put it frankly, isn't it in order to put a stop to the expression of that aspiration of the majority that at the university of Nanterre, just as in many other universities some people say: we must stop organising assemblies, we must find other modes of action, for instance organising a "Up All Night "protest (Nuit Debout) on a square in the town of Nanterre? The result was that it did not mobilise more than thirty people.

In Nanterre we have had discussions with the students who discuss with Youth Revolution. We have commented the declaration of the European Commission President, Jean Claude Juncker who said: *"The reform of the Labour code that the Valls government wants and has imposed , is the minimum of what is necessary"*. This Mr Juncker also said: *"France who loves being divided about everything should avoid doing so on Europe"*.

Europe, Mr Juncker is not your prison for peoples that is forcing the El Khomri Bill on us in France and bludgeoning us when we protest.

Europe, Mr Juncker is not your European Union police that expels refugees who flee your wars in Syria and Afghanistan.

Europe, Mr Juncker, is not your capitalist European Union that destroys all our rights, in France, in Greece, in Britain or in Spain!

Europe is not the European Union! And that is why we say: long live the British workers who are going to vote to leave the European Union on the 23 June!

Europe, as we have discussed with the young Greek comrade who spoke before me here, is common initiatives that we are going to submit to the Youth Revolution Congress next week end, to fight together in Paris, Athens, London and Madrid to say all together down with your European directives that condemn us to misery!

To say: yes to the united resistance of the youth and the working class in every country of the continent, against barbarism, exploitation, repression, war!

The El Khomri Bill must be withdrawn, yes withdrawn!

Dario Granaglia,



FIOM-CGIL trade union delegate in the metalworking industry and candidate on the “Abrogazione!” (Repeal!) list in the municipal elections in Turin (Italy)

My name is Dario Granaglia, I am a shop steward of the FIOM-CGIL, the Italian metal workers' union. I work in an industrial plant of the FCA – formerly a FIAT company.

I am a candidate on a list for the Turin municipal election, the list entitled “*Abrogazione!* Yesterday, we held a rally of our list supporters attended by 150 workers, activists and youth.

Since the beginning of the crisis and during the last six years, lay-offs have ceaselessly increased, which has driven down my wages along with those of the other workers, down to really low levels, compelling us to huge sacrifices.

When I am out of work, it is the State that pays substitute wages that we call “*cassa integrazione*”. Which means that all the Italian citizens, through their taxes, pay the crisis of the FCA company, while the FCA management has off-shored its headquarters abroad to pay less taxes. That is what the EU and free circulation of capital means. When the crisis began, FIAT decided to leave Cofindustria, the association of Italian employers, to be rid of national labour terms and conditions and to design a specific contract, tailored to suit FIAT needs. To achieve this, Marchionni, the administrator appointed by FIAT, made a deal with the CISL and the UIL, the other major Italian federations. CISL and UIL then organised a referendum of workers that amounted to genuine blackmail: if you do not accept, FIAT will close down. But even in those conditions, and even when the mayor of Turin pressured to have workers vote for the deal, 46% of the FIAT employees voted against, expressing huge resistance and a powerful determination to fight. My union, the FIOM, had stood for the NO vote leading along the whole federation, the CGIL. This was positive, but at the same time, the same FIOM did not take a clear stand for the “withdrawal” nor

for the repeal of the plan afterwards, just accepting the result of the referendum as it was. So, from January 1 2012 on, FIAT implemented a specific labour contract, outside the framework of the national terms and conditions.

What was the objective?

At the time, the FIAT administrator affirmed that a better-suited instrument was needed to respond to worldwide competitiveness, to meet the requirements of the factory governance for international competition.

But, in another interview, he was more candid: “*What I want is all-out flexibility*”

It was a declaration of war on workers, the announcement of a fight-to-the-end to destroy what remained after years and years of destructive attacks dictated by the European Union.

Then the whole population understood what was at stake: if the plan was implemented at FIAT, sooner or later, the same terrible working conditions, the end to national terms and conditions and harsh exploitation would be enforced throughout the country. And that was why the people mobilised standing by FIOM, standing by FIAT workers. In October 2010, a huge march was staged in Rome against the Marchionne plan. 500,000 flooded the streets from every sector. But in the face of this force, the leadership of the FIOM refused to call for the slogan “withdraw”, refused to demand the “repeal”, and preferred to make counter-proposals to the FIAT management.

This is the way the plan was passed, and this flung the door open to all the attacks in every sector.

Especially, the Marchionne plan paved the way for the Job's Act, which is what the reform of the labour code is called in Italy. This reform scrapped all the protective measures enjoyed by workers, destroyed the workers' terms and conditions as

they had been won in 1971 and introduced total precariousness.

But this also facilitated the destruction of the national terms and conditions in the public sector, the reform which provides for the privatisation of education, and budget cuts.

That is so, and with the Job's Act, capitalists secured huge exemptions which further run down the State's budget. The State, in compliance with Maastricht, with EU treaties has to cut from healthcare, services, privatise and slash retirement pensions.

And today, we are in a situation in which a huge number of families cannot get medical assistance for themselves or for their children, in which getting an urgent visit to the surgery may take a year's waiting, which has driven the death rate up. But, comrades, the Marchionne plan was warmly greeted by the European Union and then the Job's Act, directly dictated by the EU in a letter to the government, just as the reform of education and the reform of retirement pensions....

But their destructive work is not quite over yet: today the EU will say that reforms have been quite well carried out but that they should be continued. And for that, the government has approved a reform of the Constitution, "fast track" style.

So this is the balance sheet I am drawing: my situation is similar to that of tens of thousand workers. I have lived on "*cassa integrazione*" for seven years.

Where do they want to take us to?

What future for my wife, my children?

Today, instead of taking up arms for the repeal of the Job's Act, of the Marchionne plan, of the reforms, the leaders of my union have proposed to discuss a law for "a new status of wage earners" which implies that workers would take a hand in the destruction of their own labour cost because they would co-manage the factory alongside the capitalists and participate in the profits.

If we accept this orientation, then we are going to discuss within boundaries already fixed by the EU, and finally we will simply get along with the

decisions that have been taken. We are members of the CGIL and together with many members and workers, we fight to defend the independence of the trade union, therefore, its very existence.

We have fielded a list for the municipal elections in Turin to wage this struggle, to regroup and act for the abrogation of all the destructive reforms.

The title of our list is "Abrogation". Of course, abrogation of all the laws and also all the EU treaties that have given rise to them. That is the pre-condition for any political agenda for workers, to save us. Yesterday evening, we held a rally of the list in Turin attended by 150 workers, activists, youth and we constituted the Political Movement for Abrogation.

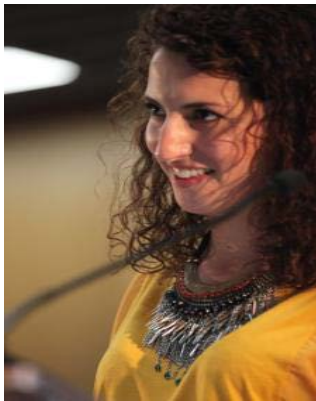
Across Europe, we need to build this movement and, in our appeal, we said so clearly: Britain leaving the EU would give a new impulse to the resistance of the peoples and of all those who want to fight to open a perspective for the overwhelming majority of the population.

I should like to end my intervention on a message to all the workers of Europe but especially to French workers who are fighting for the withdrawal of the reform of the Labour Code. A few days ago, Italian Prime Minister Renzi declared that, after the teachers' massive strike on May 5th 2015, he was about to give in and withdraw the reform. So, if the mobilisation had continued, if the leaders had not made "counter-proposals", if the strike till the reform was withdrawn had been pursued, it would have been possible to win. So, it is possible to win.

Let me say clearly: they are afraid. Just as for Brexit, just as for the struggle in France, they do know that if we can win at one point, then everything will be challenged everywhere and a new prospect will open for all the peoples of Europe.

Long Live Brexit! Long live the French Workers 'struggle until the Bill withdrawn!

Pauline Georges,



Rail worker and trade unionist

Comrades,

When we learnt that British and German rail workers were going to address this rally, we decided to ask for the support of French rail workers, and we wrote a letter to that effect.

To this day, 82 rail workers, some of them members of the CGT, FO or SUD unions – as well as others non-unionized, some with strong political views, others with no affiliation whatsoever, have endorsed this appeal in order to support the British labour movement fighting for Brexit and to give a warm welcome to our comrades working in the British and German rail industry.

As was mentioned in our appeal and by other comrades today, rail workers know the role the European Union plays in the destruction of their rights and of the public rail service.

We know, whichever European country we come from, that the policies inspired by the European directives and the so-called rail packages are directly responsible – together with the governments, whether right-wing or left-wing, that implement them – for the dismantling of public services, of our statutes and of all our collective safeguards.

Two years ago the government introduced the reform of the railways aimed at opening the railways to competition and breaking up public service, as required by European directives. In June 2014, rail workers massively mobilized in a two-week long strike.

They were resolutely opposed to the reform, but unfortunately their strike did not stop the enforcement of the reform. Regrettably, I have no time to dwell on this point here.

Now, two years on, we are suffering the practical effects of its implementation. The national company does not exist anymore. It has been broken up in three distinct enterprises, and working conditions have deteriorated. Rail workers can see in concrete terms that the purpose of all this is to destroy our status.

It thus fits in with the El Khomri Labour Bill which, in the same way, attacks the Labour Code insofar as all that used to come within the remit of the law is to be a matter for company-level agreements. And it undermines the way working time is organized.

Before the reform, all rail workers in the national company had the same organization of working hours, governed by a decree called RH077.

The reform is meant to abolish this decree and to replace it with one that is much more vague, to be supplemented by a national collective agreement and company-level agreements. Therefore regulations will no longer be the same for all rail workers in the public service, since they will be “negotiated” in each company, thereby destroying what unified all the rail workers in the state-owned company, the *Société nationale des chemins de fer français* (the SNCF).

For months, rail workers have been showing, through their strikes, that they are determined to fight to preserve their gains - and further strikes are to be expected. But we are faced with a problem.

Some trade unions, including the one I belong to, want the repeal of the reform while others express things differently. However, within the latter there are activists who favour a repeal.

Today raising the question of the repeal of the rail reform entails raising the question of a return to the public service, and consequently to one statute for all rail workers.

What does this mean in practical terms today? The crucial demand is the inclusion of the whole of RH077 in the core decree for all rail workers in both the public and private sectors - the first step towards a return to public monopoly.

But things are not that simple. In the same way as some trade unions supported the reform while others were opposed to it, some unions favour the transposition of RH077 in the decree, others in the national collective agreement, others in company-level agreements and others still in a high quality national collective agreement.

Things are not simple either when it comes to the forms of strike. Some organizations have called for an indefinite strike starting on May 18th, other unions have called weekly two-day strikes each week, and others an indefinite strike as of May 31st. At the time I am speaking, all trade unions are calling an indefinite strike as of May 31st. But once more the slogans are different. This creates a very complex situation for rail workers. But you can feel

a strong determination to fight, which produces intense debate in the many general assemblies: an intense discussion on the slogans and the form of the strike. However, in some places, for example at the Paris Est (East) train station, there is unity in support of a strike on only one slogan: “the decree must be RH007”.

This shows very precisely the concrete way in which renationalization – and consequently the break with the European Union – has been put on the agenda. What is gradually emerging among rail workers is the concrete path leading to renationalization. Of course we are confronted with obstacles and we are not going to succeed in one go. But something is trying to emerge. Our grouping of rail workers is part of this movement on the ground of the class struggle.

In contrast with those who are telling us that there is no alternative, in contrast with those who are telling us we should go along with reforms and that opening up to competition cannot be avoided, rail workers declare: renationalization, return to our statutes, return to public monopoly.

That is the concrete movement that tomorrow will abolish the European Union.

Klaus Schüller,



Rail trade unionist in the federal state of Thuringia and member of the National Bureau of the SPD Labour Commission (Germany)

Dear comrades and friends,
With all my heart, thank you for inviting me. It is a great honour to be with you today. For all of us, Europe is an executioner whose job is to liquidate workers' rights, public services and social gains. In an incredibly brutal way, capital, in this case German capital, is trying to impose its roadmap on all EU countries, i.e., a relentless destruction of national collective agreements, the massive use of precarious employment and agency staff, the destruction of healthcare and pension schemes.
Dear comrades,

Those people have no respect whatsoever, no regard, for us who create wealth. We shall not let their doctrine poison the workers of Europe and this is one of the reasons why we are here today. Let us take the example of the rail industry: the fourth rail package shows that it is indeed through those measures coordinated by the European Commission and the European Parliament that extremely severe blows are at the moment being dealt to state-owned rail industry throughout Europe. They want to “liberalize the market” and boost competition through tendering at the European level.

The “technical pillar” of this rail package plans to reduce national standards so as to satisfy private rail companies and suppliers, who therefore will be able to provide services all over Europe irrespective of borders.

In fact, they have decided to deliver the deathblow to state-owned rail companies by including them in the tendering process and by increasing the separation between traffic and network – which is tantamount to privatization and will lead – as happened at the time in Britain – to a disaster in the transport sector.

Obviously, rail workers in the whole of Europe should wage a joint struggle to defend and reclaim our national rail companies, together with all the social and legal safeguards that go with them, and it is this fight that we are going to launch together.

In addition, this privatization inevitably leads to a full-scale deregulation of the rail industry, similar to what is already happening in airports, and not only affecting ground services. As a result of EU directives demanding that all ground services be put out for tender, all airport enterprises are to be liquidated through privatization and outsourcing. It means that collective agreements that used to include all the airport workforce are also to be scrapped.

I am a member of the national leadership of AFA, the SPD Workers Commission. Our April national conference decided to launch a campaign against precarious employment and to include in the collective agreement all those that are no longer covered, or have never been covered, by it. This fight is absolutely necessary because everywhere, even in what used to be the public sector, there are now millions of low-paid and low-status jobs. In Germany there are already 8.1 million under-

paid workers, with an hourly wage rate of less than €9.30. About 39% of the workers are casual, part-time or agency workers, or have dead-end jobs. On the other hand, the wealthiest 10 per cent own €8 billion. How outrageous when you realize that in Germany over 2 million children are living below the poverty level.

Now, in the wake of the agreement between Tusk and Cameron, they are intent on forcing through low wages, precarious employment and poverty. Like Cameron, Nahles, the German Labour Minister wants to make it harder for foreign workers to get welfare benefits. She intends to exploit the refugees’ misery to force hundreds of thousands of them to take dead-end jobs, thereby pitting them against unemployed or poor German workers.

We must therefore join forces at the European level to defend and win back our collective agreements on the principle: one enterprise, one union, one collective agreement, and the constitutional right to strike.

Let us reject any form of division, whether from the bosses or the government. It is on that basis that we will be able to defend and win back permanent contracts against the EU's diktat, against its determination to constantly reduce the cost of labour.

We want to express solidarity with your fight against the destruction of the French Labour Code. I have supported the British transport union’s call for a Leave vote in the referendum on Britain’s membership of the EU.

It is also the best way to prepare the Mumbai World Conference of November 18th-20th against war, exploitation and precarious employment. All together for the same fight! Thank you.

Marie-Luce Mouly,



**Former district Secretary of the Parti de gauche (Left Party) in Eure-et-Loir
Signatory of the "The Appeal of the 147"**

Comrades,

I was asked to pass on a message first. An appeal was handed out. It is an appeal of activists from all tendencies, of which I am a signatory. It is a proposal for a national workers conference for a break with the Fifth Republic, and with the European Union and for a sovereign Constituent Assembly.

I call on you to endorse it and to get endorsements, and I would like to briefly explain to you the personal reasons that led me to sign it.

Throughout my working life, which began in May 1968 in Paris, I have done trade union work in defense of the interests of the working class in the banking and insurance industry. Retired since 2007, I did keep a very close eye on Europe and its destructive decisions whose burden mainly fell upon the populations in southern Europe, nicknamed with patronizing contempt PIGS (Portugal, Ireland, Greece, Spain), this of course with a view to divide European peoples by pitting them against each other. But these restrictions also applied to France and other European countries, equally affected, in a creeping but unceasing manner.

In this respect, obviously I have paid close attention to, and supported, the powerful movement in France for the withdrawal of the El Khomri bill, called the "labour bill" (rather a slavery law), a threat to hundred and fifty years of social gains that would open the way to a complete and quick step-by-step dismantling of the whole social structure. Once harm has been done in the private sector, it will be the turn of the public sector (the report on working time in public services has just been released, of course, anticipating the allegedly necessary "reforms") ... and tomorrow Social Security's turn - although, of

course, this has already begun - just like in England as shown in Ken Loach's film.

Beyond the current movement, a problem is obviously raised: what political outcome?

For my part, I joined the PG (Parti de Gauche / Left Party) in 2011 because it claimed to be a fighting organization with a strategy and with commitments. There was then a democratic discussion framework that had us take on with enthusiasm the presidential election with the Left Front. But by the following legislative elections, we spent all our time campaigning for elections and negotiating between parties of the Left Front, the question of the useful vote against the FN (Front national / National Front) eventually taking precedence over all the other subjects that had been at the origin of my joining the PG.

In the last local elections, being co-secretary of the Left Party of Eure-et-Loir, in the name of party discipline, I still agreed to campaign and run as candidate for the Left Front. But when the moment came for the Centre region to decide on which stance to adopt in the regional elections, militants and activists of Eure-et-Loir and of the region refused, by a large majority of their gathering, to ally with the PCF because inevitably this would have resulted in the second round in a call to vote for the PS (Parti socialiste / Socialist Party), which was contrary to our mandate and to what we were defending as activists.

Jean-Luc Mélenchon can pretend he had no part in the agreements signed with the PS, yet no one but him announced his personal vote for the slate of Claude Bartolone! A slate where Coquerel, national secretary, stood, counter to a majority vote against departmental representatives of Ile-de-France.

And when, early 2016, the PG leadership refused

to table in the National Council the removal of the national secretary that we were demanding as well as the motion that, precisely, dealt with the recurring Socialist Party question, the militants at the origin of these two motions were suspended and then expelled. Others, like ourselves, in Eure-et-Loir, decided to resign from all our duties and positions as well as from the PG and, for lack of substitutes, to leave empty the departmental bodies of the PG. Presently I'm not a member of any party.

What is becoming of all these activists?

Mélenchon is an eloquent speaker, but even if he talks of the Sixth Republic, his running in the presidential election is exemplary of the Fifth Republic. And toward being elected, despite the ideas he initially advocated that I think were sincere, the candidate had to make so many alliances on the basis of the lowest common denominator in his quest for voters that, once elected, the nice projects of the beginning would no longer have existed and even become the opposite of those that would have got him elected! Consequently I am led to consider that taking power for a real change will not come about through the ballot box. For this takeover to lead to anything but the misery that rulers have in store for us, a revolution initiated and won by the

working class is in order to free us from the shackles of these institutions. Valls and Hollande decide nothing, they are just lackeys of the European Commission, which, in July 2015 already, when imposing on Greece the payment of its debt, was, at the same time, planning to demand that France enact a thorough reform of its labor legislation. All the legislative framework is in place for this law to pass, hence the 49.3.

But even if, thanks to the pressure of the mobilization, we can wrest a withdrawal of the El Khomri bill ... or a change of Prime Minister, another similar minister and other provisions with the same aim of reducing workers to slavery will again be imposed upon us, relentlessly, to the end. I think that it is the question of power and of breaking with the Fifth Republic and with the European Union that we must raise as a prerequisite. We cannot leave our lives in the hands of those who have power and money.

This is what led me to sign this appeal in order to organize the broadest discussion possible directly in touch with the real problems of the people.

Today is the time when all generations of activists must come together to open a future worth living for young generations.



Roberto Giarrocco,



Trade-union activist, member of the Unity Committee / Eenheidscomite (Belgium)

Good afternoon,

In Belgium, the prison officers have now been on strike for a month. It has been a very long strike, and it is still going on. Two agreements have already been drafted and submitted to the rank and file, which rejected them. A third draft agreement has just been negotiated this past week and, according to the union leader, it will likely get rejected again. So, we can say that this is an exemplary strike. Why is that? Because it's been a month that workers in the prisons, who are heavily unionized, have been faced with a side of the European policy that takes the form of fiscal targets that, most concretely, translate into prison staff cutbacks while prisons are in a dilapidated state, with crime taking on new forms, therefore in very, very difficult working conditions, and we can see that union leaders are really overwhelmed by their base.

Another aspect is that the strike has been lasting for a long time because workers went on strike hoping that the other sectors would join in the strike so as to bring the government down. Last Tuesday a big demonstration took place in Brussels, a national demonstration called by all the unions, attended by 80,000 workers. Its goal was to protest against the government's plan to annualize working hours and to generalize agreements where overtime no longer gets paid as such but must be done in the framework of working weeks of up to 50 hours. The question that arose in the minds of all demonstrators, all workers, was how we could go from the strike in the prisons to a general strike against the government to stop a vote on this working time annualization law that we quickly came to call the

"labor law", to draw a parallel with the situation in France.

Two answers were given to this question. The first answer came from the railway workers that went on an open-ended strike the day after the demonstration, and there was a convention of the Walloon public services union of the FGTB that decided on, words matter, but the rank and file still felt it was a call for an open-ended strike from Tuesday on, although the words are not exactly those since the leaflet call reads: *"All affiliates are expected to strike on Tuesday 31st and to pursue the movement until the government falls."* It would have been nice if there had been a clear call to continue the strike. That will be the challenge in the next period: who will go on strike on Wednesday, the day after the 31st? So we are on the verge of really huge battles at a time when the prisons strike continues and there is the railway strike. We are really on the eve of an exceptional situation.

At the level of our Unity Committee, we organized a meeting to promote today's rally. It was a very successful meeting. It turned a bit into an open debate because some activists came to listen to our arguments. There were arguments against the Brexit.

One deserves some discussion: it mistakenly draws a comparison between the European Union and a company. One participant said: *"You say you are in favour of leaving the European Union. It is as if, in the midst of a strike, you were saying that we should all leave the company while the shop-stewards' goal is to negotiate within the company."* I think that, as is often the case, comparison is not reason. The European Union is

not our company. The European Union is outside our companies.

It is a foreign body. I'd say that the June 23rd vote is a vote to leave the EU, but perhaps it would be more accurate to say that it is a vote to expel the

European Union.

I had planned a few words to say that, obviously, if the Brexit wins, it will set an example for all of us, in the other European countries, to, in turn, expel the Union.

Alex Gordon,



Former president of the RMT.

On behalf of the Lexit campaign

Dear comrades,

My name is Alex Gordon. I am speaking as Convenor of #Lexit – the Left Campaign to LEAVE the European Union in Britain and I bring you their greetings

I am here with you today because this is a critical moment for the working class: in Britain, internationally and especially here in France where your fight against the 'El Khomri' Law is the latest magnificent example of resistance to the financial dictatorship represented by the European Commission. In country after country the EU institutions are leading attacks on workers' rights and on the historic social gains won by previous generations of workers.

Solidarity with the resistance of French workers against EU attacks.

In Britain, voices of opposition to the EU from communists and the far left, alongside trade unionists and associations representing workers from India, Bangladesh, Turkey and young migrants from Greece and eastern European, are necessary because our class enemies have united massively to call on us to vote to REMAIN in the EU. The representatives of Goldman Sachs and all the global banks based in the City of London; the IMF Director-General Mme. Lagarde; President Obama and the leaders of world's main imperialist powers from Europe and Canada; the general secretary of

NATO and the governor of the Bank of England are all united to [demand, cajole and] threaten voters in Britain that a vote to LEAVE the EU will bring war, economic recession and a life of endless misery, which is ironic because these are precisely the outcomes that their policies promote.

No doubt, in the next few weeks Mother Theresa will be exhumed to add her last-minute appeal for the EU as the foundation of faith, hope and charity And shamefully in Britain (exactly as in France during your referendum on the European Constitution in 2005) socialist and trade union leaders by a great majority have joined this campaign of deceit, telling trade unionists and workers that our best interests lie in voting to REMAIN in the EU.

Only a very small and brave minority of trade unions (led by the railworkers' unions RMT and ASLEF alongside the Bakers' union) and a tiny number of socialist members of parliament have explained the role of EU policies and institutions in Britain, France, throughout Europe and beyond in attacking social rights in the interests of global corporate finance capitalism.

Lexit – the Left Leave Campaign calls on workers in Britain to vote to Leave the EU in the referendum on 23 June for two principal reasons.

Firstly, a vote to Leave the EU is an act of internationalism and solidarity with oppressed peoples and workers not only in Europe, but across

the world. The EU is an imperialist entity – an essential part of the NATO/IMF/EU axis. A blow against the EU weakens imperialism. That is why imperialists in all their forms are united in calling for a vote to REMAIN

Secondly, a vote for Britain to LEAVE the EU is the quickest method to destroy the pro-austerity government of David Cameron. Britain's governing Conservative party is deeply and irrevocably split reflecting the tactical conflict between its factions over whether to serve as a junior partner of Germany inside the EU, or to continue as an alternative pole of global finance capitalism outside the EU.

A vote to LEAVE the EU will certainly lead the **Conservative Prime Minister to resign** and will bring forward a general election where voters will have an opportunity to elect a government committed to opposing austerity.

Therefore, our Lexit Campaign sets itself a particular task in the few weeks before the EU referendum in Britain on 23 June. That is to explode the myths and lies about a 'Social Europe' promoted by EU institutions such as the ETUC and the corporate media, and which are cynically repeated by trade union leaders who failed to lead any mobilisations against the British government's attacks on trade union rights and workers pay and conditions for the last 5 years.

A recent report from Britain's TUC claims that a vote to LEAVE the EU would set back women's rights by "decades." Yet the EU's Stability and Growth Pact designed to ensure that countries in the EU pursue austerity programs represents the greatest assault on equality between men and women for a generation.

The TUC general secretary, has claimed that only the EU can defend workers' rights including protection against pregnancy discrimination to fairer pay, holiday and pensions.

But the **truth is that** benefits for women of equal pay and equal rights were won by hard work and campaigning by trade unionists and equality campaigners.

I should like explanations on how has the EU advanced equality for women in Greece, Portugal, Romania or Bulgaria?

In reality, the fight for equal wages between men and women dates back over a century. Britain's TUC voted to support equal pay in 1888. The British Labour Party included a right to equal pay for equal

work for all employees in its 1964 manifesto, and the Labour government introduced the Equal Pay Act in 1970 – five years before Britain joined the European Economic Community.

That Act was the result of mounting pressure from British workers, including the **renowned** strike action by Ford women car workers in Dagenham in 1968 and vigorous campaigning by the National Joint Action Campaign for Women's Equal rights culminating in a massive demonstration in 1969.

EU supporters ignore this and point to the 1957 Treaty of Rome which set out the principle of equal pay for work of equal value in Article 119 — now Article 141 of the Treaty of Amsterdam. However, this was included largely as a concession to French workers "who already had equal pay legislation and feared that they would be at a comparative disadvantage."

We should thank French workers and their class struggles for equal pay laws, not EU institutions.

In practice the EU has a significant pay gender gap 60 years after the Treaty of Rome. Moreover rising conservative and religious forces and far-right politicians are calling into question the very notion of rights — especially sexual and reproductive rights.

Economic crisis and austerity are "used as an excuse" to dismantle gender equality across EU member states. In Slovenia, women used to enjoy 100 per cent of salary during maternity leave, now **considerably** reduced.

The idea promoted by some trade union leaders that the EU, which imposes austerity on millions of peoples from Ireland to Greece, and enforces unemployment, low wages, insecurity, mass privatisation and TTIP could promote increasing equality is utterly absurd.

We won't accept lessons on equality or workers' rights from the same EU institutions that attack workers' rights in France, that cancel trade union rights of collective bargaining as the price for 'bail-outs' in Greece, Portugal and Ireland and which continue to attack trade unions in country after country in order to defend the interests of banks and big business.

Until recent days, the British media has almost entirely refused to report the massive social struggles taking place today in France by transport workers, railworkers, oil workers, youth and the unemployed. They don't want voters in Britain to see the illusion of 'Social Europe'.

But workers in Britain increasingly can see that 'Social Europe' is a mythical creature like unicorn. A victory for the French working class against the government of Hollande-Valls by rejecting the El Khomri law will be a signal to voters in Britain on 23 June that workers can only protect their interests by rejecting the EU.

A victory for France's workers and trade unions is the best example you can give to voters in Britain on 23 June.

A vote to LEAVE the EU in Britain on 23 June will trigger a political crisis in the European Union that will **strengthen French workers** and weaken imperialism and the ruling classes of your country and ours. **This is now an open conflict. It is all the more important that those who on the left sow illusions about EU should have to be held accountable.**

Workers' rights and equality are our common fight. The EU is our common enemy. Solidarity !

Daniel Gluckstein,



National secretary of the POID (Independent Democratic Workers Party)

Comrades,

To all of those who claim that the combat for voting No to the European Union in Great Britain is nothing but strict nationalism, I must say that this is indeed the first time that I have been given the floor by a German chairman at a rally being held in Paris in support of British comrades. There is a name for this: it is called workers internationalism. In the name of all of us, I would like to thank all the comrades who have come to take part in this internationalist rally, to all those who have spoken before me. And before getting to the heart of the subject, I would like to say - if you will excuse the nod - that after having heard the speech by comrade Roberto Giarocco from Belgium, I remembered these words from Julius Caesar who wrote, in *The Gallic Wars*, that: "*Of all the Gauls, the Belgians are the bravest*".

Well comrades, if the Belgian comrades succeed - even with "*not quite satisfactory*" appeals - in overthrowing their government, this will give us some help this side of the border, to deal with ours.

Comrades, this rally is being held on May 28 2016. A hundred and forty five years ago to the day, on

May 28 1871, a few hundred yards from here, the last barricade of the Paris Commune fell. It marked the end of the Paris Commune, the crushing of the first workers' government that ever existed in history - a hundred thousand dead - women, children, fighters and workers murdered, plus thousands deported overseas.

On May 28 1871 already, two Europes found themselves facing each other. On one side, the holy alliance of crowned heads - from Germany, Austria, Britain, and Russia - allied to the French bourgeoisie. The holy alliance of the obscene "*Versillais*" reactionary forces which, during a hundred days, had quaked with fear before the example of the Paris Commune, and which now could at last let out a sigh of relief when its crushing was announced.

On the other side, the workers, who, throughout Europe, had supported the "Communards", had their organisations vote motions and demonstrated, and then welcomed them and supported them when they were forced into exile.

Comrades, today as in 1871, there is not "one Europe". There are two Europes facing each other.

The one which (as comrades have said before me) line up behind the Cameron government, behind the City of London, behind the capitalists, the world over, behind the G7 – that summit of chiefs of state of the 7 most powerful countries in the world who, no later than yesterday, adopted a motion expressing their concern over the consequences of a vote for Brexit, and - guess who was chosen as the spokesperson was? None other than François Hollande. Not because France is the most powerful among the G7 countries (which is far from the case) but because its government is trembling the most at the possible consequences of this Brexit, combined with the developments in our own country.

Comrades, the French working class remember that, in 1871, British workers, factory by factory, collected money to assist the Paris Commune victims. They remember those semi-clandestine meetings, factory by factory, where the German labour movement came to the aid of the Paris Commune.

Today, the joint movement of French, British, Belgian, German workers, of workers all over Europe, is part of this continued history to overthrow the anti-worker holy alliance, heir to the 1871 counter-revolutionary holy alliance. To topple the reactionary holy alliance, this same body that is determined to expel, to send to certain death, tens and hundreds of thousands of our brothers and sisters coming from Syria, Afghanistan and Africa, turned out of their homeland by *their* wars, and being turned out again by *their* barriers, *their* borders and *their* European Union.

Comrades, if the French government is one of the most ardent to wish for the defeat of Brexit it is because this French government, on this 145th anniversary, deserves to be called by its rightful name: the Hollande-Valls government is a government of Versailles¹, it is reaction at its most obscene.

It is the government which is determined to fragment and physically destroy the working class, to replace to collective rights with what used to be called – exactly before the Paris Commune - “*the individual contract for the hiring out of service*”, by which every worker, sometimes every child, had to

sell their labour, without any guarantees and under the conditions set by the employer. A century and a half of class struggle has replaced this semi-slavery system with collective guarantees – the very same ones that the El Khomri Bill is bent on erasing, in order to implement European Union directives.

A few days from now we will be entering the fourth month of the combat waged for the withdrawal of the El Khomri reform. Many things have happened during the past three months. So let us come back to what is the simplest.

During these three months, how many millions – how many tens, hundreds of millions - of times has the slogan “*withdraw the reform*” been chanted? In how many marches? And in each one, by how many tens of thousand, hundreds of thousand marchers? On March 9th, 17th, 24th, 31st, April 9th, 28th, May 12th, 28th - how many times have workers said: there is one single mandate, withdrawal? And how many times will it be said again in the coming days?

Against that mandate, the government has sent police forces to smash picket lines, to brutally assault and injure hundreds of youth, and has had union activists taken to court and sentenced.

And today, comrades, this government of truncheon wielders, this government of bare-faced repression, this government of Valls-the-basher, has just come up with this bright idea: they might, perhaps, imagine the hypothesis of putting their thinking caps on and maybe envisage to devise a way of altering one or two words of article 2 of the El Khomri reform. And some are ready to shout “*Hallelujah! Victory!*” Should we say: “*Your Lordship, we are so grateful for your generosity*”.

Who is being taken for a fool here, comrades?

Apart from knowing whether they will or not “alter” the bill and apart from knowing how much they might alter or mend it, need it be reminded, comrades, that the El Khomri bill is not just one article, it is 54 articles? Need it be reminded that “*individualisation of rights*” does not feature in one article, but in every one of the 54?

Do we have to remind ourselves of the article that provides for full scale re-writing of the Labour Code within the next two years? Do we have to remind ourselves of the article which institutes

¹ The reactionary executive led by Thiers had fled to Versailles and from there, they mustered various forces to crush the Paris Commune, hence their nickname: the Versailles.

and enshrines the CPA²? So article 2 is to be “altered”, all right, but.... the workplace agreement will therefore override any collective guarantees in all the other articles of the law? Article 2 will be altered, all right, butthe Labour Code will be rewritten? Article 2 will be altered all right, and firing workers will be made easier? Article 2 will be altered but company doctors will disappear? Who is being taken for a fool here, comrades?

And we should shout “We’ve won”? Then comrades, best to talk plain. During the latest marches, workers not only chanted: *withdraw!* They not only chanted: strike till the bill is withdrawn! Another slogan erupted: general Strike – meaning an inter-sector, strike to be organised till the bill is withdrawn.

Yes, today, the legitimate hatred is concentrating against this government, stirred by its anti-worker agenda, its anti-union speech, its denouncing of the young and its cynicism.

So comrades, let no one blackmail us. Let no one tell us: beware of destabilising the government. If this government wishes to save its own skin, it would be better inspired not to link its fate to the El Khomri bill. Because, if it carries on, the government itself and nobody else will be responsible for its fall, at the hands of the working class moving together and imposing the withdrawal of the bill.

On the TV channels and on videos that have been being circulated, we have recently been seeing a sort of staged show. Everyone is pretending they were surprised that, in 2016, Valls is saying the exact opposite of what he had said back in 2010, against the right wing government.

Comrades, this comes as no surprise for workers. Because this show has been playing out for thirty solid years. For thirty years, the opposition has “opposed”- up till it comes into government in its turn. Then, when it comes into power, the former government.... “opposes”.

But as they implement the same agenda, as they implement the same European Union directives, the arguments of those who rule are always the same, and the arguments of the opposition are always the same, too.

Last time, it was retirement pensions - a reform dictated by the European Union. Sarkozy explained then that, because of “*the needed competitiveness of the country,*” the “*restarting of industries*” or “*fighting unemployment*”, it was a necessity to destroy retirement pensions. And of course, as he was having a hard time getting it through, he used article 49-3 of the Constitution. And the opposition - left wing – said: using article 49-3 is a scandal, more “*cooperation*” towards a “*collectively discussed*” reform “*of retirement pensions*” is needed.

And now, it is the destruction of the Labour Code, dictated by the European Union, and the right wing will say: “*Ah, but still, using article 49-3 - what a pity! Through far-reaching dialogue, a general agreement could have been reached together on the destruction of the Labour Code*”.

So comrades, if democracy is the mandate given by the majority, democracy is a government capable of implementing what suits the needs of the majority. Comrade Steve Headley said so before me, concerning Britain, but what he said is fully valid for France: a government that accepts to bow to the institutions of the European Union and to the institutions of the Fifth Republic, that a government, wherever it be, cannot possibly do otherwise than to challenge working class gains. Such a government cannot possibly rule on behalf of the people and abide by democracy.

If the point, today or tomorrow, was to set up a government which - like the Paris Commune - would halt all job destruction, would develop public services, would restore public education in its own right and aid the poor and destitute, then such a government, would demand breaking with the European Union and the Fifth Republic!

This must be clearly said - and that is no empty argument – whoever fears to challenge the European Union, whoever fears to challenge its institutions, whoever fears to challenge the sacrosanct European Central Bank, the sacrosanct treaties, the sacrosanct Brussels Commission, whoever fears to go against the orders of the sacrosanct European Trade Union Congress, abstains from defending the gains of the working class, abstains from constituting any government

² CPA is a personal record which every worker would carry throughout his/her active life and would account for labour contracts, sick or maternity leave, training on and out of the

workplace, unemployment and so on, and ultimately, condition retirement pension pay - with the objective of exempting employers from contributing to the *Sécurité Sociale* system, to retirement pensions, to unemployment and occupational injuries benefits.

in the service of the working class and of democracy. A government of the working class and of democracy raises a single issue: break with the EU!

The appeal that comrade Marie-Luce Mouly asked you to endorse and which will be handed out at the end of the rally, is the expression of the joining together of activists from all tendencies on a single demand: break with the EU !



Nothing will happen unless we break with the European Union!

In this appeal, what is at stake is the gathering of the most far-reaching political force, which, in

unity, will make it possible to do away with these oppressive and exploitative institutions.

For its own part, the Independent Democratic Workers Party considers that a party is needed. You may share this point of view or not. For our part, we consider that, in a democracy, a party representing the interests of the exploited is needed. But whether or not you share this point of view, there is no other solution today than to join together, we the militants of all tendencies, to open the way towards breaking with the EU.

Yes, today the rift is still perhaps more blatant than a hundred and forty five years ago. On one side stand the "*Versaillais*" - the ones in Brussels and Frankfurt, and their lackeys in London, Rome, Madrid, and Athens, and in our country at the Elysée and the Matignon Palace.

On the other side, the workers, the youth and their organisations, united in the same struggle which is the struggle which will lead to the free union of free peoples and nations across whole Europe.

Yes comrades, we have accomplished the organizing of this rally for the success of Brexit.

A successful Brexit will be a landmark in a long fight. A successful Brexit will be the legitimate success of the fight of workers and peoples, of the exploited and oppressed across the whole continent. So, together with our comrades from every country, today as in 1871, we say: Long live the Paris Commune! **Long live the free union of free peoples, free working classes and free nations of all Europe.**



Appeal tabled by the platform and approved by the rally

We, workers, activists and youth, have met in an internationalist rally in Paris, on 28 May. Our rally formed part of the continuity of an appeal by labour activists from 23 countries of Europe, entitled "*We support the workers of Britain who will vote to leave the European Union in the 23 June referendum*".

We have heard the speakers from different countries of Europe. With them, we send our fraternal greetings to the workers of Britain and their organisations engaged in the campaign to leave the European Union.

Yes, leave the European Union. The result that could be achieved in the referendum on 23 June would then be a call to action to all the workers and all the peoples of Europe to smash the shackles of the Brussels institutions.

We have met today, 28 May, and have noted that the workers in France who are fighting for the withdrawal of the reform of the Labour Code are facing the willingness of a Socialist Party-led government to implement the programmes dictated by Brussels.

But this is true in another form for the workers of Belgium, who recently demonstrated in their tens of thousands together with their organisations against the reform of the Labour Code dictated by a right-wing government.

This is true for the workers of Germany, who are facing the measures taken by the "grand coalition" government, which wants to impose precarious work, wage dumping and the abandoning of collective bargaining agreements.

This is true for the workers of Greece, upon whom the Tsipras government is trying to impose new reforms, etc., despite having been elected on the basis of opposition to the Memorandums policy.

This is true in Italy, where a government that calls itself "left-wing" is implementing the EU's anti-worker programmes in every domain.

This is also true for the Baltic States, for Poland and the Czech Republic, which imperialism, NATO and the EU are pushing into excessive armament.

This is true when, under the shameful agreement between the European Union and the Erdogan government in Turkey, the refugees driven from their homes by war are being expelled *en masse* and sent back to countries ravaged by the wars fomented by the big powers!

The facts are there for all to see. Whatever the political colour of the governments in power, there is no possibility within the framework of the European Union to nationalise industries and public services.

Whichever government is in place, as soon as the governments submit to the directives of the European Union, each of them in turn is led to open up to competition and privatisation the operations of the railways, the post office and health services.

It is clear that what is referred to as the European Union is nothing more than the most violent and unprecedented attack carried out by the multinationals against democratic labour gains in the history of humankind.

It is clear that the European Union cannot be reformed. There is no possibility whatsoever of giving any kind of content to what was presented to us so long ago as "social Europe". Defending social and democratic gains and winning back what has been destroyed requires the dismantling of the institutions of the European Union.

We firmly believe that the peoples of Europe are capable of re-establishing the conditions for free co-operation in peace and harmony, respecting the sovereignty of all the nations and within a democratic process where each government must have the obligation to give an account of itself to the population.

This is why in this internationalist rally, in this rally based on the international solidarity of the workers and peoples of Europe, we affirm that by voting for Brexit, the British workers will be voting for a new future free from austerity and anti-social policies throughout the continent, and in so doing they will be acting on behalf and in the service of the exploited and oppressed of all the countries of Europe.

MESSAGES

From Great Britain

Present in the hall:

John Sweeney, trade unionist in the construction industry UCATT. Trade Union Liaison Officer for the Labour Leave campaign.

Nigel Griffiths, former Labour Party MP.

Support to the rally was also expressed in interviews with **Ben Chacko**, editor of the *Morning Star* and **Ronnie Draper** General Secretary BFAWU.

Message received from **TUAEU - Trade Unionists Against the European Union** and read to the participants (extracts):

« Comrades,

The self determination of nations is a fundamental principle of socialist internationalism. Throughout the world socialists have fought and died and languished in jail to establish this principle and win it in reality.

The EU was built to destroy this principle. It has waged the longest slow motion coup d'état against nations in history.

Those who love the EU in the Labour Movement in Britain have suspended their internationalism.

They want to pretend that the current struggles in Greece, France and Belgium do not exist and certainly have nothing to do with the EU.

We all know that they do.

First and foremost therefore we send our deepest international solidarity to all trade unionists fighting the EU led attacks on them. Your struggle is our struggle.

If the only bad thing that the EU had done was the cruelty it has delivered against the Greek people, we would argue that all countries should leave it. Of course Greece was the tip of a terrible iceberg. There is much worse to come.

Do not laugh out loud at this, but some in our Movement say that the EU protects workers' rights. Yes they really believe this.

Others say, in the year, 2016 when our last coal mine has closed and when our remaining steel industry is struggling for survival, when industrial workers cannot afford decent food and go to food

charities, that the EU has been good for manufacturing! (...)

Who is against us? The OECD, the IMF, the EU, the WTO, US imperialism, the Cameron government, the banks who caused the 2008 crisis, all the major corporations. These are all paper tigers of no benefit to the world.

Who is on our side? All of you, all progressive people in Europe and across the planet. On our side too, the pioneering spirit of the Paris Communards of 1871, a short time ago.

We ourselves, we the people, self-government, the 99% in power, the 1% consigned to history.

Workers in Europe must unite in new ways.

Thought should be given not just to declarations but new organisations to bring us together.

Whatever the result on June 23rd, Trade Unionists Against the European Union will continue. Thank you for your solidarity. We will not run away from the opportunity to demolish the huge anti democratic, anti socialist EU.“

From the Czech Republic

“Dear Comrades, dear Friends,

Although we have been unable, for diverse reasons, to come and take part in this conference, it is nevertheless an honour for us – and also a need for us – to at least demonstrate our solidarity with the British activists and with you who are gathered in this hall.

We also address our most sincere salute to the French workers who are once again engaged in the fight against the diktat of Brussels and Berlin, and thus against their pseudo-socialist henchmen.

In the Czech Republic, as in Slovakia, our comrades are becoming more and more aware of where lie the roots of the state of desolation that Europe – and more generally, the world – is in.

Briefly:

- 1) This supra-national and totalitarian institution that is called the European Union is destroying Europe. This institution does not serve the population, but capital in general, and North American imperialism.*
- 2) The EU, along with NATO, represents a contractual and political imbroglio in which it is*

not specified where the limits of the EU begin and where the North Atlantic Treaty pact – that criminal and war-like organisation – ends. (...) The dissolution of the EU of financial markets, supra-national and totalitarian, and the exit from NATO would mark the beginning of the rescue of the social solidarity of the free and peaceful peoples of Europe. Let us work together to advance on this path!

On behalf of the Czech endorsers of the appeal at the initiative of the British workers for leaving the EU and of all those in the Czech Republic who have signed this appeal:

Vladimira Vitava (Czech Forum for Peace, the CMF)

Ivan Müller (Czech Forum for Peace, the CMF)

Petr Schnur (Czech Forum for Peace, the CMF; Czecho-Slovak Bulletin of the ILC)

Ivan David (Political Platform “The New Republic”)

From Slovenia

*“Dear Comrades,
Having been prevented from participating in your rally for reasons beyond my control, I salute you from the insides of the refugee camps, where the tens of thousands of those that the NATO wars and the IMF plans have chased out of Syria, of Afghanistan, of Iraq and of Africa have been stock-piled.
The European Union, as the heir to a long colonial*

tradition, is today one of the major pillars of imperialism, the very imperialism that is the cause of the political, social and cultural breaking up of many of the Balkan countries, of the countries of eastern Europe, of Africa and of Asia.

My patients, who are among the millions of the refugees, are but the consequence of that policy. The policy of the European Union is also devastating the countries who are members of the European Union, such as Slovenia, where the public health system has been devastated, with a budget amputated by 20%.

In the Balkans, where our countries have recently been forced to join the European Union, the American military bases are proliferating: in Kosovo, in Bulgaria, in Rumania, while the puppet governments are integrating their armies under the control of NATO.

That is why we have signed the appeal saluting the British workers who will vote to leave the European Union. We, labour activists of Slovenia, of Serbia, of Croatia, of Bosnia-Herzegovina, of Bulgaria and of Greece, have signed.

That is why we have enthusiastically welcomed the initiative of the Indian workers who have convened a World Conference against War and Exploitation in Mumbai, in November 2016, a conference that expresses our common need for a fight for peace and social progress.

Dimitar Anakiev, doctor in Slovenia in the refugee camps, himself a former refugee during the wars that destroyed Yugoslavia.



Appeal endorsed by labour activists from 23 countries

We are workers, youth and trade union and political activists from every tendency of the labour movement, and from every country of Europe (members or not of the European Union). A referendum has been called on 23 June in Britain, with one question on the agenda: “stay” in the European Union or “leave” it.

We salute and support those trade unions, Labour Party branches and CLPs and those British labour activists who, despite the instructions issued by the Labour Party leadership and the leading circles of the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC), have decided to call for a vote to “leave” the European Union on 23 June! From Greece to Portugal, from Poland to Germany and elsewhere, for years we have experienced the true meaning of the European treaties based on “free and undistorted competition”, the directives and programmes dictated by the European Union or by the Troika (and implemented by every one of the governments, whatever their political colour).

Our peoples and the workers of the whole of Europe have suffered the same policy, whether their countries are members of the European Union or in Association Partnerships: deregulation, the dismantling of the Labour Code and labour rights (pensions, social security, collective bargaining agreements), the privatisation-destruction of public services and budget cuts in the name of the national debt, and the putting into question of every form of national and popular sovereignty.

We note that the European Union (interlinked with NATO through treaties) supports the foreign military interventions that are driving millions of refugees onto the road to exile.

We note that at the European Summit of 18 and 19 February, the British Prime Minister and the European Commission concluded an agreement which will aggravate even further the process of making workers compete with each other. Under that agreement, any worker originating in an EU country and emigrating to Britain will be deprived for four years of all the social rights won by the British working class through struggle. This can only lead to competition between workers, and to a new offensive to drive down the “cost of labour” of the British workers and to encourage a climate of reactionary xenophobia.

Against this “European Union”, which tries by every possible means to set workers against each other for the great benefit of the capitalists and bankers, we counterpose the union of the workers and peoples of the whole of Europe for defending and winning back their rights, sovereignty and democracy.

Together with the 578 delegates who met at the annual Conference of the Trondheim Trades Council of the Norwegian Confederation of Trade Unions (LO), we support the British workers who will vote in favour of “leaving the EU” and “*struggling hand-in-hand with the workers of Europe and the whole world*”.

A victory for the British workers on 23 June will be a leverage-point for all workers who in every country are opposing through their own class struggle the destructive plans of the European Union and the governments that are carrying out its policy.

This European appeal was endorsed by labour activists from Austria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Belarus, Belgium, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Moldavia, Norway, Portugal, Russia, Serbia, Slovenia, The Spanish State, Sweden, Turkey, Ukraine.

Endorsements to be returned to:

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