

THEMATIC FORUM OPPOSING UNNECESSARY LARGE PROJECTS

ANOTHER FUTURE IS POSSIBLE

Venaus/Susa Valley/Italy, 26 - 30 August 2011

<http://presidioeuropa.net/11-12-2010>

sharing experiences of struggle and democracy

with the participation of the European movements and of the local population

let's meet, discuss and learn from each other's experiences

The Forum is a space of debate, open to Associations and community groups defending their territories and their future threatened by the realization of useless and/or damaging works, in the belief that a healthy environment cannot be used as an object for compromise and barter.

Nowadays people who have decided to stand for their future show, through self-organization and uncompromised action, that winning is possible and that through these struggles hope for a better world is right at hand.

This first Forum intends to confine and contain the wide theme of ULP within the specific context of freight and passengers transportation via rail infrastructures.

Defending one's backyard means to begin defending that big backyard we call Earth.

PRESENTATION

The planning of grand public works seems to follow the same scheme in all of Europe (and elsewhere):

- Instead of being useful to citizens, such works seem to be designed to serve specific political/economical interests, profitable for a restricted group of financial and industrial entities only.
- The promised benefits are only hypothesis - in perfect tuning with the ongoing free-trading globalization; the ideology supporting such process has been preaching for 30 years total freedom of money and goods' circulation on one hand, and on the other has caused relocation of goods' production and labour, mass transport of products and an unrestrained consumer society.
- Important data is not shared with the population which is kept in the dark and out of the decision-making process.
- Where protests rise, they are ignored, de-legitimized or even criminalized.
- The works' promoters, in order to obtain the consent of the residents in the territories concerned (that in fact suffer substantial damages), often promise the construction of ancillary works called 'compensations ancillary works' that are included in the infrastructure's costs (e.g. roads, schools, playing fields, etc.).
- While the huge spending for these grand works are charged on the citizens, their negative side effects fall heavily on the local populations, on the social stability and the environment.

The following hypothesis might be the starting points for our debate:

- Substituting large projects with smaller interventions, along with a democratic process of consulting with the community (refer. Aarhus' Convention) in order to evaluate the usefulness of the works, are a better option especially if important public funding would be used. This way of planning public works can bring more benefits, like the strengthening of democracy, more work and development of the local enterprise, respect of the environment, social and cultural utility with tangible results in a short time scale.
- The “common good” is a value we must defend; but this value cannot be at the expense of Local communities' welfare. The only way to guarantee a viable future to next generations is the re-localization of services, production and market, that is the so-called kilometre Zero option as opposed to the failing globalization process going on.
- For the good of humankind and of nature we need to relinquish the concept of unlimited growth as a self-defining value and eventually come to term with the need of a lifestyle resizing, this can be experienced as an enriching achievement not a failure or just a necessity.
- The local movements sprung spontaneously from their own territories have long demonstrated how their requests are in perfect relation with the global problems generated by the ongoing free trading policies.

PROGRAMME

- Aug. 26 - Participants' arrival
- Aug. 27- On the first day every group will be asked to introduce itself, explaining its aims, tell its history and the way the movement is organized, analyzing the opposing forces and expressing its future prospects and hopes. We will discuss the existing links between the different committees and also any conflicting points of view.
- Aug. 28- The second day will be dedicated to the discussion of ideas about different lifestyles and alternative projects, in order to give a future chance not only to the struggle against useless works but also to proposed ideas. We will try to lay the foundations of a solid support network among every Movement from each different Country. Potential information platforms and ideas will be discussed as well as a calendar of future meetings and joint events.
- Aug. 29 - On the third day the people attending the meeting will be able to get to know the Susa Valley and its problems but above all its beauty, its cultural sites and its Alpine landscape. In a relaxing atmosphere, meeting new friends and exchanging ideas will be much easier.
- Aug. 30 - Participants' departure. As an alternative a visit to the city of Turin (or to any other town) might be organized.

We do believe that - by meeting different Movements and Associations and by looking beyond national borders - it is time to create some new resistance networks which might make every single struggle even stronger and much closer to one another.

As we are all aware we are now beyond the simple “NO” of our protests, we also wish that all the Movements might gather to build - through new alternatives - a viable and worthwhile future together.

We sincerely hope this meeting

- will strengthen the existing network between all the Movements,
- will allow a wider, solid and efficient cooperation among distant Movements who are nonetheless close to each other in their common aims,
- will set strategies for the common struggle and a date for a new Forum to be had in one of the attending Groups' Country.

This Forum aims to gather the experiences of:

- The Pact of Mutual Aid that has been advertising on the Net the struggle of different Italian groups www.11-12-2010.eu/old_/Home/,
- The Charter of Hendaye, which was signed in January 2010 by French, Basque and Italian Committees in order to fight together against the Trans European high speed trains TEN-T www.11-12-2010.eu/old_/Home/ ,
- the day of protest against all big unnecessary works and all the similar demonstrations that took place around December 12 , 2010 in France, Spain and Germany www.11-12-2010.eu/old_/Home/ .

The Social Forum against Large Unnecessary Projects is a stage of the WSF (World Social Forum) 2011 and it is sponsored by the Venaus' Town Council and by the Susa and Sangone Valleys' Council.

Operating costs will be borne by the No Tav Movement but voluntary contributions will be welcome. Travelling expenses and hotel lodging will be at the participant's expense. A donation will be kindly requested for board and lodging offered by the No Tav Movement.