

After November 13: Belgian Fourth Internationalists denounce move to strong state

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On the third day of the “Brussels lockdown” as the shutting down of the city by the activation of the “level 4” alert was known, the LCR/SAP issued the following statement.

The LCR/SAP denounces the march to the strong state by the Michel government

The LCR/SAP has sounded the alarm over the anti-democratic procedures that have been introduced in the name of fight against terrorism

For the LCR/SAP, it is unacceptable that the Security Council can hide behind opaque feedback of OCAM [Belgian security services] to impose a state of emergency, without being subject to any democratic control.

On Monday, the Prime Minister announced the continuation of this state of emergency for a period of at least ten days. On behalf of the government, he refused any explanation. We are supposed be content with the fact that members of the executive say they are acting “in good conscience” ... It opens the door to abuse, in the opinion of the LCR.

For the LCR/SAP, the Michel government is cynically exploiting the feeling of horror provoked by the ignoble DAESH attacks to impose a climate in politics and the media of ultra-security, where any challenge to its unjust neoliberal policy is pointed to as being the playing game of the enemy.

The incoherent decision to reopen schools and the underground despite the level 4 alert illustrates the cynicism of this political exploitation of the situation.

It is not insignificant on Monday 24, the date of the 24 hour strike against the antisocial measure of Michel 1, the minister Jambon called on the unions to “be responsible” in the framework of combating terrorism, so to stop anything that disturbs the current climate. Nor is it insignificant that Joelle Milquet of the CDH, considered as the “left opposition” to the government Michel, also launched an attack against the unions.

Under the pretext of the fight against terrorism, the right, the NVA in the lead, is seeking to create a strong state. It wants to change the relationship of political and social forces in its favour, especially in pushing the trade union movement into a corner. It is encouraged by the fact that all the parliamentary opposition, led by the PS and SP.a, is giving its support in principle to national unity and strengthening law enforcement. [1]

There is reason to fear that the government will use the current climate to force through, in the near future and without much debate, its attacks against trade union rights, together with a new package of anti-social measures.

The LCR/SAP welcomes the common front of FGFB-CSC [trade-union federations] in Hainaut, which

did not yield to pressure and maintained its strike on November 23. It calls on the left not to fall into the “security” trap. For more than ten years, the “war against terrorism” has only fuelled an escalation of terror. The right to live in peace and security is inseparable from a radical turn, at all levels, to social justice, equal rights, the satisfaction of needs, the sharing of wealth, and respect.

In the days and weeks ahead, we cannot just make statements, we must also show in the street, in the public space, that we continue these struggles, we do not accept our rights and democratic freedoms being taken awayneitehr nor by terrorists nor by governments.

Secretariat of the LCR/SAP, Brussels, November 23, 2015

A correspondent from the LCR/SAP adds:

After the banning of the Climate demonstration of 29th of November in Paris, the Belgian coalition asked for permission to have a demo in Brussels (more then 9000 people from Belgium had planned to go to Paris by train or by bus). With “Fase 4” and the banning of all big (and small...) public events in Brussels, this has been refused. As “Plan C”, permission was asked for a demonstration in Ostend. Today this has been refused as well, with the excuse that the strengthening of security in Brussels (500 police officers from all smaller towns have been called to go to Brussels) this week, means no demonstrations can take place in safe circumstances. So, we are now seeing a de facto total banning of demonstrations in Belgium...

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P.S.

* <http://www.internationalviewpoint.org/spip.php?article4299>

Footnotes

[1] The NVA is the largest centre-right liberal party in Flanders. The PS is the Francophone Parti Socialiste. The Flemish Socialists changed their party’s name to Socialistische Partij Anders (SP.a) in 2002.