



## IV534 - July 2019

# A predictable fiasco - on the outcome of the European elections and the immediate tasks for Die Linke

31 July 2019, by **Lucy Redler, Thies Gleiss**

1. After the congress of *Die Linke* devoted to the European question, which was held in Bonn in February 2019, the Anti-capitalist Left (AKL) analysed the decisions taken:

*For public opinion, Die Linke is quite clearly identified as a party opposed to the European Union. And in view of what is the reality of the Union, its warlike attitude towards Russia and its other weapons programs, faced with Frontex and the terrible treatment to which refugees are subjected, in view of the diktats that have imposed austerity on Greece and other member states, mass youth unemployment in the South and East of the EU, the inertia it opposes to the measures necessary to protect the climate and many other things, that is the least one could ask for. Anyone who identifies with the left, and Die Linke, should be honoured to voice their opposition to this Union and at the very least refrain from feeding the flow of nonsense around the "European idea". Given the considerable progress of the radical right and the racists, due to the effects of the EU's concrete policy, it is also completely idiotic to assert, as does the right, that any criticism of this EU, any political orientation that would be hostile to it, would amount*

*to demanding "a return to the nation state". Indeed, criticism of the bases of the EU is left-wing, a criticism from the right barely exists, or at most does so in the rough form of a "Europe of nations" presented as a counter-model. Unfortunately, at its special congress on Europe, Die Linke took the decision not to make this issue the point of honour that should have been, placed at the centre of the election campaign. This makes it more difficult to mobilize a part of our members, our electorate and supporters of the Grünen [Greens] who are likely to turn away from them because they no longer support the infantile Europeanist euphoria and declarations of love to capitalism that are the mark of this former leftist party. As in 2009 and 2014, we can then predict a result that will not exceed two thirds of the votes that the final polls will give Die Linke. [1]*

The actual results impose the conclusion that this has unfortunately been so. [2] Whether *Die Linke* would have got more votes by running a different campaign, clearly oriented against the EU, remains in the domain of speculation. On the other hand, it is certain that such a campaign would have allowed it to really defend its positions, thus helping to root it in

popular opinion. The work of explanation - which is the noblest task for a left-wing activist - has been purely and simply neglected.

2. This election result, however, is nothing other than a validation of one of the issues discussed between the AKL and other *Die Linke* currents. But there is more. This European consultation has shown that it is still not and that it will not be in the future a true election in the bourgeois-democratic sense, but a propaganda show by the European ruling class which is witnessing the disintegration of its project of capitalist economic unification. To prove it, it is not necessary to refer to the usual European constitutional experts who point out the absence of an electorate and an electoral system. A simple look at the election campaign says much more: never before has capital, through its organizations and companies, intervened so directly in an election. The golden rule of the bourgeois democratic election, which is that the sovereign, that is to say, every individual enjoying the right to vote, has the ability to put their cross on a ballot paper without any pressure or tutelage being formally exerted, has been shamefully trampled underfoot. After the big groups in chemicals,

cars, metallurgy and commerce got involved, it was the turn of the railway companies to intervene in favour of Europe. As did entities placed under the aegis of *Deutsche Bahn*, so late that their statement appeared only the day before the election. The campaign gave rise to mass entertainment and propaganda shows, with the sole aim of raising the level of participation and a hollow feeling of almost religious adherence. The unanimous cry of "Go to vote" came from TV sets, football stadiums or fairgrounds.

Unfortunately, the governing bodies of the DGB and its federations have also perfectly integrated into this concert, singing in chorus "Europe!" And "Go to vote!". The big demonstrations [against the far right] of May 19th, which could have been an occasion to make heard in the street a critical left-wing voice opposed to the EU as it exists (a goal that *Die Linke* had elsewhere initially set, in accordance with the decisions of the party's executive committee), turned into a grand apolitical spectacle. Unfortunately, *Die Linke* did not, so to speak, make any discordant voice heard in the enthusiastic chorus of Europeanists calling for their "vote". And yet in this situation (as already unfortunately in previous elections) arithmetic could have been enough to convince *Die Linke* to rely instead on participation in the reduced vote so that the weak mobilization of its electoral base allowed it at least to have a presentable percentage.

The EU is designed to respond to the interests of capital and not to those of the European peoples, let alone the lower classes. This fact, which was at the heart of the criticisms made by the AKL before the elections, was only too well confirmed during the campaign.

3. Propaganda for "Europe" has constantly used two "narratives", as they say today. In the first, "Europe" is the EU, and the EU is a tremendous unifying project in the service of peace that in recent years has embarked on a wrong path. The second: whoever is not for the EU strengthens the radical right and the nationalists.

These two narratives are the opposite of the truth and what people in Europe have felt in their bones for years.

These are two gross lies that those who dominate this Europe have more and more trouble defending. This year's European election campaign has already spread these lies in an almost impertinent way and has not even concealed the fact that these are lies - propaganda was the only goal, so that the legitimacy of the EU leaders, which had been collapsing for years, was at least strengthened on election day.

In an adversarial discussion with a young social democrat from Pulse of Europe, organized by the daily *Neues Deutschland* and published in its 15 May edition, Lucy Redler explained why the EU is not a roadblock against racism nor an instrument for the defence of peace:

*I believe that with its neoliberal policy, the EU has promoted the rise of racist parties. It has a policy of closing the borders: setting up the Frontex agency, criminalizing rescue at sea, agreement with Turkey on the backs of refugees. And within the EU, it has a disastrous anti-social policy, for example with regard to Greece. It is the EU that has pushed for drastically lower wages, and unemployment, especially among young people, is still extremely high. In spite of everything, I find it important to give more weight to leftist forces in the European Parliament. But it is wrong to believe that we could make this European Union a social Europe. It has never been anything other than a treaty-based construction through which capitalist states strive to achieve their economic and foreign policy objectives. The 2007 Lisbon Treaty makes military spending and close military cooperation mandatory. In April again the European Parliament voted 13 billion credits for the European defence fund (...) Naturally [during the Cold War] it was about building a bastion against the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. Before 1990, it was a matter of one half of Europe against the other, within the framework of NATO. And at a certain moment, the idea that the interests of the German and French capitalists could be better defended in association with other states was imposed. But that does not make an imperialist enterprise a pacifist*

*enterprise.* [3]

*Die Linke* has unfortunately submitted to these two "narratives" of the bourgeois camp on the EU. What would have been right is for it to oppose these two legends with all its strength. Firstly, because the truth requires it, secondly because it is the only way to give a real left-wing response to the claims of the extreme right and the nationalists. The discourse heard, even within *Die Linke*, according to which one should not leave to the right the ideas of fatherland, of national state, of defence of the borders are not correct; on the contrary, and in a very concrete way, we should not leave the critique of the EU to these people. This is unfortunately what happened during this campaign. Nothing should be abandoned to the right.

4. Our criticism of the submission of the radical left to the dominant ideological narratives unfortunately relates to almost the entire radical left of Europe. For example, the alliance made around La France insoumise, though more critical of the EU, also got a bad result.

Nobody developed in this campaign the left-wing perspective of a European association on completely different bases, a socialist Europe, although at the party congress some reformers constantly referred to Altiero Spinelli and the Ventotene manifesto of 1941, according to which the European revolution would be socialist. The sharp criticism of the EU as formulated by leftists in France, Greece, Slovakia, Scandinavia, unfortunately leads each time only to a criticism of the institutions which is immediately understood as the demand for a "European Union of nation states" - as the German comrades grouped around Diether Dehm, Sahra Wagenknecht, Sevim Dagdelen and others regularly demonstrate with the same mechanistic argumentation. In this campaign, we have barely heard the three constituent parts of a policy of transcending the EU: "criticism of what exists", "a rebel opposition policy where left activists have the possibility of it" and the contribution to the construction of a "Europe from below" from concrete class battles and

social movements. Many on the radical left, although they have already defended at least some aspects of such an approach to the European question, have remained largely dumb under the pressure of bourgeois and Europeanist propaganda and according to a series of tactical, national and parliamentary considerations.

In addition, in each of the countries of the Union, as at the European level, disagreements on the left are significant on the political basis, tactically more so, and it is divided into different camps. That is why the overall number of MPs elected to Parliament represents a painful weakening. It is not yet certain that it will be possible to succeed in forming a left-wing parliamentary group capable of taking initiatives (at least 25 members from 7 different countries), and it is to be feared that this group will even be less capable than the outgoing GUE-NGL group.

5. *Die Linke* did not succeed in its attempt to combine a critical position towards the EU and the display of a desire to place its action within the framework of the actually existing EU. On the one hand, during the electoral meetings, on the information stands, the *Die Linke* members were the most severe critics of the EU (and were, according to expectations, perceived as such), while most of the chapters of the electoral program and the election posters had a content that had *Die Linke* labelled as “Euro-sceptic” when it was not an “enemy of the EU”.

But this contrasted with the central orientation given to the campaign: the press releases, the campaign newspaper, the short version of the program and all the material published by the campaign team without democratic control by the steering committee were focused on the illusory slogan “make Europe social”, like the SPD, the CDU and the *Grünen*. This was a deliberate deception and betrayal of positions developed collectively on the EU issue and adopted at the party congress and steering committee.

With regard to the criticism of the capitalist EU and the strategy to be put in place against it, the credibility

of *Die Linke* and most of its sister European parties is seriously undermined. Without credibility and without being able to rely on a new and valid social conception throughout Europe, it is not possible to obtain electoral success, much less to excite activists. This is simply the record of the 2019 European election.

That is what is determinant in explaining the poor performance of *Die Linke* in Germany. We should add also some personal quarrels, the conflicts between the parliamentary group and the party, and the presence among some members of fantasies of “red-red-green” [SPD-Linke-Grünen] governmental combinations which, above all where *Die Linke* participates in regional governments, have contributed still a little more to the demobilisation of our voters.

6. The high-profile propaganda spectacle staged by the ruling class in Europe to contain the legitimacy deficit of the European project, including that of the bourgeois parties that supported it, largely missed the goals pursued. Participation made little progress, and non-voters could have the largest elected group in parliament. The pro-European bourgeois parties everywhere have been shunned or sanctioned at the polls. In Germany, voters de facto delegitimized the parties making up the ruling coalition. Unfortunately, it is not the left-wing parties that are benefiting from this situation but various right-wing parties (even though we have not seen a far-right breakthrough as terrible as some forecasts had predicted). It is the old social democratic parties that have been particularly affected by this phenomenon of defection, with the exception of the PS in Spain and the Dutch social democrats. The venerable parent organization of the Second International, the matrix and model of all the social democratic parties - the German SPD - is on the precipice.

This result is not surprising. They have nothing to oppose the perspective of the dominant European Union to which there is no alternative, and are devoid of any vision, any hope for a better future for the people. The EU is a sordid project of domination and management of the main

components of European capitalism. It is in its bases militaristic, anti-democratic and neoliberal. How many more times does this simple truth have to be politically confirmed in practice before *Die Linke* admits it?

There was in the bourgeois camp a political force that knew how to play the big advantage of not having so far any responsibility in endorsing the European disaster and, in Germany, not having not participated for a long time in the federal government, and which indulged in an indecent orgy of pro-EU enthusiasm in its electoral program. These are the green parties, first and foremost the *Grünen* in Germany. They appeared as the very incarnation of the pro-EU campaign that all others led, or intended to lead, and were thus able to arouse hope and capture as a “virgin” bourgeois party the votes of disillusioned electors. In addition, the *Grünen* benefited from the fact that the crisis of the capitalist mode of production is now worsening to the point of destroying the climatic and ecological conditions essential to human life. A broad movement of youth across Europe for radical measures against climate destruction has unexpectedly offered to green Europeanist euphoria an anchor in the real world. But this does not increase the chances of seeing the *Grünen*’s cherished “green capitalism” emerge, or even those of a “green new deal”.

Another factor was that the AfD designated the *Grünen* as its main adversary, and so many people opposed to racism and extreme right-wing populism gave them their voice. The *Die Linke* conflict over immigration and how to approach the AfD certainly did not help to make the party appear as a clearly anti-racist alternative. Thus, on issues of the climate and extreme right-wing populism, the *Grünen* have managed to position themselves as an alternative to the CDU-CSU and the SPD.

7. Throughout Europe, nationalist and far-right forces have seen their numbers increase, though not to the extent we feared. Their success is confirmation of the analysis repeatedly made by the AKL and others: it is first and foremost the crisis of the EU and the authoritarian

politics linked to it that has advanced the forces the far right in Europe. The opposite view that extreme rights triggered the crisis in the EU is false news - and this was the central thesis of pro-European propaganda during the campaign. This is true only to the extent that when the extreme right reaches a certain level corresponding to the weakness of the left, the nationalist and extreme right parties serve to Hoover up protest and dissatisfaction.

The situation in the European Union after these elections is more polarized, but the left is weakened. The increased fragmentation in the European Parliament will make the implementation of policy more complicated and raises fears that this evolution will lead even further to its loss of power and to the strengthening of the EU's executive bodies (and ad hoc special bodies that the European Constitution did not foresee).

It remains to be hoped that the left in Europe and *Die Linke* in Germany will draw the proper consequences of this election and this campaign. Without a left-wing strategy to go beyond the EU as it exists, building on existing struggles and movements and with a radical critique of capitalism, it will not be possible.

8. The elections in Bremen are a welcome counterpoint to these gloomy

European prospects. The AKL is delighted to see the increased vote for the comrades there. The possibility of a "Jamaican" coalition is opposed to the arithmetical majority for the SPD, *Grünen* and *Die Linke*. [4]

The AKL is against the entry of *Die Linke* in the regional government of Bremen. By "taking responsibility" in the context of an alliance with the losing SPD and the *Grünen*, totally committed to capitalism, *Die Linke* can only lose. This coalition would not be a leftist government. However, the AKL proposes to take advantage of this tactically favourable situation to advance themes and proposals specific to the left. One can imagine support for a minority government of the SPD and *Grünen* without any condition or commitment, as minimal as it may be, with *Die Linke* only providing support to push through the concrete measures that it considers positive. For all the rest, the government would have only to get its majority from the CDU or the far right.

The European elections and the Bremen elections has pushed the SPD to a new phase of its agony. This is a very understandable situation, and like all crises, it also reveals the disgusting traits of corrupt and unprincipled professional politicians of bourgeois parties. We have no sympathy for the SPD or its resigning president Nahles. At the same time, the fate of the SPD is a reminder of

what happens to left-wing parties that are completely determined by the own interests of their permanent members, for whom only parliamentarism counts, and who forget their principles to comply with the rules of functioning of capitalism. For *Die Linke* too, such a prospect looms on the horizon, unless it starts internal structural reforms as soon as possible and draws the necessary political consequences from the proposals repeatedly made by the AKL as by others.

The end of the "grand coalition" before the end of the legislature is quite possible. The largest regional federation of the SPD has already voted for exit. This emergency measure is today an option widely discussed in the SPD, including within its leadership. *Die Linke* should not take part in these debates. The end of a bourgeois government should be for us simply a cause for satisfaction.

However, *Die Linke* must make a strong commitment against the prospect of an alliance between the CDU and AfD. In the CDU, some have already expressed themselves in this direction. And *Die Linke*, instead of calling for new national elections, should develop a program of action with measures to be implemented immediately, so as to engage in pre-campaign on the fundamentals rather than begging from the SPD and *Grünen*.

# Floods & Erosion: Call to Support Natural Disaster Affected People in Bangladesh

29 July 2019, by **Badrul Alam**

The sufferings of millions of people know no bound. There are different points where people are marooned by the water logging. Most of the people take shelter on the dams, high land, etc. There they are staying under open sky in sub-human life. They are unfed and half-feed for 4 days or five days, even more. They do not know when

they will be able to go back home.

The government initiative is not satisfactory either. They can not reach all the people because their support is insufficient. On other hand, there is allegedly report of corruption with relief support of the government. The allocated amount of relief does not

reach the affected people. It has been grabbed on the way to them.

Few NGOs are working for them but their help is very symbolic. They distributed the relief among few people but publicity is enormous.

So far the death toll is 104. They are



drowned in flood water, bitten by snake, etc. As they flood water is lingering to recede, the water born deceases spreads quickly. Already people started to die of diarrhea, severe fever, cholera, dysentery, etc. All the tube-wells which is their only source of pure drinking water have gone under water. So there is dire scarcity of pure drinking water. At night they live in dark, no electricity, no light. The condition of women and children are quick vulnerable. The devastating flood will claim more lives, no doubt.

We, Bangladesh Krishok Federation and other associate organizations, decided to stand by our members in the northern districts in Kurigram where we have our big settlement of landless people. There are 2500 families living in rail way abandoned land since 2004. They are also seriously affected by the unexpected flood. People say this flood is more dreadful than the flood occurred in 1988 which also claimed a lot of people and damaged seriously the economy of the country.

Following is our budget to help the people who are extremely suffering due to flood disaster. We decided to give support with humanitarian goods for 500 families.

The objectives of the proposition is 1) to support the affected members of the organization so that they can

survive the flood water 2) to make them feel that the organizations are with them in their difficult situation 3) to increase their level of confidence that they need to fight for their survival for which they need organization.



*Extraction PDF An open history:  
Blanqui and Bensaïd*

*Movement of people in the flood water.*



*Extraction PDF Britain Slammed in  
UN Court Judgment over Illegal  
Occupation of Chagos and Diego  
Garcia*

Everything almost sunk into flood water. People are living in the roof of the house.

#### **Budget:**

1. 20 Kg of rice: 10KgX60Tk.per KgX500 families = Tk. 300000/-
2. 2 kg of pulse: 2KgX100Tk per KgX500 families = Tk.100000/-

3. 1 Kg of onion: 1KgX50Tk. per KgX500 families = Tk. 25000/-
4. 1/2 Kg garlic: 1/2KgXTk.160 per KgX500 families = Tk. 40000/-
5. 1/4 Kg Pepper: 1/4KgXTk.140 per KgX 500 = Tk. 17500/-
6. 2 Piece of candle : 2 piecesXTk.10 per pieceX500 = Tk. 10000/-
7. 1 piece match: 1 pieceXTk.3 per pieceX 500 = Tk. 1500/-
8. Transport cost: = Tk. 10000/-
9. Administrative cost: = Tk.15000/-

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**Total expenditure = Tk. 519000/-**

*In Euro: 5641*

*In word: Five Thousand Six Hundred Forty One Taka Only*

We sincerely request to have urgent cooperation from our well-wishers and supporters at home and abroad to provide with humanitarian support so that we can stand by our severely affected members who are still floating in the flood water in the north Bengal.

**ASM Badrul Alam**

President

Bangladesh Krishok Federation

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## Johnson's Tories = Brexit Party Mark II

28 July 2019, by **Alan Davies**

This is what Brexit looks like.

Boris Johnson's new Cabinet, shaped by purges and resignations, looks more like the arrival of a new party, which effectively it is, than the same party with a new leader. It is the most right-wing government in Britain since World War 2. It will shift the political

centre of gravity further to the right, normalise racism, and drive through privatisations, deregulations, and inequality. Those on the left (the Lexiteers), who have refused to see Brexit as a project of the hard and far right, or who have even seen it as an opportunity for the left, should think again.

It is also the final takeover of the Tory Party by hardliners from the European Research Group and the 2016 Vote No campaign. It has Nigel Farage stamped all over it. [5] Qualification for membership of the Cabinet is a pledge to stand firm for a no-deal exit from the European Union at the end of October - for which Farage is the

leading advocate.

Johnson's most enthusiastic support, unsurprisingly, came from Donald Trump - who dubbed him the 'British Trump' - and sees his arrival as a welcome addition to the growing number of hard right governments around Europe and the world. These include Modi in India, Bolsonaro in Brazil, Duterte in the Philippines, Netanyahu in Israel, Salvini in Italy, Erdogan in Turkey, Orban in Hungary, the Freedom Party in Austria and the rest. They are supported by Trump and operate within his reactionary nationalist and racist world view.

Johnson has created what is effectively a war Cabinet with a single purpose: to exit the EU at the end of October 'do or die'. The members of his Cabinet are willing to crash out at the end of October 'come what may', something they wanted in the first place.

He gave no quarters to the soft Brexiteers in the Tory Party, let alone Tory remainers, as he moved hardline ideologues into the key Ministries. Priti Patel, sacked by Theresa May for gross misconduct, who recently advocated capital punishment and was a big supporter of May's hostile environment, is now Home Secretary. [6] Sajid Javid, a hardline Thatcherite, admirer of the bizarre Ayn Rand and a hardline Brexiteer, becomes Chancellor of the Exchequer. Dominic Raab, Brexit hardliner and previous Brexit Secretary, becomes Foreign Secretary. Jacob Rees Mogg, chair of the European Research Group and its ideological leader, becomes Leader of the House - with key influence over its agenda which is necessary for when the battle in Parliament opens up.

Michael Gove, who is seen as a master manipulator, was made Minister for Implementing Brexit. Dominic Cummings, who was the leader of the Vote Leave campaign and found in contempt of Parliament for spreading fake news, becomes Johnson's senior personal adviser - in other words chief of staff for a no-deal Brexit. Even Liam Fox was not seen as reliable enough to be a part of the team.

Johnson - with some justification - sees 31st October as the last chance to force a hardline Brexit through under conditions where the majority of the country and MPs are against it. Everything else that he has to say is contingent on this, since if Britain is still in the EU after that date anything could happen, including the final implosion of the Tory Party for which it will be very difficult for him to avoid responsibility.

His plan is to blame the EU for not acceding to his demands, but it won't be easy. By taking complete control of the Cabinet and the Brexit process he also takes complete ownership of the outcome of the whole thing - whether that is a failure to get Brexit through or the mayhem that is likely to follow if he succeeds.

Johnson's has declared that the Withdrawal Agreement that May negotiated is 'dead' and goes on to predict with great optimism that he expects to get a new agreement by the end of October. This is delusional. Both the EU and the Irish government were very quick to point out that the Agreement (an international Treaty actually) obtained by the May government is not going to change, except for possibly the Political Declaration of future relationship which is not legally binding. He continues to babble on about the EU changing its mind once it realises how much self-harm we are prepared to indulge in.

He also continues to insist that there will be no hard border in Ireland because no one is prepared to introduce such a border. This assertion was demolished by the Irish Foreign Secretary Simon Coveney on the Marr show recently when he said that once the Irish border becomes a part of the external border of the EU, then the EU will ensure that it is secure and the responsibly for doing that will be the EU and the Irish government jointly.

## Can a no-deal Brexit be stopped?

Whilst it is not easy for Parliament to block Johnson's agenda, it is also not

easy to take such a momentous decision as is a no-deal Brexit in defiance of Parliament. One way or another we are heading for a monumental constitutional crisis at the end of October, the parameters and the outcome of which are very hard to predict. The situation is completely polarised and we are heading for a brick wall. The Tory majority is smaller than it was the last time the issue was voted on, and the opposition is stronger - not least because most of the ministers who resigned or were sacked by Johnson are likely to join the opposition from the back benches.

A key stage will be when Labour decides to put down a motion of no-confidence in the Government, which is likely to be after the current recess. If that is adopted, there will be a general election or a second referendum or both - but it depends first on how many Tories are prepared to vote for it and (remarkably) how many Labour MPs are prepared to vote against it - and there are indeed some who would.

The Tories have big problems in terms of a general election. It is likely to be disastrous for them to hold an election either before they have 'resolved' the issue of Brexit, i.e. crashed Britain out, or have failed to get Britain out on 31st October. They also face a possible split-vote with the Brexit Party in a four-horse race. An electoral pact with Farage would involve the Tories standing down in a large number of seats, which they would be unlikely to agree to.

The biggest factor in all this, as it has been for some time, is the position that Labour would take in such an election. In other words, whether it fully supports a second referendum and present itself unambiguously for Remain. There are signs that things are moving in that direction, for example in Corbyn's reply to Johnson in Parliament, but it is not there yet. If Labour is able to go into such an election as the party of Remain with Johnson's Tories going in as no-deal Brexiteers, then Labour would be very well placed, and a Labour victory at the next election would be a major blow against the whole of the right-wing project from Trump and Salvini

# Before the Revolution: an interview with W, Algerian Marxist-feminist.

27 July 2019, by W.

*On the 8 March, during the third act of the Algerian uprising, W. and her comrades unfurled a huge banner: “Abrogation du code de la famille” (“Repeal the Family Code”) — a message applauded by some, though not well understood by everyone. [7] ‘We’ve still got work to do’, sighed the founder of the Collectif libre et indépendant des femmes de Béjaïa (Bijayah), in Smaller Kabylia.*

At 25 years old, W. is a militant with the Parti socialiste des travailleurs (PST; a Trotskyist organisation) whilst participating in the Collectif des Femmes d’Aokas, in her parents’ village, 30 kilometres from Béjaïa. Three months after our first encounter, she brought us, by telephone, further news of the Algerian feminist movement.

**You’ve just taken part in two days of national meetings organised by women’s collectives. What came out of it?**

The meeting was held on the border of Bijayah’s wilayah [an administrative region, in this case Kabylia]. There were seventeen collectives, from across the country, the majority of which were created after 8 March 2019. There were, of course, women from Algiers, Oran, and Constantine; new collectives from the south — Ouargla, Ghardaia, Tamanrasset — were meant to come, but it wasn’t possible, due to logistical issues. This is a pity, since the women of the south have for a long time remained invisible, and these collectives embody a real change.

The idea was, above all, to meet, to make links. We tried to identify our points of agreement, but it was

complicated, since it was rather a mixed bag [un peu une grande ratatouille]: there were women of the right, of the left, different generations, women who are militants in France, LGBT collectives who work underground.

When we say we want an egalitarian society, we all need to agree. Some don’t want to dissociate religion from the state, for example, and not everyone speaks about the precarity of women.

**And what did you achieve?**

This time, the militants of the left won a little (laughs).

We have managed to write a shared declaration, which will serve as a basis for a future manifesto. Seventeen collectives have signed, and three want to join us. The struggle against precarious work and the repealing of the Family Code are included in the declaration.

**How do you see the evolution of the movement of contestation on the question of women’s rights?**

From the 22 February, women have gone out to the streets. Since the 8 March, there have been more specifically feminist demands. Every Friday in Algiers, women organise their own bloc within the demonstration, with their own slogans. They have however been attacked. On television, some people say that feminism has never existed in Algeria, that these women are manipulated by outside sources, that they want to break with tradition. As if feminists weren’t really Algerians! There have even been rape threats. Fortunately, things quietened,

particularly because all the collectives have united against these forms of violence.

**Have the political parties grasped these questions?**

Some people seized on them, but not necessarily in the right way. For instance, a new collective that was created, La société civile, which includes especially people from Front des forces socialistes (FFS), the Rassemblement actions jeunesse (RAJ), but also some Islamists. These are very different people, who might start a meeting with a prayer, then refuse to do a minute of silence for Kamel Eddine Fekhar, a militant who died from a hunger strike, although the RAJ held a rally in tribute to him. [8] On the question of women, they say ‘Yes’ to equality, but with all their internal contradictions, I don’t quite see what that is about. There is nothing concrete.

More generally, amongst parties that claim to be democrats, everyone calls for a revolution first, thinking that it’s only after that the question of equality between men and women will arise. We say: “We have to organise right now!” Now that the elections are cancelled, if there’s a National Conference or a Constituent Assembly, we want women to affirm their issues [problématiques], and above all that they are represented — and not by men. [9]

**What does your feminist struggle mean?**

When we talk about an egalitarian society, we need to know what we are talking about. Legally, there is equal pay; however, men hold the most

important positions. Here, the right to abortion does not exist, and the mere fact of speaking about it exposes us to prison. After that, of course, there is the question of the woman's position in a capitalist system: she suffers precariousness and discrimination in domestic work, which is unpaid. I have a Marxist perspective, far from the more bourgeois positions that exist here, too.

For example, concerning the debate on inheritance: I am obviously for greater equality between men and women, but it is not an end in itself — inheritance concerns relatively few people in Algeria. Concerning the question of the Family Code, or violence, laws must be changed, but

so must mentalities. Some collectives do not do any work with women from populaire backgrounds. Here, we organise workshops in villages, we talk about domestic work, we bring up the question of childcare in factories or in state companies — for now, the only one with a nursery is Sonatrach, the hydrocarbon company. Private nurseries are also very expensive: a woman can spend 70% of her salary there.

**Do different generations find common ground in the collectives that you are a member of?**

This is not a conflict between generations, but it is true that the new generation accuses the old one of not

wanting to pass on the torch, which is not entirely wrong. That being said, it is important to reflect on the road traveled: the movement of the 1970s where women created a clandestine film club in Algiers, then that of the 1980s, which questioned the Family Code, have been crucial. In the 1990s, during the Black Decade, many activists were murdered or had to flee. Then in 2001, there was also the Berber movement. Not to forget of course, commitment during the revolution for independence.

There have been achievements. An older activist once told me that the fact that we dare to speak today about violence and harassment is already a huge thing.

## After the elections, the storm

26 July 2019, by **Uraz Aydin**

Would Erdogan be able to learn from his setback in the new elections of 23 June, after the arbitrary cancellation of the municipal elections on 31 March? Would he try to understand the reasons for the reaction to his policies within his electoral base, especially among young people? Erdogan's answers to these questions did not surprise anyone.

In addition to the various "revenge" trials against many journalists, activists, academics and leaders of the Kurdish movement, there was also the trial of Canan Kaftancıoğlu, the president of the CHP in Istanbul. Indeed, five days after the election, she appeared in court accused of insulting the president, terrorist propaganda, humiliation of the Turkish state and incitement of the people to hatred and adversity... due to tweets, most of which were written several years ago. But the real motive is obvious: to punish — she risks up to 17 years in prison — the one who is considered as the "architect" of the victory of Ekrem Imamoglu, the candidate supported by the opposition in Istanbul. The political authorities

are also trying to obstruct the administration of the city council by the CHP, in particular by the refusal of the — AKP — leaders of the companies linked to the city council to resign from their posts. It was only last week that the resignations were finally submitted, but the majority held by the AKP-MHP block (far right) in the city council is a permanent obstacle to city management.

### Disorder in the ranks of the AKP

Former Minister of Economy and AKP Vice-President Ali Babacan finally resigned from his party to accelerate the construction of a new pro-Western political formation. Accused by Erdogan of wanting to "divide the Ummah", Babacan, sponsored by former President Abdullah Gül, and supported by former party elders, intends to reforge a political movement that will be inspired by the pro-European discourse of the AKP from the beginning.

Babacan's relations with the Western

world, and in particular with investors, are presented as a way out of the dual economic and political crisis with a liberal agenda for democratization and the restoration of international relations. This would be a realignment of the Turkish state with the interests of Western imperialism. It is currently difficult to measure the effect that such a party will have on public opinion. Especially since former Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu is also about to launch a new party. But if Erdogan fails to reverse the trend of disintegration at its base, which seems difficult given the deepening economic crisis, a Babacan with international support could strike a more or less severe blow at its former leader.

### Military breach with the United States

The purchase of Russian S-400 air defence systems finally resulted in a concrete response from the United States after several months of threats.



After the delivery of Russian missiles began two weeks ago, the US Ministry of Defense decided to exclude Turkey from the F-35 military aircraft program. This means that Ankara will not be able to acquire the 100 fighter aircraft for which \$1.4 billion has already been paid, nor will it be able to continue to manufacture the several hundred spare parts (which was expected to bring in \$11 billion). This

is the consequence of a change of position in foreign policy and a rapprochement of the Turkish state with Russia, initiated after the attempted coup in 2016 - considered to be supported by the USA - and Washington's alliance with the Kurdish forces in Syria in the fight against DESH. Thus, Erdogan's strategy of pursuing its relations with the various international actors and

using their conflicting relations to widen its room for manoeuvre (all accompanied by anti-imperialist discourse) seems to be reaching its limits. This break with the United States - even if Trump does not seem to be in favour of it - should accelerate Ankara's dependence on Moscow, which must probably be satisfied that it could have caused such a conflict within NATO.

## **"We got the cup, now we want to get the system out of here"**

**25 July 2019, by Wissem and Lemnouar**

On Friday, July 19, the mobilization continued, as people used to march each week with slogans in response to the speeches of GaÃd Salah and Bensalah.

### **Against repression**

Lawyers' mobilizations have resumed their strength. At the beginning of the movement, they demonstrated every Wednesday. Then it was smaller. Recently, with the repression, lawyers have begun to mobilize more strongly, on Wednesdays but also on Fridays with their own contingent. They have formed a collective, from the beginning, against the system, but also against repression, which is now the system's tactic to intimidate the movement. The action of lawyers helps to combat this policy by removing its legitimacy.

Hadj Ghermoul's release after 6 months in prison is not proof of the decline in repression: his verdict was 6 months, so he was released at the end of his sentence. But on the other hand, the others are not released.

The government arrested Haddad and other corrupt people, not because they stole public money, but for bogus reasons. For example, Haddad was arrested on the pretext that he has two passports. At the same time, they arrest demonstrators and activists to

intimidate and disperse mobilizations.

Fortunately, the broad masses of the people continue to mobilize on Fridays. But without giving an alternative. In Bejaia, in the "left contingent", mainly led by the PST, the Constituent Assembly has been put forward from the beginning. Then, the teachers' and students' contingent did not hesitate to use this slogan in the marches on Friday as well as on Tuesday. The contingents are organized by neighbourhood and some are demanding a Constituent Assembly.

### **Personalities to save the regime**

For its part, the government is looking for a way out of the crisis by bailing out the system. It has called on organizations and collectives for social dialogue, with a view to organizing a presidential election.

Their "national dialogue conference" took place on 6 July, with representatives of various organizations that are not representative of the movement. Their aim was to establish a roadmap for organizing the election. This does not really have any legitimacy, but personalities have been suggested to

negotiate with the government. However, if they are really representatives of the people, who appointed them? The appeal speaks of an egalitarian society but there are only 4 women among the 14 personalities... Djamilia Bouhired has been appointed, but she denied it by saying that she is with the Hirak, does not want to negotiate with the government and calls for the people to remain mobilized.

### **Continue to fight to end the system**

The people reject these negotiations, like the presidential elections of 5 July; they want the whole system to leave. The movement has taken on a permanent character. It is to be expected that there will be demonstrations from other layers of workers, in addition to Friday. In any case, this is what we want, in order to impose another approach, another perspective, the sovereign Constituent Assembly as a perspective for the nomination of representatives of the people, workers, the unemployed, students, for the interests of the popular masses. In addition, we are calling for continued mobilization, for the lifting of banking secrecy to be promoted, so that those who have taken the money of the Algerian

people will pay. We want social justice. In this sense, the Constituent

Assembly is a step towards legitimizing popular demands and

opening up the prospect of a change in society.

# Solidarity with the people of Puerto Rico

## 24 July 2019

The protests began after accusations and arrests of several heads of government agencies in the Rossello administration, including former Education Secretary Julia Keleher. Keleher, in addition to awarding contracts to his relatives, was distinguished by implementing the policy of privatization of the public education system and the closure of more than 400 schools. Teachers' organizations and affected communities have been fighting these policies since 2017. Now the whole town joins the denunciation of Keleher and what it represents, neoliberalism and its sister corruption...

In addition to the accusations against Keleher and other government officials, there was the publication of a chat in which Governor Rosselló, officials of his administration and some close associates shared their comments. The more than 800 pages published reveal or suggest a large number of crimes such as obstructing justice, firing people for political reasons, giving "lessons" to opposition leaders such as Manuel Natal of the Movimiento Victoria Ciudadana, using public funds for private purposes. But, above all, the chat exposes the sexist, homophobic and racist attitudes of the participants. It is a living portrait of the mentality of a privileged class that governs the country as its former private estate, with total disdain for the population, although they publicly present themselves as the opposite. In the chat, the death of government critics, the corpses stored after Hurricane Maria and the grassroots activists of the same government party were mocked.

The people of Puerto Rico have decided that such a person can no longer be governor and have been

demanding his resignation for the past week.

We know that Rossello is only part of the problem. Puerto Rico is experiencing an economic crisis that has already lasted a decade. Twenty per cent of the jobs that existed in 2007 have been lost. The economic crisis has resulted in a public debt crisis of \$70 billion. To pay it, a Fiscal Control Board imposed by the U.S. Congress is enacting austerity measures that impoverish the country and prolong the crisis. That is why the call for resignation is accompanied by the rejection of the Board and the demand for an audit of the debt. We do not doubt that the victory against Rossello will lay the best foundations to continue the struggle in those areas.

We express our admiration for the persistent struggle of the people of Puerto Rico, an example for the struggles of the world. We demand the release of those arrested or accused as a result of participating in this resistance. We join the call for the immediate resignation of Governor Ricardo Roselló.

22 July 2019

### Signed by:

Guillermo Almeyra

Humberto Montes de Oca, International Secretary of the SME (Sindicato Mexicano de Electricistas) and the NCT (Nueva Central de Trabajadores).

Luis Bonilla-Molina, Portal Coordinator "Other Voices in Education".

Miguel Urbán (MEP for Podemos and

militant of Anticapitalists in the Spanish State)

Stalin Pérez, LUCHAS (Liga Unitaria Chavista Socialista), Venezuela.

Polo Ciudadano, Panama: Olmedo Beluche, Briseida Barrantes, Félix Villarreal and Abdiel Rodríguez.

PRT ,Mexico. Edgard Sánchez, Luis Rangel, Josie Chávez, José Martíáñez, Alicia Mendoza, Mafer Arellanes, Melisa Morán.

Eric Toussaint, CADTM (International Network of the Committee for the Abolition of Illegitimate Debts)

Dan LaBotz, Solidarity and DSA militant in the United States

Claudio Katz, Argentina

Eduardo Lucita, Argentina

Luz Mayorga, Venezuela

José Santos: PRP, Mexico

Germán Hurtado, FP, Mexico

Alberto González Bárcenas, OPT, Mexico

Luis Bueno Rodríguez CNSUESIC (Coordinadora Nacional de Sindicatos Universitarios la Educación Superior, la Investigación y la Cultura) Mexico

David Finkel and Dianne Feeley, editors, Against the Current

Anticapitalistas (Spanish State)

Democracia Socialista (Argentina)

Amaru Current (Peru)

Revolutionary Socialist Tendency (Chile)

DSA International Committee (USA)

Solidarity (USA)

FROM MEXICO: Socialist Front; People's Front (PF), Popular Unity Committee (CUP), Magonist Popular Council (COPM), People's Revolutionary Party (PRP), Socialist Path (SS), Socialist Workers' Group (GOS), Emiliano Zapata Proletarian Organization (historic OPEZ), National Organization of People's Power (ONPP), Political Organization of the

People and Workers (OPT) and Workers' Revolutionary Party (PRT). Revolutionary Socialist Coordinator (CSR)

José Antonio Salas: National Coordinator of Support to the Sovereign National State of Borinquen.

FROM VENEZUELA: Christian Pereira, General Secretary of the Union of Workers of the Company FCA (Fiat, Chrysler Automóvil) and

President of the Unitary Federation of Automotive, Autoparts and Related Workers of Venezuela (FUTAAC), Ángel Navas, President of the Federation of Electrical Workers of Venezuela (FETRAELEC), Marcos García, General Secretary of the Union of Workers of the Municipality Libertador, Caracas; Gustavo Martínez, General Secretary of the Occimetal Company Workers Union; Hernán Castillo, General Secretary of the Pro Avena Company Workers Union of the Polar Group.

## European Union-Tunisia Relationship: "Stop People but Let Goods Through"

23 July 2019, by **Messaoud Romdhani**

In the aftermath of what's often been referred to as the "Arab Spring", the European Union (EU) gave much more attention to the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) Region, especially to Tunisia, where the democratic transition was more likely to bring about hope, as its peaceful political advances stand in contrast to most of the Arab Region's tragic chaos. Taking into consideration its unique experience and geopolitical position, the EU has had a strong belief that Tunisia needs assistance to overcome its critical economic problems and social unrest.

In establishing the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP), the EU seemed, since 2011, to grasp the importance of fostering stability, security and prosperity with its southern neighbours, particularly with Tunisia. However, with increasing flows of migrants and social and economic problems in Europe, priorities seem to have changed. Two

main issues have lately dominated the relationship: the main negotiations are held on the readmission of migrants and conditions of signing the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement (DCFTA).

### "High fences do not make good neighbors" [10]

For decades, Tunisia has been both a transit country for thousands of undocumented migrants and refugees from the region and a source for thousands of desperate Tunisian youths, seeking a better future in Europe. Established in March 2014, the EU-Tunisia Mobility Partnership (MP) gave Tunisians a lure of false hope that European gates would be more open. Through the past five years more and more restrictions have been put on obtaining visas, pushing young people, who are driven by high unemployment and lack of economic

prospects, to take dangerous sea routes increasing death tolls. Lately, with the rise of nationalist and radical rightwing parties that benefited from the "threats" of immigration and multiculturalism, the number of migrants decreased, but the death toll has increased especially after the criminalization of search and rescue operations led by non-governmental organizations in the Mediterranean Sea. For the last two years, more pressure is being exerted on Tunisia from European countries not only to arrest Tunisian migrants but also to host intercepted migrants in the sea. Rather than helping the country to overcome its inherent economic and social problems, the EU is more interested in other priorities, mainly pushing Tunisia to sign agreements on both criminalizing Tunisian youths who take to the sea and readmitting migrants who pass through the country, often linking "effective migration management to financial assistance." [