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EACL plans May Paris forum

Declaration of European Anti-Capitalist Left meeting

- News from around the world -

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Description:

The European Anti-Capitalist Left conference met in London on the 26th and 27th November 2005. It decided to step up its own activity and visibility, most notably by proposing to host a broad seminar in Paris in May 2006 as a forum for discussion for the European radical left.

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The European Anti-Capitalist Left conference met in London on the 26th and 27th November 2005. The conference took stock of the situation in Europe created by the No votes in the European referendums in France and the Netherlands and reiterated the need for an active radical alternative left to emerge on a European level. It therefore decided to step up its own activity and visibility, most notably by proposing to host a broad seminar in Paris in May 2006 as a forum for discussion for the European radical left.

European Anticapitalist Left Declaration

1) The results of the French and Dutch referendums on the European Constitution struck a major blow against the neo-liberal project of the European Union. The Draft EU constitution is dead and the EU itself is now in a crisis of legitimacy. The constitutional treaty was the summary of the neo-liberal agenda championed by European governments of both the centre right and centre left.



It flows from the undemocratic way in which the EU has been built since the 1950s for the benefit of the corporations and their shareholders. Consequently the popular rejection of the treaty also means the popular rejection of the neo-liberal agenda both at a national and a European level. But we also recognise that the drive to implement free market policies will be sharpened as a result of the competition between European, US and Chinese capital.

So we see further privatisation measures, attacks on pensions with the German, British and other governments proposing increasing the retirement age to 67 and more attacks on welfare, health and education. Yet this is also sparking resistance as demonstrated by recent strikes in Belgium, France and Italy plus the student protests and occupations also in Italy.

2) The radical left has continued to enjoy electoral success most recently in Denmark and England but above all with the success of the Left Party in the German federal elections. The success was the result of a united campaign of the German left. For the first time since World War 2 a broad alliance of nearly the complete left supported the new left party. There started a dialogue between the Left Party and the social movements to coordinate the parliamentary and non-parliamentary fight against neo-liberal policies.

This is urgent because the new government has already announced new severe and painful cuts in the social system. The left forces in Germany are preparing a campaign against the policies and threats of the new neo-liberal government starting with a common day of action in March. They are preparing a broad alliance for actions of protest against the G8 in 2007 in Germany and are calling for a European mobilisation.

The European Anti-Capitalist Left notes that a break in the most powerful and important European social democratic

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party is of major significance and marks a further development of the crisis of social democracy and a further advance in the construction of a left alternative.

3) The EU centres of power are determined to push ahead of their neo-liberal policies and the destruction of the social gains won by previous generations of working people. One of the attacks we face is on pensions and the attempt to increase the retirement age. Of fundamental importance to this clash between the popular classes and big business is the Services Directive (also known as the Bolkestein Directive) whose main purpose is to lower wages and to decrease rights at work across EU states.

We reject a policy of divide and rule which seeks to pit workers from Eastern Europe against those of Western Europe. We reject the "race to the bottom" where we are asked to accept the worst conditions in Europe. We note that this Directive flows from the WTO/GATS agreement and from the Lisbon strategy for a neo-liberal Europe agreed by the EU Council in 2000 and revised in 2005. Workers in any country are entitled to the same rights and wages as citizens of that state no matter where they originate.

We will argue for the worker's movement across Europe to co-ordinate policies and action to secure work for all on living wages throughout the continent. United we can win gains for all, divided we all compete in the "race to the bottom". Organisations, parties and movements involved in this EACL conference will actively participate in and promote the actions planned for the start of 2006 against the Services Directive/Bolkestein Directive when the European parliament meets to discuss this measure.

4) The results of the neo-liberal policies and attacks against social rights are increased unemployment and poverty as well as the increase in precariousness and poverty pay, particularly among young and women workers. Along with racial discrimination and the provocative behaviour of police against young people, this situation of poverty and the lack of hope is the background to the riots that exploded in the French suburbs this month.

The only answer of the French government and the political establishment has been more repression including the institution of a state of emergency on the basis of a law passed in 1955 during the colonial war against Algerian people. This law allows the suspensions of civil liberties, the right for police and prefects to ban demonstrations and meetings to impose curfews.

5) War against the poor and immigrants cannot be the answer to social questions. In recent months we have seen the further militarisation of Europe's Mediterranean frontier with the clashes at Ceuta and Melilla and the detention of refugees in Lampedusa, Sicily and Malta. We reject a policy of deporting refugees to detention centres in Libya. In most EU countries new measures against civil liberties have been passed since 11 September 2001 using the "war on terrorism" as a pretext.

In recent months we have seen a rash of laws passed in European states limiting our rights, the approval of torture by the CIA and the creation of illegal detention centres in Eastern Europe with US flights using airports in the EU to deliver hostages to these centres and to those in Bagram and Guantanamo.

We reject the so-called "war of civilisations" and the Islamophobia underlying this policy. We renew our opposition to war and racism, our commitment to defending human rights and our rejection of "Fortress Europe".

6) The European Anti-Capitalist Left is an integral part of the movement against the war and occupation of Iraq and Afghanistan. Once again we renew our commitment to ending these occupations and resisting imperialism. Above all we oppose the growing role of European states in the occupation of Afghanistan under the umbrella of NATO. Once again we reaffirm our determination to scrap NATO and any similar military alliances.

Declaration of European Anti-Capitalist Left meeting

7) The global justice movement is the driving force of the new global resistance. That is why we as participants in EACL will be present at the forthcoming World Social Forums in Mali and Venezuela. We will both to develop our links with the movements and the new left in both Africa and Latin America.

In particular we salute the success of the people of Bolivia in resisting privatisation and the pillage of their natural resources demanding their nationalisation in the interest of the people, the developing revolution in Venezuela and the rise of a new left in Brazil. We will be present too at the forthcoming European Social Forum in Athens and will co-ordinate our actions there.

We are committed not just to resisting attacks on our rights, our conditions and our future but to aiding the development of an alternative society based on peace not war, solidarity instead of competition, equality not repression and justice not exploitation. That is why we propose on the first anniversary of the French referendum vote to gather in Paris next year to discuss the creation of a Europe of social justice. This will be a seminar designed to encourage the maximum participation and involvement of all those who are exploited and oppressed.

London, the 28th of November 2005

Bloco de Esquerda (Portugal),

Deutsche Kommunistische Partei (Germany)

Espacio Alternativo (Spain)

Esquerra Unida i Alternativa, (Catalunya)

Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire (France),

Red/Green Alliance (Denmark),

Respect (England and Wales),

Scottish Socialist Party (Scotland),

Socialist Party (England and Wales)

Socialist Workers Party (England and Wales),

SolidaritéS (Switzerland)