

# Forum Tematico contro le Grandi Opere Inutili Venaus - Bussoleno 26-30 agosto 2011

## DISCORSO INAUGURAZIONE Venaus 26 agosto 2011

Dear Friends,

On January 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2010, while two huge NO TAV demonstrations were taking place both in Susa and Bayonne, the Charter of Hendaye was signed. The Charter formally marked the existence of a wide popular opposition against high speed trains all over Europe. But this opposition – as the Charter itself states – goes far beyond a matter of high speed railways.

In fact a few months later with an acceleration which was merely allowed by passion and by the belief they were doing something right to defend the common welfare a lot of citizens in Italy France and Germany started to organize themselves against any **Large Unnecessary Project**. It was December 11<sup>th</sup>, 2010.

Our opposition can be summarized by the following statements:

- Large Railway Projects - but not only them - mean an ecological social economical and human disaster for the areas they cross ; the devastation of natural areas and farming land new ways towards deterioration and environmental pollution with huge negative consequences for the people who live there.
- Large Railway Projects - but not only them - are made without taking into account the involvement of people in the decision-making process; they denounce the dullness of Governments when facing deep social disagreement and their scorn towards the citizens' reasons and suggestions about railways – but we believe these assumptions can be effective for any large project - the official reason for the building of new railways is systematically based both on false assumptions about traffic and false social and economic profitability and on an underestimation of costs in order to better "sell" the project the real value of which has not been proved.
- Priority is given to high speed trains which are enormously costly to the detriment of local traffic and of the maintenance and development of the existing railway networks which are neither looked after nor optimized in order to develop freight which allows to serve the economy of different areas and a public transport within everybody's means.
- We criticize the aberrant growth of transport triggered by global capitalism that has not allowed a local even development but on the contrary it has favored the abnormal concentration of traffic and the wild delocalization of production.

The Forum we are going to open today was planned on the day after the European Day against All Unnecessary Projects in 2010. On that day the Italian No Tav Movement demonstrated in Susa French people demonstrated in Bayonne and the Germans did the same in Stuttgart. This place – the No TAV site in Venaus – is greatly meaningful for the Italian No TAV Movement. Another place – La Maddalena site in Chiomonte – a few weeks ago become the symbol of the citizens' resistance to the State's madness and violence.

We thank all the Movements and Associations who are here today and all those people who have sent us messages of solidarity for taking part in a struggle that goes far beyond the opposition to the new railway Turin-Lyon.

We would like to remind you that this Forum is one of the many stages of the World Social Forum 2011. In fact if the first aim of this event is to confront different struggling situations on a European level the second aim which is not less important is to confirm – through innovative top level topics – the category of **Large Unnecessary Projects** within political and social struggles and debate on an international level.

This Forum is sponsored by the Town Council of Venaus, the Town Council of Bussoleno and by the Susa and Sangone Valleys Mountain Community who in doing so have stressed their interest in the development of a thorough debate about the reasons of an opposition against the new railway that started more than twenty years ago. The space of the Forum will be mainly offered to those who speak from “the bottom”. They are going to be three days full of intense debates that will be alternated with pleasant evenings and group dinners.

Some classrooms of the Upper Secondary School “Norberto Rosa” in Bussoleno have been placed at disposal of the debates. We kindly thank the School Principal for her institutional cooperation to our international meeting.

Tomorrow morning all the Movements and Associations will introduce themselves bringing up their different situations and ways of struggling.

We have invited seven people who through different topics will stimulate discussion with a short 15 minutes’ speech followed by a 45 minutes’ talk with the audience.

We kindly thank all these people for their generosity to come here and suggest some remarks about innovative rails. We activists strongly need that but we believe the whole society does as well.

The first speech will be given by the climatologist Mr Luca Mercalli who has the responsibility and the honour to open the Forum and who will talk about the Turin-Lyon Railway a typical example of a large unnecessary project of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

The other six people who most Italians already know are :

- The Mayor of Cassinetta di Lugagnano Mr *Domenico Finiguerra* who will talk about land consumption,
- Professor *Sergio Ulgiati* from the Department of Environmental Sciences of the Parthenope University in Naples who will talk about the hidden costs in the life cycle of large projects,
- Mr *Ivan Cicconi* an engineer with a reputation in the contract and financing architecture of large projects who will evaluate large projects referring to post-fordist capitalism,
- Professor Elena Camino from the Research Group of Natural Science Teaching Methodology – Interdepartmental Centre IRIS of the University of Turin who will introduce post-normal science and processes of democratization in a perspective of sustainability and equity,
- The philosopher *Gianni Vattimo* who follows with an activist’s eye the path of the NO TAV Movement and supports it as a member of the European Parliament will offer us a view on the destiny of technik and the destiny of capital,
- While Professor *Alessandra Algostino* will end with an innovative contribution to popular struggles democracy and constitution.

All the speeches “from the bottom” during the long meeting on Sunday afternoon will evaluate the proceedings but above all they will introduce some coordinated actions on a European level and finally the date and the place of the Forum in 2012.

We believe it is indispensable to briefly talk about the global finance.

The measures The European Union The Central European Bank and the Governments of the different Countries belonging to the European Union are imposing to their citizens not only appears as an injustice towards the producing social classes and the retired people but above all as a further step towards the creation of an ultraliberal society where the State will mainly administrate violence serving an apparently free society which as a matter of fact will have a limited democracy.

We have evidence of that here in the Susa Valley where soldiers – some of them back from Afghanistan - have been deployed to protect a building site (which does not exist) in order to start a Large Unnecessary Project the strongest economic and financial powers strongly want.

Here and on these days we strongly declare that Large Unnecessary Projects are not the materialization of progress but one of the main problems for most Countries all over the world both in the south and in the north part of our planet.

We still don't know much about what happens in China Morocco Israel and in some other countries. That's why the list of disasters caused by the building of these projects is still partially unknown.

We take on the task to throw light on these projects and to fight against these disasters caused by mankind and even more harmful than earthquakes and devastating floods.

Keeping all that in mind: we welcome you all to the Susa Valley. Have a nice evening and enjoy the Forum....

%%%