

In these times when everything seems to lead to despair and resignation, when hope for a better tomorrow seems vain, when the media keep calling workers to give up and accept a generalized social policy, it is vital to reinstate reality so as to re-establish action.

Due to popular demand, we are republishing the editorial originally published in issue n°23 from December 2003 in French, followed by the English translation.

EDITORIAL

Paris, December 2003

by Stéphane Pozderec

Trade liberalism: The abolition of borders for goods.

Today, the economic liberalism forces have established a world-wide free-trade system in which fits the European Union.

Free-trade is the asphyxiation of domestic economies and the inevitable social crisis that ensues –It is the annihilation of nations' sovereignties, the obliteration of democracy, it is the ruthless financial sharing of the world by multinational corporations, and workers' ever-growing enslavement. In every country, industrialized or not, this liberal economic globalization has brought about the development of unemployment and impoverishment.

In France, in 2003, that means 150 000 additional unemployed men and women and 1 000 100 more people on Jobseeker's Allowance (RMI).

Unemployment insurance? In the General System, the duration of compensation has been reduced by 7 months for all whose benefits had been in place for over 30 months.

Beginning this January, these are 250 000 unemployed people who will be excluded from this social security scheme, and 800 000 more at by the end of the year.

Not to mention the ASS (Allocation Spéciale de Solidarité or Special Solidarity Benefit) paid by the State to unemployed people no longer eligible for benefits, which saw its duration reduced by 12 months and limited to 2 years (instead of 3, previously).

For our professions, this will also mean tens of thousands of people excluded by the new agreement's application on January 1st.

Social step-backs are generalized: Retirement, Health, Social Security, the skinning of Public Services, salaries in perpetual decline, the increasing rate of privatization, downsizing measures, outsourcing of our industries...

This situation is not a produce of chance –It is not unavoidable.

It is the consequence of a deliberate and organized policy by the political forces of dominant economical liberalism forces.

Today, identifying the opponent is the first step towards action.

Liberalism based on free-trade and the abolition of borders for businesses is leading us to the abolition of our country's every social conquest; to aligning ourselves on countries without social protection with ever decreasing salaries and gradually deteriorating working conditions.

NO, this policy is not ineluctable, whatever we are led to believe.

Challenging the right to unrestrained free-trade commerce practiced by the W.T.O.

Imposing economical exchanges regulation by way of fiscal measures on importation.

Today, in France, as in most other countries, we are more and more forbidden from being able to produce what we consume and so in every domain – Our production is too expensive in comparison to other countries' and our industries are leaving the country.

We need to regain the right to produce what we consume.

This right which is progressively trimmed, reduced into non-existence, by the rules of free-trade. If borders are abolished for goods, they aren't from a social standpoint.

We cannot accept to see our economy devastated by social and financial dumping –We cannot accept more unemployment, reduced salaries, health and retirement revised downwards for employees.

This is forging ahead.

Meanwhile, financial scandal is ceaseless and the considerable embezzlements are “transferred” onto the taxpayer's shoulders. CEOs of the world's top financial groups can boast of wages of indecent measures and those who placed their money in the stock exchange, although the return on investment has thoroughly decreased, have made roughly 15% in 2003...

Yet we are told class struggle is outdated...

We are told: “Tomorrow, things will be better, with the return of our economy's growth”.

What growth? With unemployment's galloping progress? With salaries perpetually on the downward slope? With downsizing measures? With ever-increasing outsourcing? That is to say with ever less riches produced and less revenue shared?

Growth can only be re-attained by implementing fiscal regulation of economical exchanges and so just as much at a national level than at the European Union's.

As for Film Production

For the economic sector of Film Production, had free-trade presided, had the additional taxation on the exploitation of films which's yield generated by foreign films is reinjected to the benefit of national production not been instated in 1946, France wouldn't be able to boast the production of over 150 movies a year.

What has been done for the filmmaking economy can be done for other branches of our economy –The implementing of additional taxation applying to the equality of certain imported products as well as the same products made in France.

The income from this Special Additional Tax on prices being reinjected into the sole companies producing in France these same goods or produce.

This could be a way to restore our economy, restore employment and insure the financing and upkeep of our social protection and, meanwhile, allow a reinvestment so as to maintain and repatriate some of our industries rather than support them by way of subsidies out of the taxpayer's pocket.

This could be an effective way to put an end to the limitless social fracture we are experiencing, and the impoverishment that grows ever farther and deeper.

This is not about ending economic exchange: the idea is simply to regulate it so as to maintain our economy and social equilibriums and not accept that, in order to live in France, one need to align socially with "underdeveloped" countries or see French companies ship off to said countries.

Of course, at this point, this is not –Be it at a national or at the European level– the policy being pursued, including in the filmmaking sector for which the European Commission on competition is trying, by multiple means, to challenge the economic regulation mechanism presiding over the very existence of our national Cinema and the International Co-production Agreements.

As far as we are concerned, more than ever, we are aware of how decisive it is for us, for the existence of French Cinema, to remain mobilized, to keep fighting to our last breath for the preservation of the economic regulation mechanism that constitutes our Support Funds. It is an advantage we have over other branches of the economy. We refuse to lose it. This is a cultural stake, a societal stake. It is about knowing what world we want to live in.

FOR ANOTHER FUTURE

This means first and foremost SAYING NO to the current recession policy.

The conscience of existing is the conscience of thought and action. It is that which must gather and unite us. Hope is something that gets built; it resides within each one of us.

NO to the ambient defeatism.

Translation : Thomas Chirol