

Contribution to a debate: No “LEXIT” without “Another Europe Possible” - based on struggles in/outside/against the EU

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Since the Greek trauma - both the neo-colonial diktat from the Euro-group and agreement by Tsipras to submit despite the popular OXI - the European radical left has debated “Plans B” without any strategic or tactical consensus. The referendum in the United Kingdom (UK) is the bitter illustration of this, without the anti-racist left opposed to the EU having the conditions of expression of a *credible alternative to the dominant national, European and international institutions and policies*. With less of a media profile than Brexit, the referendum on 6 April, 2016 in the Netherlands, rejecting the agreement of association between the Ukraine and the EU shamefully illustrates the same booby trapped “choices” for the internationalist left.

Contents

- [1- The story of the Greek OXI](#)
- [2 - Facing the European \(...\)](#)
- [3 - Brexit, an act of “dischar](#)
- [4 - The EEC/EU is not “Europe”](#)
- [5- Past crises have bequeathed](#)
- [6 - To give meaning to “the](#)
- [7- “Exit from the Euro” \(...\)](#)
- [8 - From the euro to Germany -](#)
- [9 - BREXIT, a “shock”? In what](#)
- [10-No Lexit without “Another](#)

Isn't it time for a “Europe Debout!” [1], plural but opposed to the dominant policies and institutions, constructing an alternative European political space within/outside/against the EU? [2] The alternative left in the EU's dominant countries – notably in France and in Germany – has a major responsibility in the possibility of blockage and challenging of the harmful powers of the EU in an optic which is not only a “discharge” (from the EU) but “constituent” [3] of another European project, organically linked, from below, to the mobilizations of those most dispossessed of their rights and “peripherized” in Europe's east, south, and centre. Challenging Treaties and policies at the European level is a strategic issue weighing on geopolitical, ecological and socio-political struggles at the national and internationalist level.

1- The story of the Greek OXI is neither written nor terminated

The OXI of the Greek people was a mandate of *opposition* to the new austerity plan negotiated with

the Eurogroup. It did not express a choice of *exit* from the euro, still less from the EU. But it is not true that the capitulation of the Syriza leadership *would prove* that the sole alternative to submission would have been exit from the EMU and indeed the EU. [4] Rejection of such an exit was reducible neither to a *support* for the logic of the EMU or EU, nor to *illusions on a “good EU” that could be democratically reformed*, without crisis, and without challenging these Treaties. *Several proposals expressed before and after the OXI implied opposition and disobedience to the dominant policies* and acts of unilateral rupture with the Troika, without a prior adoption of exit from the Euro as main axis of mobilization expressed before the OXI. [5]: suspension of payment of the debt and support to the citizen’s audit analysing the causes of the debt, with a refusal to pay the unsupportable and illegitimate, indeed illegal, part of it; socialisation of the banks and control of capital movements; creation of a fiscal currency allowing the financing in particular of public services and support for vital food production, and so on.

The fear of an absolute peripherization through being outside of the Euro zone is not a phantasm or an irrational fear that can be overcome through a good “pedagogy”. It can be turned against the current Treaties. And the idea that another Union of European Peoples could be founded with its ad hoc monetary system using the Euro “otherwise” and on the basis of equal rights is no less concrete a utopia than the hypothesis of a “sovereignty” which could be acquired by the return to national currencies.

The OXI expressed in its way this hope without knowing how to realise it. It was not only in radical conflict with the forces dominating the EU but also with the Greek oligarchy, the powers of repression, the fascist far right weighing also on Greece’s state apparatuses: the strategic stakes were first those of class, *organically national and European*, with or without the euro [6]. *If we draw out the lessons of the fragility of the relationship of forces in summer of 2015, they are located both at the European* (which is the responsibility of all the components of the anti-austerity and anti-racist left) *and national levels*: at all these levels, the possible scenarios depended on the combination of political/ideological battles (against all the relations of domination both in the EU and in Greece) and the extension of *popular self-organization on the bases of solidarity (egalitarian, anti-racist), minimizing international commodity relations and dependence on the euro*: the experience of the self-managed dispensaries in Greece for health – with their support in France – indicated a logic that a Syriza government could have supported. Public funds and a tax currency could revive employment and the public services and support survival agriculture.

In reality, the main positive lesson of the Greek experience is that the OXI was “intolerable” for the Eurogroup because it was *dangerous for the EU – which is, thus, fragile*. Yannis Varoufakis has stressed that it was France and its protective legislation that was targeted. And it is true. The “Nuit Debout” against the employment law has shown that resistance is still there and the future is uncertain.

But above all, it can never be said how much a victory for the Greek OXI was *dangerous in Germany itself*, as in the whole of the EU, if it “spoke” to the peoples and *not to the leaders of the EU*, like Hollande and Merkel.

The experience of Syriza remains that of the first (and not the last) of battles which are both national and European, in/against the EU and against its role in the globalized social war. To submit to the leaders of the EU and their desire to lock down more than ever opposition to their projects is as suicidal as renouncing the fight in/against the EU from the first battle lost. The story of the OXI is not over, in Greece or in Europe.

2 - Facing the European strategic issues

Euroscepticism can only be provisional (conjunctural) and linked to the real difficulty of European struggles and an unfavourable relationship of forces: there are big differences in the capacity of initiative of “those at the top” and “those at the bottom” and of the European trade union and socio-political movements. Pessimism and its binary choices – leave or submit – can obviously be comforted by the double note of the real submissions to the Eurogroup going on in Greece, and the “Ordoliberal” orientations of the EU leaderships which seek to inscribe in the Constitutions their own choices while muzzling any opposition.

However, the same social resistance to the same policies exists de facto in the atomization and diversity of EU states; and the difficulty of building a European movement does not invalidate its urgent necessity. We should neither reject national struggles while awaiting impossible consensus, nor denigrate as “submission to the EU” the search for collective scenarios, to have an effect on the relationship of forces, to help the most vulnerable countries and to delegitimize the politically and socially unbearable policies imposed by the Eurogroup and the ECB. The alternative left in the countries of the “centre”, in France, in Germany – or in the United Kingdom – has particular responsibilities on this level.

But it is then necessary to go beyond the *theorizations* that pull the Greek example in the sense of their own denial of a European strategic stake. This involves on the one hand the argument concerning the absence of a “*European people*”. We can allow this *against any idea of a statist and unitary European federalism* that can and must be fought, as well as the idea that any supranational federalism would be necessarily more progressive than a nation state, without any concrete analysis of the one and the other. But such abstract federalist viewpoints can be fought very well in the optic of “another Europe” in which diverse institutional variants can fully recognise the free determination and evolutive diversity of peoples, itself not contradictory with the expression of subjective feelings of multiple feelings of belonging, including a “European” one.

The absence of a European people does not imply that there is no *European strategic issue* for the internationalist left and that Europe should be placed “between parentheses”. This is however the viewpoint which has been expressed notably by Stathis Kouvelakis, Cédric Durand and Razmig Keucheyan in defence of a new type of internationalism which would pass above the European issue, starting from the reconquest of nation states. [7] In substance, their position starts from the denunciation (obviously shared by the whole radical left, whatever their positions on Europe) of the internationalism of multinational firms and markets – or those who submit to their laws, incarnated notably in an EU which is that of these oligarchies. *No disagreement at this level.* The debate starts from there.

It is concretized (beyond the question of the “European people” evoked above), in two unproven affirmations: first, the idea that any rejection of leaving the EU would be a submission to the latter, using an “internationalist” discourse to hide a betrayal of “real internationalism” anchored in national struggles, by rallying to an “internationalism of capital”. This first affirmation is in practice “illustrated” by the reneging on the Greek OXI by the Tsipras leadership when it agreed to manage itself the “bad agreement” negotiated with the EU leaders. It is correct to say that this amounted to a choice by Tsipras and not only a “coup” by the EU. And the choice of this supposed “lesser evil” is still a serious trauma in Greece and in Europe. The risk of “Pasokization” of left formations continues to weigh everywhere in the EU and the world, in the context of unfavourable relationships of forces.

But, even supposing that leaving the euro zone would have been unfavourable then, it was not

inevitable to choose between going and remaining in government to pursue a policy which had previously been rejected. It was not inevitable either that the radical left did not fight to make the audit on the Greek debt a central issue - in Greece and in the EU - against the dominant policies, their challenge to basic rights and their lies. None of the real “choices”, between submission and exit, have been implemented. All these options are necessarily hidden by a standpoint that seeks to exclude from the debate any European strategic stake and any possibility of resistance in/against the EU. These rejections are “consolidated” by another “theoretical” tilt which denies that the EU can be a “battlefield”, characterising it as a “prison”- which must then be physically escaped from at any price.” [8]

Yet the Greek example can illustrate the opposite: not only was “European construction” permeable to social struggles but we can see *the proof of a specific social and political vulnerability of the EU*. in the violence exercised against Syriza’s actually quite moderate programme.

More broadly, far from being reducible to the EU and to having the euro as its main tool, the *social war* which has been effectively waged by the EU has been on the agenda since the 1980s under Margaret Thatcher’s “TINA” slogan and has been followed at the centre and in peripheries, via all the Free Trade Treaties with or without the euro. This is more true than ever since the crisis of these policies in 2007/2008 in the context of the “neoliberal night” as Dardot and Laval stress. [9]

But it is not a logic without contradictions and resistance. The situation of crisis and instability is accompanied by polarizations, including in the EU. The instability and difficulty of “governing” the EU testify to this. But *in the absence of a European progressive and credible alternative*, it is xenophobic nationalisms which can push towards a reactionary disintegration. Not to “see” and “work” on the European strategic stake as *necessary support* for both national and internationalist struggles, is not only false, but dangerous.

Brexit is a stern warning of this.

3 - Brexit, an act of “discharge” (from the EU) without a “constituent” act of a European progressive alternative [10]

Certainly, no “vote” is “pure” or unequivocal. This one was necessarily composite: Brexit dominated in England and Wales, but Scotland and the North of Ireland voted to remain; it won a majority among older people, but not among young people (who were more abstentionist than their elders); it was massive among a part of the workers “of English descent”, but *rejected more massively still* by those who were “racialized” or “othered” as “invaders”. No sociological, “national” or political oversimplification would make this a “plus” for progressive struggles. At best, it was “a kick in the backside” for the EU and a “slap for the British establishment” as Tariq Ali puts it. [11].

Undoubtedly it was also a slap to the EU’s enlargement policies and their pretensions, but not an internationalist, solidarity based and progressive gesture: on this level, it chimes with the vote in the Netherlands during the referendum organized on 6 April 2016 (with 30% participation) where the EU’s proposed association with the Ukraine was rejected by more than 60% of those voting. But in what sense? With what underlying stakes? In the event, it was about the EU extending its free trade treaties (without the perspective of joining), presented to its neighbours as specific “partnerships”, seeking in Eastern Europe to force several countries located between Russia and the EU to “choose” an orientation towards the latter. How should one vote if both radically critical of the EU and this disastrous free trade agreement, but also against any logic of choice of Putin’s Russia against the EU (or the other way round)? How to respond to Ukrainian popular hopes - especially amongst youth -

of rapprochement with the EU? Whatever the vote, there would be no progressive option in the false dilemma of this referendum, which Alona Liasheva has analysed very well *"The real solutions of issues of geographical division can come only by turning the question "EU or Russia?" upside down and instead asking: The EU, Ukrainian and Russian elites or the people of Europe, Ukraine and Russia?" This can be done only by creating networks of solidarity between the oppressed residing around all of the those territories..* [12]

In the same way that making European links "from below" with the Greek people was and remains essential in defence of their OXI, we can hope that in Ukraine there will emerge, against the "partnerships" proposed by the EU, coalitions of associations of civil society, as in Tunisia or in several black African countries who oppose the "Partnership Agreements" by which the EU is supposed to "aid" them [13], as it claims it is aiding Ukraine, notably against Russia. In all cases, and from all sides these different forms of free trade agreements escape the control of society and dismantle protections and social rights. But seen from the Ukraine, they can appear as a possible "stage" towards future EU membership, which is *perceived by a part of the population as a means of escaping absolute peripherization and the reign of the oligarchs*. This viewpoint should be understood, as it has also been present in the internal (semi) peripheries of the EU.

Demystifying illusions cannot occur with a logic of "veto" by the Europe of the rich coupled with racist rejections. A euphoric vision of these "slaps" of the EU risks also blindness on the fact that they do not lessen the risk of consolidation of a hard core of the EU or the Eurogroup which would impose de facto its norms on different "circles" of members and non-members of the EU. Brexit is *far from weakening this menace*, even if we cannot yet measure all the effects – the United Kingdom (UK) is a great financial power which was not one of the founder members of the EEC, not part of the Euro and is capable of negotiating – yesterday as tomorrow, after Brexit – many arrangements with the EU bodies. Its leaders have, *inside the EU*, been a major obstacle to any policy aimed at limiting social and fiscal dumping. Far from turning against the European austerity plans forced by the euro, the British ruling class has been an exemplar for them, for decades, under Margaret Thatcher or Tony Blair, without the euro.

The British (in fact English) affirmation of "sovereignty" against the EU, dominated by far right forces, does *not* target the economic policies but the "free circulation of workers" imposed by the EU. Hence this nauseating campaign against oppressed populations, according to whether they are perceived as "native" or stigmatized as "invaders" or "taking jobs" and incomes which have become extraordinarily precarious and miserable. Brexit will not put an end to the destruction of social rights and the jobs without social protection which has spread using the pressure of a poverty coming from Eastern Europe, but according to a logic which makes fire from any wood, inside or outside the EU.

The British referendum did not allow opposition to this logic. In the absence of a concrete and progressive European alternative, the British subaltern populations have taken one or other of the sole votes possible, by rejecting various relations of domination without any credible progressive orientation: the components of the internationalist radical left that supported Brexit – thus a Left exit/LEXIT – *stressed the responsibilities of the EU* and not those of the British ruling classes (inside and outside the EU) as to the social damage suffered for decades, and the logic of the binary choices led them to assimilate all the partisans of "Remain" to "defenders" of the EU. Symmetrically, a part of the left which fought for "Remain" blurred the critique of the EU by calling for a Remain voted based on "rights defended in Europe" – notably the free circulation of workers, and by assimilating any Brexit vote to a racist vote. This "campist logic" – where anything that could give "arguments" to the adverse vote is blurred – dominated this booby-trapped referendum, erecting walls between the internationalist currents of *Lexit* and those inside Remain who campaigned not to *support* the EU but to *fight it* with the horizon that Another Europe Is Possible (AEIP).

In such a context, the common points (anti-racist and anti- social dumping) of the two sides could not be brought together; it was not possible in the various currents of the alternative left to fight together the dominant policies in both the UK and the EU, nor the reactionary political forces on the two sides; this context did not allow clarification of the semantic blurring or the real divergences that should be debated, behind the diversity of the political sensitivities manifested both inside *Lexit* and in the radical left of *Remain*.

Going beyond such impasses is urgent. Which means initially clarifying the discourses and analyses of “Europe” – that from which we wish to “exit” (from the left) and that which we wish to build (from the left).

4 - The EEC/EU is not “Europe” - the appropriation of words, a major democratic, ideological and strategic issue

The semantic battle is one of the stakes of the class and democratic struggles: we must remove from the dominant the privilege of “words” and interpretations which they have constructed in defending their specific interests while legitimating them as supposed European “values” which are necessarily progressive, indeed universal. To designate explicitly the EEC, become EU, by its name, is to treat it as a “historic construction”, socio-political, institutional - which can be gone beyond; and to reject, in so doing , hiding the other geo-political realities which have fashioned and divided the continent. It is to stress the genesis and context of a project in evolution, to designate its sponsors, to analyse the crises which have induced the unforeseen institutional transformations and to lay bare the contradictions. But also to analyse, with the peoples concerned, the illusions or hopes linked to these projects, not the same here and there, or in various past phases. It is to stress the haziness of the political debates which underlie the appellation “Europe”, apologetic or worse, arrogant and dominant - like the USA calling itself “America”.

The rejection of naïve or apologetic positions towards the EU does not imply accepting, in the opposite sense, analyses obscuring the conflictual diversity of the “bourgeois” projects and their contradictions.

Established during the Cold War, the EEC has been subject to different viewpoints from the leading forces of the countries concerned, and in conflict with other equally capitalist projects (like the European Free Trade Association /EFTA, supported by the USA, itself composite and evolutive). Understanding this “construction”, with its *continuities and discontinuities*, does not come from simply reading the Treaties. Free trade was recorded as an objective in the Treaty of Rome (and the USA, the dominant industrial power, pushed in this direction). But during the post war boom, the EEC was dominated by policies giving a predominant role to state intervention and bank finance (notably in France and Germany). But it never stabilized as an univocal project between the different national bourgeoisies: no consensus was consolidated as to the role of national governments, markets and supranational institutions, or again on relations with the USA, USSR and then post-Soviet Russia. It has never been (even when it became the EU) a simple free trade agreement, like NAFTA (which has neither “budget”, nor parliament, nor political pretensions). The free circulation of capital was forbidden by exchange controls until the Single Act of 1986 which dismantled these controls - after the neoliberal turn of the French Socialist Party from 1983. The free circulation of capital in the EEC, effective from 1990, was an essential institutional and economic turn which fragilised the European Monetary System, based on the Ecu and the national currencies, while establishing the “big market” of capital, commodities and workers which would characterize the EU. The latter was, then, fully committed to neoliberal globalization.

Joined by most of the EFTA countries, with different profiles among the richest countries in Europe, but also opening towards the poorer southern countries emerging from dictatorship in the final phase of the Cold War, the EEC became the centre of gravity of “European construction” in the capitalist and imperialist world without being a simple instrument of the USA in Europe. Nor did it imply any agreement between member states on NATO (notably inside one of its founder members).

To attract to its institutional system a growing number of countries endowed with a strong historical reality, it was obliged to combine “federal” dimensions and a very strong inter-governmental and confederal reality. In the same way, the introduction of redistributive budgetary funds and a parliament with restricted powers, but elected by universal suffrage, from 1979, formed part of the arguments presented to the peoples during the referendums on joining in their countries. It was not a “German Europe”. It was the Franco-German core which played a key political role in its different phases, from after Nazism to after German unification, via the Single Act and the Maastricht negotiations.

None of all this makes it an egalitarian democratic system close to the peoples: it still acted as a project of the dominant forces and classes. But in a context of Cold War, the rights and principles recognized – which could be described as “smoke and mirrors” to legitimate and facilitate the enlargements – nonetheless also constituted a “political” dimension and the source of some difficulties. For the financial lobbies and all the forces of neoliberalism, these traits were increasingly bypassed and/or challenged so that the system was increasingly organized on “Ordoliberal” bases, framing a free trade zone that the governments of the union supported, under all labels.

The gap between principles or discourse (egalitarian and democratic) and reality forms part of the common lot of all parliamentary “representative” systems based on the capitalist market economy – which explains their current crisis of legitimacy, in a context where their anti-social and thus anti-democratic drift is affirmed everywhere. This is then not only an EU reality. And it is not even obvious that this drift is less strong in the French nation-state than in the European institutions; nor that the French government acts only under the pressure of European prescriptions. Every progressive struggle must be waged on two fronts, national and European.

5- Past crises have bequeathed an unstable construction incapable of responding to progressive European aspirations

It was “great crises”, and not some pre-established unequivocal project which pragmatically impelled the major transformations of European construction – obviously all decided by the dominant social and political forces and “from above”, but without a united “bourgeois” vision.

It was thus international monetary crises that led to the establishment of the European Monetary System (EMS) in 1979 around the Ecu, then Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) around the Euro after the Maastricht agreements in 1992. On another level, it was the Yugoslav crisis of the 1990s parallel to the breakup of the USSR which favoured the putting in place of a Euro-Atlanticist “management” of the Balkans, allowing the maintenance then redeployment of NATO in Europe after the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact and the end of the cold war.

The “systemic crisis” of transformation of the eastern European systems unfolded under the pressure of the standards and criteria of membership imposed by the EU on the countries which were in its orbit. Social destruction, disastrous for the great majority of people in these countries, was accompanied by a financial, monetary and commercial integration in the EU which was

completely specific [14] – several countries being moreover rearguard bases for German industrial and export strategies. In the absence of a capital market and a previous capitalist accumulation, privatization of banks was subjected, in the context of global financial liberalization, to a radical “peripheral” integration to the big west European banks, supposedly a stabilising influence, until the crisis of 2008/9 which affected Eastern Europe more seriously than the old Europe.

Globally, the peoples of Eastern Europe were exploited to implement a radical policy of social and fiscal dumping on the continental scale: the “convergence” between old and new Europe took place on the bases where the only winners were the minorities at the head of all these countries, without popular legitimacy, seeking EU membership as a substitute “programme” because the EU had all the same a certain attractive power – albeit illusory.

The union was in any case enlarged on the basis of a discourse and claim of stabilising and pacifying the continent. But the neoliberal turn was organically contradictory with any social and political cohesion, at the internal and international levels. The EU became involved (without any votes from its parliaments) in the first NATO war on the continent (in 1999 in Kosovo) and it was incapable of positively affecting the origins of the wars in which it was implicated in various forms. It was equally incapable of contributing to the social wellbeing of the great mass of people when it was co-responsible for the destruction of old social protections of various kinds and rising inequality. It was also incapable of providing a welcome to migrants and refugees, while the “free circulation of workers” has been experienced (in the East) as a response to great poverty, and (in the West) as the “theft” of jobs and resources which have become increasingly precarious.

A sociological analysis of the Brexit vote illustrates these realities. [15] The EU propagates an “egalitarian” discourse anchored in the ideology and mechanisms of “free trade”: it is with the pretext of male/female equality or the right of Polish workers to find work in the UK that many protections and rights have been suppressed, competition allowing the alignment of everyone at the lowest common denominator. But at the same time the EU is stigmatized by far right atheist or religious forces as “decadent” for the rights it effectively recognizes. Seen from the countries where the dominant forces do not bother with the niceties of social rights, the EU can also appear as a “protector”. [16] In the same way, the French authorities have been correctly condemned by the European courts for their attacks on civil liberties and the odious conditions in French prisons.

In short, according to the immediate issue or the country from where you are looking, the EU can be *perceived* as a framework to combat wildcat capitalism, or as a tool of destruction of precarious protections; or again be supported as a bearer of feminist, anti-racist and anti-homophobic values whereas increasingly precarious employment weighs notably on women and racial minorities: the equality of rights it defends is that of the fox and the chickens when the henhouse is destroyed.

In other words, it is equally false to present an apologetic and dishonest version of EU “values” or to underestimate its contradictions. And far from denigrating and concealing popular “pro-European” *aspirations* past and present, they should be turned against the reality of the EU to the benefit of progressive alternative projects.

The inappropriate use of the word Europe also makes it hard to fight what the EU really is and to clarify what one is fighting for.

6 - To give meaning to “the other Europe”, construct a Europe Debout!

The slogan “for another Europe” can span diverse logics that should be clarified. It can mean 1) minor changes which do not contest the essence of the EU’s anti-social and anti-democratic

dimensions; 2) a “sum” of nationalist xenophobic and reactionary practices; 3) progressive objectives in opposition to the current Treaties and institutions of the EU in defence of egalitarian and environmental rights, against commodification and the privatization of common goods.

We should reject any *alliance* on superficial “anti-EU” bases with racist and xenophobic currents; it would be organically contradictory with any progressive coherence of the national struggles themselves: because it is necessary to distinguish oneself from far right currents both on what the “nation” is and on the finalities of an “other Europe”, solidarity based and egalitarian. We must reject false alternatives between national and European struggles, and distinguish the defence of national rights (notably in a free union) from xenophobic nationalism. The debate is necessary because the radical lines of exit at any price are expressed in the context of debates on “plans B”. A red line of rapprochement with the FN has been crossed by Jacques Sapir or Jacques Nikonoff. [17] It is not inevitable. [18] And it is also important to push the debate on the content of what a “popular sovereignty” could be: the defence and implementation of a control of choices, by the diverse peoples of the union, on democratic and egalitarian bases should not be assimilate to a statist and racist vision of sovereignty, and can be understood at various territorial levels (not only “national”).

It is obviously the third variant of “Another Europe” in opposition to the EU treaties that should be defended – distinct then indeed opposed to the first which is content with “trifles” to bring about a “good EU”. But we should not confuse forces consciously engaged in a policy of social wrecking and currents or individuals who criticize these dominant policies while hoping for “reformist” transformations of the EU. We should then specify the stakes and the criteria of fronts.

The affirmation that *the EU is “irreformable”* is both correct and the source of false and bad debates. It is correct in the sense that the harmful effects of EMU – that is, the choices made in the construction of the EU – are not there “by chance” (or are not simple errors). But we cannot deduce from this any conclusion denigrating the interest of “reformist” battles *in the sense of concrete objectives or partial measures advanced even inside the EU*, compatible with diverse logics. People or political, associative, trade union forces, can engage in struggles against the dominant policies with different perceptions as to the possibility of “reforming” existing institutions and systems (indeed the hope of “saving “them from something perceived as worse). Revolutions have never been brought about by demanding “the revolution”, but on the basis of concrete demands and struggles in the “system” against its mechanisms and effects. And we will never know in advance by which scenario (with whom?) a struggle *in* the system transforms into a struggle *against it* (with what we can sometimes call a “transitional” logic forming the bridge between reforms and struggles for a change of system): when a legitimate combat is blocked and repressed by the dominant institutions and forces, “in the name” of this system, it is possible to capitulate or go further in the confrontation. Nothing is decided in advance.

Saying all that does not mean that analyses and propaganda that are “anti-capitalist” – or against the EU – are not useful. They are very important. But they are nobody’s exclusive property and those who develop them should demonstrate their capacity to convince and/or to open a democratic debate, thereby possibly educating others. And it is not necessary to have a “clear” conception of what the EU is and the possibility of “another Europe” to engage in progressive and egalitarian struggles, by perceiving their conflict with the dominant policies and institutions, at all levels, notably in the EU.

Hence the importance of the creation of a European pluralist and alternative hegemonic bloc, which works to put in place a European alternative autonomous space – a sort of Europe Debout! based in embryonic fashion on the meetings of Nuit Debout! in France with multiple territorial relays and its thematic networks that conferences and internet can help to animate. Such a space and socio-political movement should, like the meetings of Nuit Debout !, be closed to xenophobic currents or

those who defend an “Employment law” but “open” and pluralist on the rest, on the basis of democratic and egalitarian basic principles and objectives. “Motions of defiance” against the dominant policies of the EU are expressed on the social level as well as in relation to refugees. The open character of the debates on “which other Europe” and “how” should rest on the principle that a new Union should precisely emanate from a democratic constituent process.

The scenarios of crisis and mobilization allowing us to go towards Another Europe are unforeseeable. And they will be linked to crises in one or several countries and/or in the EU. They will be progressive and egalitarian to the extent they have been prepared by a “Europe Debout!” from below, mutualising and amplifying what already exists, and reactive to the unforeseen. The debates should transcend the false dilemma: nationalism or European federalism in favour of the search for a path which articulates national and European rights, defending at all levels egalitarian and ecological policies, and following a democratic principle of subsidiarity according to the subject. [19]

But we must face the strategic debate: is exit from the euro the precondition for progressive struggles?

7- “Exit from the Euro” - what does it mean?

It has been admitted by many economists for a long time that EMU, through its heterogeneity is not an “optimal monetary zone” and that a single currency, without substantial budgetary counterweight, deepens the gaps in a capitalist commodity context. Disagreements, inside the radical left notably, *do not concern this*. And the idea that another system is needed (thus “exiting” from this one) can be broadly consensual. *But that says nothing on “how” and toward what we “exit”*.

Nor do the divergences *concern the* (socially and ecologically disastrous) *balance sheet* of the EU, or the fact that a monetary policy and a single currency have aggravated the imbalances between member countries without protecting them from speculation – because the markets have targeted not exchange rates (which no longer exist inside the Euro system) but the budget and trade deficits of the most fragile countries, in a system lacking any solidarity.

The real debates concern a series of choices, marked by various possible bifurcations and options, which can be summed up succinctly here.

The first set of debates concerns logically the importance of a return to national currencies in the EMU. Is this a precondition for effective progressive struggles, social, democratic and ecological? The analyses critical of this viewpoint dispute the *primary* accent put on the currency – and thus the idea that the change in currency would be a mobilizer and precondition for struggle; either/and because the return to national currencies alone in the current European context seems problematic. It amounts then to reflecting on another European monetary system, that of “another Europe”. Grafted on here are discussions on the criteria of functioning of this other system taking account of on the one hand the failure of the previous EMS based on the common official currency, the Ecu, and the national currencies, but also taking account of different visions of what should be the common European confederative or federative institutions.

The second set of debates concerns the strategy for passing from EMU/EU to something else. It is obvious if you believe it is necessary to put Europeanism “in parentheses” by stressing the beneficial character of a return to national currencies, indeed that this is a precondition to any progressive struggles, you logically need *a strategic slogan of exit at any price and everywhere from EMU and*

the EU – with possible divergences on the question of “alliances”.

If on the contrary, you believe we need “another Europe” equipped with an ad hoc monetary system, combining a European currency and an arrangement allowing national monetary policies, then the need for a common strategy takes strength. Certainly, the lack of synchronization of struggles between countries can encourage an option of unilateral “exit” from the current system rather than staying in the EMU (the question remains pertinent for Greece). But in the context of a collective strategy, leaving or “staying” without giving in, are variants of a logic which seeks in all cases to articulate national struggles (going as far as possible in the satisfaction of the anti-austerity programme and advancing rights) and to weigh collectively on a crisis or blockage of the EU: so this implies seeking common battles in the greatest possible number of countries, and “significant” regroupments. All the tactical debates are obviously legitimate, and should be anchored in the national conditions of struggle, different from one country to another and expressed by those affected in the country concerned, with all their specificities.

Whatever the case, isolating the currency – the euro – *from the system which surrounds it* is a theoretical and practical error. Not that the currency is “neutral” – it condenses multiple social relations and powers. But it is the latter which need to be highlighted. And it is not obvious in the current context of instability and social explosions that the main issues and mobilizers will be monetary. In a context of crises which are “societal”, ecological and “systemic”, and of very great instability, the need to think about other fundamental “choices” of society should also inform debates which tend to be too much confined within the perspective of capitalist commodity.

Should not “structural” *European* investment funds (planning) work for a reduction of productive inequalities involving simultaneously social objectives, the redeployment of public services and an “ecological transition” in terms of transport, for example? Should not a “social” and egalitarian (indeed socialist) Europe or a Europe Debout democratically elaborate rules to limit discrepancies of income and organize the defence and extension of access to non-commodified public services which would be redeployed on the basis of solidarity at a European scale?

Are not the debates on control of tax havens and the free circulation of capital, or again on the dismantling of “systemic” banks, the development of socialized banking poles, the protection of household savings, the return to a public financing of public expenditure (via taxes and the central banks) priorities on the European scale? [\[20\]](#)

Also it is urgent to share the reflections on the “Eurodrachma” as “oxygen balloon against the euro” without exit from EMU expressed during the Greek crisis. [\[21\]](#) The critique of the privatization of the central banks in the EU needs to be extended, going back to “fiscal currencies” transforming the content of public debts. [\[22\]](#)

These urgent and serious debates (among others), have major consequences on how to envisage an “exit” from the *Euro-system* (and not “from the euro”) – thus another use of the euro challenging the functions and status of the ECB, but also the tax and budgetary policy in the EU. It is not the same debate as that which could be had in 1985 on the Single European Act concerning a common or single currency (in the context of an EMS existing since 1979 and based on national currencies, capital control and the Ecu). [\[23\]](#) Subsequently, there was the crisis of the EMS after German unification, the rush to create the euro, the enlargement towards Eastern Europe, the crisis of 2007/8 extending in 2009, and new threats of crises which could open supposedly closed debates.

The banking crisis of 2008/9 has already modified the discourse and “paradigm” of the financial institutions as to the supposed “virtues” of the banking integration of the New Member States (NMS) in a “peripheral” fashion: the essence of their banking assets originated from west European

banks, which before the crisis was presented as a “security” and condition of a “catching up”. And that counted (much more than the euro) on the supply and demand for credit experiencing strong growth before 2008. With the crisis there was no more talk of catching up: austerity was imposed, and an emergency device, the “Vienna Initiative”, was urgently put in place involving all the big European and world banking institutions, to avoid a disastrous capital flight from the subsidiaries in several eastern and south-eastern European countries. Conceived as temporary, this “Initiative” had to be relaunched in 2012 and has been maintained since then in the face of persistent dangers and instability [24]. Throughout the union, new banking and financial crises are possible given the fragility of the banks, with everywhere close intertwining of assets and national and European policies.

It would be aberrant if the European radical left advocated a “monetary” and banking free for all instead of seeking solidaristic and progressive resources to face possible crises. This is urgent against the pseudo-policies and mechanisms of “aid” and banking control past and present, linked to the IMF and the EU, which are instruments seeking to impose new social sacrifices and the disastrous reforms and “structural adjustment policies” that the IMF has imposed everywhere.

We can repeat today what was true for Greece in 2015: the refusal to obey the Troika and pay an illegitimate debt *“involves protecting oneself from the blackmail of the Eurogroup by unilateral measures like what was proposed in Greece but not applied (or applied too late and in difficult condition: control of the banks and capital movements, preparation of a parallel currency, suspension of payment of the debt, in the very first place. The proposals of a “fiscal currency” limiting dependence on the euro and the world market could prepare an alternative conception of a European monetary system where the functions of the euro would be transformed, but would also be provisional forms of resistance”*. [25].

In this sense it is interesting to evoke proposals that Frédéric Lordon had made in 2013 concerning “fiscal currencies” of the Eurodrachma type mentioned above (without using this notion). [26] Far from subsequent polemics against a “good euro”, he proposed a euro radically *transformed in its functions*, by making it a common currency – without going back to the national currencies, and keeping a European Central Bank whose status would obviously change (should one polemicize against a “good ECB”?).

It is worth citing it:

“Between the impossible single currency and the national currencies under EMS, the common currency restores the possibility of exchange adjustment – excluded by construction of the single currency – while avoiding the instability of a system of separate national currencies. But not in just any configuration. The common currency only produces benefits under an architecture which institutes a European currency (the euro) but leaving the national denominations in existence – there would thus be €-Fr, €-Lira, one could even say, for the pleasure of the imagination, €-DM, and so on ... The strategic point is then the following: 1) the national denominations are convertible between themselves (obviously), but only through the European Central Bank... which functions as a kind of bureau de change. Thus, direct convertibility between private agents is forbidden and there are no intra-European exchange markets; 2) the fixed parities of the national denominations in relation to the euro (thus the exchange rate of the national denominations amongst themselves) can be adjusted but according to political processes, completely separated from the (destabilizing) influences of the exchange markets — thus, by construction, the latter have been suppressed inside the zone.

There are supplementary provisions which produce in some ways the best of two worlds. The common currency has the same functional property as the single currency of providing a screen between inside and outside the zone, in this case by protecting the national denominations from the

international (extra-European) exchange rate markets. The convertibility “at the counter” (in the ECB and at a fixed rate) of the national denominations then adds the suppression of intra-European exchange rate markets, with the result being an effect of internal monetary stabilization equivalent to that which the single currency produces. But, unlike the single currency the common currency /national denominations system offers possibilities of intra-European exchange rate adjustment by construction excluded from the current euro... and this, unlike a renewed EMS, in a completely stabilized internal monetary environment”.

Wasn't then Frédéric Lordon a supporter of “Another Europe”? This debate should be taken up and collectivized seriously with all the contributions on national fiscal currencies, inside the European strategic discussions post Brexit.

8 - From the euro to Germany - and to the German people

In the article cited, Frédéric Lordon sees the trauma suffered by Germany under the hyperinflation linked to past wars as the essential cause of the rigidities and imbalances of the euro-system. And he believes that Germany would “exit” from a system of the type evoked above. He is both right and wrong. Wrong in his pessimism on Germany. Right to raise this concrete and historic question, which has certainly weighed on the Maastricht negotiation and the criteria adopted, as I have stressed elsewhere. [27] But the current instability of the EMU and the EU could reopen debates seen as closed, in Germany above all, where the European anchoring is perceived (positively, beyond the dominant positions) as strategic.

Indeed Lordon's proposal would respond much better to concerns of monetary instability (notably those of the Bundesbank) than the current system, if they were consolidated in a cooperative and egalitarian manner: they would also allow a better protection of the European monetary system against the speculation of the financial markets than the old EMS.

On the other hand the Maastricht criteria concerning budget deficits are in no way “scientific”. They expressed an aversion by the German negotiators to the “budgetary laxity” of the “club Med” of southern countries. But this was accompanied by an explicit clause in the European Treaties making German unification accompanied by *colossal budgetary transfers*, a (colossal) exception. Nothing prevents (from the “constituent” angle of another Europe, critical of the current EU) disputing these criteria that Germany itself (like France) has not respected – *without rejecting the importance of common rules*. But the latter are not “respectable” when they have a “variable geometry”, and are thus neither egalitarian nor truly “common” – all the more so when their efficacy is not demonstrated. A procedure of levelling of the rules but also of European mechanisms which have increased public debts would be in every respect more effective, in the context of new crises. An alternative European left should fight for this.

But above all we must stress how much the debate on *another logic of social and economic relations in Europe* also concerns the social conditions and the transformation of property relations which have marked German unification and the transformation of systems in Eastern Europe. This balance sheet could also be made with the peoples affected. It is the separation by the (social and fiscal) competition imposed on the backs of all the peoples which prevent the *perception* of common interests. This is reinforced by the absence of “social movement” and European political spaces where it would not be difficult to show the convergence of many strikes that are doomed to failure because they are atomized.

The great mass of employees have been the losers, as much in Germany as in the new peripheries, even if the “average” gaps between countries remain significant. It is not the euro which is *first* the

cause of this. It is the social war and the dismantling of all the old protective statues in all European countries, playing on the competition between the least protected (in the east) and all the others, with or without the euro.

The hope of joining “the Europe of the rich” and if possible “the centre”, where the big choices are made – the Euro zone – is a profoundly legitimate aspiration that should be turned against the institutions, criteria and mechanisms of the dominant social and economic policies, well before being turned against the “Euro”.

We should add that we should defend the free circulation of workers and students, as much as *the right to have a life, a job, conditions of study and quality research in one's country of origin*. We start from there, and from the way in which “another Europe”, cooperative and solidarity-based, could protect all these rights.

9 - BREXIT, a “shock”? In what way?

We can take divergent orientations from Breexit, debate whether or not it is a “historic shock” [28] but be certain that its future depends notably on the lessons learnt from it in the European alternative left.

If the “Lexit” orientation means that “*the left*” *should everywhere demand referendums of the same type* as the UK without the “content” of this Lexit being concretized by the construction of a European alternative, we will remain in impasse and division. [29] We are still “between two”. But we can go fruitfully beyond poorly conducted debates by starting from a common base which affirms that any solidarity-based and progressive struggle in Europe should challenge the current EU Treaties.

Stathis Kouvelakis, during an intervention at a meeting of Greece's Popular Unity, drew as the first lesson of Brexit that “*opposition to the EU* establishes very clearly the strategic question of the struggle for political and ideological hegemony in Europe today”. But he continued: “the choice today is not between a “good” and a “bad” EU, between one version or another of the euro zone, as the bankrupt European ideology continues to claim, but between a conflict with the EU of the right or of the left”. [30]

We are still far from such a clarification. While we can of course agree with Kouvelakis on the fact that “opposition to the EU” is a key element of strategic positioning (linked to the struggle for ideological hegemony), the argument that Brexit and all the popular referendums concerning the EU *have rejected the latter and with it all “European ideology”* is fallacious. It does not appreciate the diversity of what the referendums have expressed in their different contexts: the OXI criticized the policy of the EU but did not reject it; our left “Non” against the EU Constitutional Treaty in 2005 in France was accompanied by principles for another Europe; on the other hand we have stressed above the poverty of the *booby trapped binary choices* in the UK and Dutch referendums. Also, we should not minimize the high rate of abstention and the fact that rejection of the current powers of Brussels or the Euro group is totally *compatible with the aspiration in favour of “another Europe”*, of peoples and rights, against an authoritarian federalism. The case of Scotland underlines that “Europeism” (if understood in an open fashion and not reduced to the projects of the financial oligarchy) is not contradictory with a “national” and strongly pro-independence sentiment.

Finally as shown above in the text by Lordon, the radical critique of the EU is compatible with *another use of the euro and the ECB*. It is certainly not about a “good EU” but *another union, another ECB, another euro: other Treaties* would determine their final form. That is why (to clarify

the issues) “another Europe” should take another *name* than the “EU”.

We hope that Frédéric Lordon, Stathis Kouvelakis and other radical left activists who share their viewpoint fully agree to joint struggle with an opposition to the EU of this kind.

10-No Lexit without “Another Possible Europe”: build it against the “values” of competition, xenophobia and all relations of domination, local or global

The new European network built around a call for “LEXIT” seems embarrassed by Brexit and open to a real debate. [31]

The hope of a “paradoxical effect” of a Brexit radically opposed to the hypothesis of an end of “Europeism” is evident in several recent contributions. Bernard Cassen thinks that one of the lessons of Brexit “applies to the partisans of one form or another of “Leave” or a refoundation of the EU”. [32] Evoking the boomerang effects and an impasse of BREXIT, he adds: “a majority of voters disapprove of the policies (and some the very existence) of the EU and the euro, but another majority disapproves those *who fight them without formulating credible alternatives!*”. “The path is then very narrow” he says “*for those who believe another Europe – solidarity based and progressive – is not impossible*” [my emphasis]. That is why, even if it is unleashed by a sovereign national decision, any implementation of a plan B needs alliances with a critical mass of forces of other European countries sharing the same objectives”.

That would imply a somersault in the European alternative left and going beyond binary choices (national *or* European movements and rights; submission to the EU/EMU *or* exit) and the characterization as “opposition to the EU” of the sole option of “exit”. The clarification of these debates could allow notably giving the “formula” of “Lexit” the broad sense of an “opposition to the logic and Treaties of the EU”, without a united “line” of “exit”, learning the lessons of Brexit, that it is urgent to construct an alternative on a European scale. It should take shape as a *progressive hegemonic bloc* which should build a European “alternative political space”, a kind of Europe Debout! linked to all the ecological and egalitarian resistance against the policies of the dominant institutions.

Any left opposition to the EU in a given country could be organically linked in the networks of this Europe Debout in many other countries. Instead of managing the issues of the debt in dispersed order and in a head to head with the ECB and the Eurogroup, a people engaged in a similar struggle to that of Syriza could, after a citizens’ audit, decide on a moratorium on the payment of this debt while fighting with Europe Debout for a European conference on the public debts, which would decide common rules. All the negotiations and demands emanating from the European leaders would be made public throughout the EU and confronted with other proposals concerning all the peoples of the Union, towards a process of collective democratic rebellions demanding a constituent process, or grouping around common projects.

A “Europe Debout” would influence the possible alternatives from below, with its own agendas of struggle and debate, supporting all progressive campaigns and rebellions against the dominant “rules”, in defence of basic rights and needs. It could “Europeanize” struggles which are currently fragmented, ruptures attempted but without credibility and a relationship of forces, allow convergences – allow the pluralist appropriation from below of balance sheets of the struggles and revolutions of the twentieth century, without nostalgia, but against the criminalization of past and present resistance.

But Europe Debout should be anchored – like Nuit Debout – in the new generations and offering also

spaces for intersection of life experiences and viewpoints. The popularity of transnational free circulation among young people must become a conquest for a student movement for another Europe, spectacular in its diversity but defending the same “common goods” in its initiatives and plenums, open to civil society and to struggles, as in Croatia. They can be rendered “visible” on the European scale and mutualize the key experiences of re-municipalization of water, in Italy or France, or the defence to the right to housing against the expulsions and toxic credits of the banks – as in the Spanish state. Against trade unionism embedded in national or European institutions, we need also to mutualize and Europeanize the experiences of transnational strikes, and struggles associating workers and consumers against multinational firms.

Moving on, in time and in the greatest possible number of countries, we need to concretize and extend common projects between *rebel towns*, defending egalitarian social rights and ecological goals, active solidarity towards migrants and refugees, opposition to all racism. Like the actions and campaigns of blockage of Treaties like Tafta, we need to make public and block the projects of new internal treaties in the EU (like those of the “five presidents”), by deconstructing their anti-social and anti-democratic goals and procedures. Far from leaving the leisure to express this type of denunciation to xenophobic and nationalist forces, it is necessary to counterpose to them a solidaristic, European, egalitarian, anti-racist opposition turned towards the demand of democratic processes of re-examination of all the Treaties. Reciprocal solidarities should be generalized like the positions of Blockupy international in support of Nuit Debout and resistance to the Employment Law in France [33] The initiatives of Altersummit should be mutualized and debated, like the projects of the Diem25 network or the European network for Lexit which has just been launched. [34]

On the basis of projects already elaborated and discussed notably in Altersommet, a Europe Debout site could make visible all these initiatives and reflections, and help the updating of a Manifesto in Defence of Common Goods and European Rights which could be a common basis for future elections against the dominant policies, national and European. People can get involved in such a dynamic whether they have been *or not* a Syriza member, whether *or not* a member of its left, whether *or not* then a member of Popular Unity, partisan *or not* of Brexit or the campaign “Another Europe is Possible” in the context of the “Remain” campaign - on the condition of respecting democratic debate and excluding any hegemonic behaviour; but also by practical engagement in favour of mobilizations from below as essential condition of the construction of a position which resists quagmires and setbacks. Such a front would oppose wars “of civilization” and *all policies* of placing subaltern populations in competition and dismantling of egalitarian rights – at the social level, in terms of gender or “race” - in defence of common goods (from nature to goods and service managed in common) the construction of a Europe Debout would be an essential support for struggles both national and internationalist, stretching toward other continents.

Catherine Samary

P.S.

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

Footnotes

[1] “Nuit Debout” a grassroots movement launched as part of the protests against the new labour

law in France. “The name “Nuit debout” has been translated into English as “Up All Night”, “Standing Night”, and “Rise up at night”, among other variants. Commentators have noted that the word *debout* has “significant resonance” in French political culture as it is the first word in the socialist anthem “The Internationale” (“Arise...!”).” ([Wikipedia](#)).

[2] See also ESSF (article 37082), [Construire l’espace public européen – L’expérience grecque et le débat stratégique](#) and ESSF (article 35629) « [Contre la consolidation néo-coloniale de l’Eurogroupe – Leçons de Grèce pour une Europe des droits sociaux et démocratiques](#) »: <http://www.europe-solidaire.org/spip.php?article35629>.

[3] See Etienne Balibar [“Europe: moment destituant, moment constituant”](#).

[4] This is the thesis reaffirmed notably in the collection *Euro, plan B, sortir de la Crise en Grèce, en France, en Europe*, coordinated by Alexis Cukier and Stathis Kouvelakis, Editions du Croquant 2016. See notably the proposals of Costas Lapavistas and Heiner Flassbeck expressed before the OXI.

[5] Eric Toussaint, head of the Greek debt audit committee, had notably expressed such proposals, against any capitulation [“Greece: Alternatives to the Capitulation”](#). On ESSF (article 35453), [Greece: Alternatives to the Capitulation – Some emergency measures](#) Michel Husson develops a similar approach [“La «bonne drachme»? Modeste contribution au débat sur la Grèce”](#). Available on ESSF (article 35539), [Quel plan B – La « bonne drachme » ? Modeste contribution au débat sur la Grèce](#) as do Pierre Khalfa and Thomas Coutrot, well before the capitulation [“Syriza, une aubaine pour l’Europe ?”](#).

[6] Michel Husson stresses the rentier behavior of the Greek oligarchy and the articulation of class issues internal to Greece and Europe against analyses centred on the euro. See the article indicated in note 4, or [“Grèce: une économie dépendante et rentière”](#).

[7] See the introduction by Cédric Durand to [“En finir avec l’Europe](#), and the opinion piece by Stathis Kouvelakis, Cédric Durand and Razmig Keucheyan [“La vraie nature de l’internationalisme”](#). Frédéric Lordon has defended similar approaches – although pessimism about Germany plays a greater role here.

[8] See the intervention by Cédric Durand in Madrid during the debates on “plans B” available on ESSF (article 37267), [Un plan B pour l’Europe ? « L’Union européenne n’est pas un champ de bataille. C’est une prison »](#). I share fully the critique made of it by Michel Husson [“1Plan B : de la pensée binaire, ou comment faire du sur-place”](#). Available on ESSF (article 37271), [Un Plan B pour l’Europe ? De la pensée binaire ou comment faire du surplace \(réponse à Cédric Durand\)](#).

[9] Pierre Dardot, Christian Laval, *Ce cauchemar qui n’en finit pas. Comment le néolibéralisme défait la démocratie*, 2016, La Découverte

[10] See Etienne Balibar, note 2.

[11] These were the terms used by Tariq Ali at a meeting of Greece’s Popular Unity: [“Tariq Ali* parle du BREXIT invité au meeting d’Unité Populaire à Athènes”](#) similarly (in English) [Tariq Ali ‘Pleased’ Brexit Has Given EU ‘Big Kick’ up ‘Backside’](#).

[12] See Alona Liasheva [““To EU or not to EU?” This is just the wrong question’](#). Available on ESSF (article 38772), [Netherlands, Ukraine, Which Europe – “To EU or not to EU?” This is just](#)

[the wrong question](#).

[13] See on Tunisia [“Accord de libre échange UE-Tunisie : appel de la société civile.”](#) ; and on Africa [“L’Afrique sous pression pour des accords de libre-échange avec l’Europe”](#).

[14] See under the rubric “capitalist restoration” at <http://csamary.free.fr>.

[15] See notably Paul Mason, “Brexit, les raisons de la colère”, *le Monde Diplomatique*, August 2016.

[16] That certainly explains but does not legitimize the formulation of slogans of the “Remain” campaign which obscure the dominant anti-social dynamic of the EU – see AEIP [“Stay in Europe to protect our rights”](#).

[17] For Sapir alliances with the FN are all the more envisageable on this terrain because it “has changed”, Jacques Sapir : [“On ne peut plus nier que le FN ait changé”](#). Nikonoff, a former president of Attac, has founded a new party, PARDEM, and gave support to the far right candidate Nicolas Dupont-Aignan in the elections of 2012 because of his pro-sovereignty position.

[18] The British radical left clearly opposed the racist far right. In the same way, while supporting exit, Lordon opposed Jacques Sapir on this subject: [Clarté](#).

[19] See the contribution by Angela Klein, ESSF (article 38747), [Which Europe? – After OXI and Brexit, the Crisis of the European Union and the Left](#).

[20] See the debate published by CADTM [“What is to be Done with the Banks? Radical Proposals for Radical Changes”](#) by Michel Husson, Patrick Saurin, Stavros Tombazos, Eric Toussaint et al.

[21] See the article by Thomas Coutrot, Wojtek Kalinowski and Bruno Théret [L’euro-drachme, ballon d’oxygène pour la Grèce](#).

[22] See Bruno Théret on this subject [“Dettes publiques et auto-répression monétaire des États”](#).

[23] Cédric Durand, in *Europe plan B: sortir de la crise en Grèce, en France et en Europe* correctly hails the visionary qualities of a text by Suzanne de Brunhoff criticising at the time the single currency project and defending a common currency. It’s good that Durand supports a *European* project (including monetary, thus political-institutional), after having said that it was necessary “to put Europe between parentheses”. But this does not tell us how to construct such a project since the introduction of the euro.

[24] See notably [“What is the Vienna Initiative?”](#).

[25] Catherine Samary [“Construire l’espace politique européen dans/hors/contre l’Union européenne. En défense de « communs »”](#). Available on ESSF (article 37082), [Construire l’espace public européen – L’expérience grecque et le débat stratégique](#).

[26] Frédéric Lordon [“Pour une monnaie commune sans l’Allemagne \(ou avec, mais pas à la francfortoise\)”](#).

[27] See footnote 2.

[28] See Stathis Kouvelakis [“Brexit, un choc historique, une chance historique”](#).

[29] It is this restrictive “translation” which is for example specified on the site of Greek Popular Unity in the presentation of the intervention by Tariq Ali cited in note 12: “ Lexit (editorial note: « Lexit » = Left + Exit = campaign of left movements and parties in favour of Brexit)”.

[30] See the site of Popular Unity indicated in note 12; see also note 30.

[31] This is a hope, on reading the presentation of this appeal [“Democracy and Popular Sovereignty instead of Neoliberal Integration and a failed Euro-System”](#). On ESSF (article 38431), [Democracy and Popular Sovereignty instead of Neoliberal Integration and a failed Euro-System](#): far from rejoicing in Brexit, the text stresses that the appeal was “drawn up and validated *before the referendum on Brexit and had no intention of influencing the popular vote in any way*”, and that the debate on what a “left exit” would be should be open.

[32] See [“Les paradoxes de la victoire du Brexit”](#); see also the text by Bernard Cassen which cites an article by Hubert Védrine on the unexpected potential of Brexit, in a “Europeist” sense [“Après le Brexit, la nécessité d’une pause”](#).

[33] See [Blockupy International](#).

[34] See: the site [Altersummit](#), the site [Diem25](#), and the Appeal [“Democracy and Popular Sovereignty instead of Neoliberal Integration and a failed Euro-System”](#).