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Migration

Numerous guilty actors for Aylan and the million of others...

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Europe has been rocked in recent weeks by two successive tragedies that have shaken public opinion. Firstly, on August 28, the bodies of 71 people, probably Syrian, were found in an abandoned truck on a highway in Austria. Of the 71 individuals, there were 59 men, eight women and four children, a girl of one or two years old and three boys aged 8, 9 or 10 years. A few days later, it was the image of the dead body of Aylan Kurdi, a Syrian Kurdish child of 3 years old, on a Turkish beach, which sparked massive emotion throughout Europe. His mother and brother, Ghalib, 5 years old, also died in the sinking of the vessel. Only the father survived.

The history of the family of Aylan reflects the tragedy of the Syrian people. Aylan's father, Abdullah Kurdi, was first imprisoned and tortured by the Assad regime's security services. He had to sell his shop in Damascus to bribe members of the security services to let him out. It cost him about \$ 25,000. He then left Damascus to Aleppo, and leave it shortly after because of the constant bombing by the planes of the Assad regime. He then left with his family to his hometown of Kobani. This will unfortunately only be a short respite, as the Islamic State began its offensive on the city and pushed the Kurdi family out of the city, with hundreds of thousands of other individuals, this time to Turkey. There, he received no help from the Turkish government and following Canada's refusal to grant Abdullah Kurdi and his brother asylum where their sister lives, the family then decided to leave the country by buying for \$ 6000 4 places to be smuggled in a makeshift boat to reach the Greek Islands of Kos.

The history of the Kurdi family is the history of millions of families in Syria who have been forced to leave their country as a result primarily of the barbarism of the Assad regime that is still killing and bombarding continuously entire cities and regions in Syria since the beginning of the uprising more than 4 years ago. During the first six months of 2015, the helicopters of the Assad regime dropped 10.423 barrel bombs on different regions of the country, while the regime's forces have killed nearly 90% of the total civilians over the same period, 7 times more than the Islamic State.

The gradual emergence of reactionary Islamic fundamentalist forces like the Islamic State and Al Qaeda have also caused the forced departure of many populations because of their practices and their authoritarianism. More than half of the Syrian population is now displaced (inside or outside the country), while over 80% of the population in Syria lives around or below the poverty line. The unemployment rate is above 50%, while life expectancy has been reduced by 20 years. We must condemn all these counter revolutionary forces, old regimes and Islamic fundamentalist movements alike, which are the main responsible for the forced displacement of millions of people, and bring our support to the revolutionaries in the region that struggle against them.

Without denying the responsibility of the smugglers in the successive tragedies that have affected people fleeing wars and oppression, it is nevertheless the racist and security policies of the European Union (EU) on migration that are also responsible for this situation. The policies of the border closure pushed hundreds of thousands of people fleeing war and misery to use illegal and dangerous means to try to reach European countries. The small fraction of refugees reaching Europe, the vast majority remaining in countries outside of the UE, have to met police violence: the "jungle" camp in Calais, France; Hungary's construction of a wall of four meters high on 175 kilometers with its border with Serbia, or the naval operations led by Frontex in the Aegean and the Mediterranean that have ended up in tragedies with thousands drowned. It should nevertheless be noted that despite their difficult situation, many of these refugees have organized themselves to resist and protest against police and security attacks of the EU, whether against the persecutions at the railway station of Budapest, in the camps of Calais and Greece, and at the Hungarian border. In Switzerland, refugees also protested against their living conditions and referrals.

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Meanwhile, Islamophobic and racist propaganda of far right groups in Europe has continued to characterize all Syrian refugees and others as Islamist terrorists. For instance, Nigel Farage, leader of the UK Independence Party who warned that those fleeing were probably “extremists of the Islamic State or other jihadist groups.” These groups are no different in their propaganda that the dictator Assad who wrote on twitter a few days ago: “Terrorism will not stop there, it will export itself through illegal immigration into Europe.” If the far right does not characterize them as terrorists, they accuse them of threatening the “Christian” roots of Europe. Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orba, said that the massive influx of migrants threatens the “Christian roots” of Europe. The head of the fascist movement National Front, Marine Le Pen, for her part called for the complete closure of the borders.

The great amount of deaths that have accumulated on the roads or in the Mediterranean Sea did not change anything in the past. Will this be any different this time? Will the EU continue to build itself as a fortress? Will it continue its war against human rights, while continuing its imperialist policies, responsible of the political and economic problems that are the sources of displacement of populations and therefore creating more refugees? I think we should not rely on the European leaders, but build popular resistance from below.

The emotion aroused by these tragic events has resulted in protests in support of migrants and refugees across Europe, which singularly contrasted with responses of European leaders. More than 20,000 people demonstrated in Vienna, Austria, to welcome refugees, while demonstrations were held throughout Europe. Thousands of protesters rallied against racism in Germany. Large amounts of aid were collected in workplaces and in many communities in Britain to be taken to refugee camps in France. Without the support of local people in Greece, Macedonia and Serbia, refugees from Syria would not have been able to reach Budapest, where they faced police at the border and in railway stations.

This solidarity is welcome and should be greeted, but this is not enough. Against the xenophobic and security policies and excesses of the EU, we must organize ourselves and fight alongside migrants and refugees to require the opening of the borders, the free movement and the welcome with dignity of people fleeing wars, oppression and social misery. We must close the camps, stop the racist policies and above all challenge the capitalist system responsible for these disasters.

The words of the revolutionary Rosa Luxemburg resonate today more than ever as an eternal truth: “Commonly a dead body is something silent and noteworthy. But there are those who shout louder than the trumpets and illuminate more than torches. Down with the infamous social system that generates such horrors!”

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