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Belgium: A meeting on Syria banned in St Gilles

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On Friday, November 20, 2015, the Socialist Party mayor (burgomaster) of Saint-Gilles, Charles Picqué, decided at the last minute to ban the conference “Wars and revolution in Syria”, organized in Pianofabriek by the Léon Lesoil educational foundation.

The 80 people present met as a decision-taking general meeting and initially decided to hold the conference outside, in spite of the police threat to arrest an organizer and a speaker, the only Syrian present. But the police then prevented the meeting going ahead. Those present then withdrew to a nearby establishment where they could hold the meeting.

The SP burgomaster of Saint-Gilles and the police thus decided unilaterally to ban a debate, without any preliminary contact with the organizers. This ban was not based on any threat or risks public disorder, but simply the topic of the evening. The purpose of the conference organized by the Léon Lesoil foundation was to discuss the cruelty of the Syrian regime and Daesh, the popular uprising in Syria and building solidarity with the democratic and anticapitalist currents there here ([Belgium] and of there [Syria]).

The planned speakers were: Joseph Daher, doctoral student at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS - London), and assistant at the university of Lausanne, member of Solidarités (Switzerland) and the Current of the Revolutionary Left in Syria; Sophie Aujean, specialist of the Middle-East with Amnesty International and member of the citizens' collective “Syria Action”. Pascal Fenaux, journalist with Courrier International and the editorial board Revue Nouvelle; and Rhodi Mellek, committee for Rojava (Kurdistan Syrian), Brussels representative of the PYD (Left the democratic union).

The LCR strongly denounces this ban and considers that it is censure and a breach of the rights of free meeting and association.

The Belgian State, the government and the local authorities want to lock up the population at home and stop it discussing and mobilising. The answer to the terror of Daesh cannot be a limitation of democratic rights and freedoms.

The LCR invites the social movement and the anticapitalist left to reject the traps being set for us, from national unity to ratcheting up national, through a “truce” in social fightback. It is More important than ever to consider the origin of this extreme violence. And to understand that the only way out is the unity of the popular classes and a continuation of the determined struggle against our ruling classes, for equality and against imperialist wars.

The emergency today is democratic, social and ecological!

Secretariat of the LCR/SAP, 20 November 2015

P.S.

* Translation IVP. <http://internationalviewpoint.org/>