

Journey to the End of the Night: The Paris ‘Nuit Debout’ Movement

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In his novel ‘Journey to the end of the night’ Louis-Ferdinand Céline provocatively described the soldiers who had died in the First World War as ‘idiots’. The French writer was referring to the fact the soldiers had given their lives for a cause that was not their own- a futile slaughter of the poor for the benefit of the rich. In the book’s many pertinent reflections on the human condition, the Céline notes how, in modernity, the street has come to constitute the place of dreams.

“Que fait-on dans la rue, le plus souvent ? On rêve. C’est un des lieux les plus méditatifs de notre époque, c’est notre sanctuaire moderne, la Rue - what do we most often do in the street, we dream. It is the most meditative place of our time, it is our modern sanctuary.”

Since the French government recently introduced legislation reforming labour laws, a new ‘spontaneous’ and acephalous, social movement has taken root throughout French cities- the ‘Nuit Debout- Up All night’ movement. As the title suggests, the social movement is taking place at night time and one of its slogans is ‘[Rêve général!](#)’ - general dream, which is a pun on ‘grève générale’-general strike. So, instead of calling for a general strike in order to bring the government to its knees, the activists are calling for dreaming in the streets!

The movement took off after [the release on February 23](#) of journalist Francois Ruffin’s film ‘Merci Patron’- ‘Thank you boss’, a film critical of French plutocracy.

Although the film criticizes the avarice of contemporary capitalism, it does not treat the relationship between monopoly capitalism, foreign wars of conquest in the service of capital accumulation, class warfare and mass media disinformation.

Nor does Ruffin’s film expose and denounce the complicity of all corporate French media outlets in war crimes and genocide in the Middle East and throughout Africa, through the dissemination of lies and disinformation about the role of Western imperialism in these wars.

There is no mention of the fact that the reason President Laurent Gbagbo of the Ivory Coast was kidnapped in 2010 by French commandos- his country bombed and his character assassinated- was due to the fact that he defied the powerful Club de Paris, the circle of French bankers who control the African neo-colony’s money; Gbagbo had proposed that the Ivory Coast print it’s own currency- a bold move which would have enabled the resource-rich country to build up its own industrial base independent of colonial interests.

Although there is a stand at the place de la Republique claiming to expose the detrimental role of French policy in Africa, there is no real information of what that role is, nor have any of the pan-Africanist intellectuals who have written on the topic been invited to speak and sell their books. The 'Nuit Debout' movement is predominantly white and middle class.

Ruffin's film also fails to point out how French bosses in the cereal industry colluded with terrorism against the [people of Libya](#) when they secretly met in with Libyan traitors in Paris in November 2010 to organise the bombing and destruction of Africa's richest and most democratic country.

The French ruling class are not just guilty of destroying centuries of social gains by French workers, they are complicit in genocide and crimes against humanity. So why is Ruffin silent about that fact?

Ruffin writes for 'leftist' publications which supported the NATO-backed 'rebels' in Libya- rebels who were in fact Al-Qaeda terrorists in the service of NATO. In 2011 the 'left-wing' [Monde Diplomatique](#) published an article on Libya declaring that there was no doubt about the 'brutality of the regime', in spite of the fact all of the crime imputed to Colonel Gaddafi were carried out by the Takfiri 'rebels'.

Ruffin and the dishonest publications he writes for are all complicit in the genocide waged by NATO against the people of the Southern Hemisphere states, from the Middle East and Africa to Latin America.

No, none of these uncomfortable realities are depicted in Ruffin's 'anti-capitalism.' Instead, we have ultra-leftist slogans, petty-bourgeois irony and the mindless occupation of a public square by youths, who have neither the education nor the experience necessary to understand the structural reasons and deeper implications of the labour reform they claim to oppose.

The '[Nuit Debout](#)' movement is certainly not spontaneous, nor is it grass-roots and acephalous as so many pundits claim.

On the contrary, it is the result of decades of careful policy analysis by US imperial ideologues. Since the [undemocratic dissolution of the USSR](#) in, 1991, the United States has perfected a regime change technique commonly referred to as 'colour revolutions'. The strategy involves co-opting leftist slogans and symbols to serve a right-wing agenda. Lenin and the Bolshevik party had repeatedly denounced [Leon Trotsky](#) for utilizing this counter-revolutionary technique both before and after the October Revolution. It has now become a standard tool of [US foreign policy](#).



The manipulation of youthful naivety and rebellion for the purposes of either overthrowing a foreign government hostile to US interests or creating a 'left-wing' opposition movement in imperial countries designed to kill all real opposition- this is a strategy which every would be activist needs to study if he wishes to engage in movements capable of real, social, political and economic change.

The 'Nuit Debout' movement is being led by petty-bourgeois, bohemians with little or no

understanding of contemporary capitalism. The movement is organized on the same principals as the US backed colour revolutions in Eastern Europe and the Arab Spring- empty slogans, idiotic puns and political infantilism. Although we cannot yet prove it, the use of the clenched fist as the movement's logo coupled with cretinous slogans, are strongly reminiscent of strategies and tactics of CANVAS, the Centre for Applied Non-Violent Actions and Strategies, a regime change youth training organization close to the CIA.

The ruling class in France have evidently spent more time reading Marx than their would-be opponents. For the objective allies of monopoly capitalism in Europe today are the likes of François Ruffin and the other leading bourgeois leftist ideologue of this movement Frédéric Lordon- both of whom mask the reactionary nature of their pseudo 'anti-capitalism' or, to be more precise, their 'anti-neoliberalism', with a mixture of convoluted semantics, pseudo-intellectualism and ultra-leftist sloganeering.

There are thousands of real, grass-roots organizations in France, and they get much of their information from independent media such as Meta TV, Cercle Des Volontaires, Reseau Voltaire and many more. Real proletarian analysis of capitalism is provided by communist organizations [such as OCF](#), and [URCF](#). Coherent bourgeois critique of French and EU imperialism is provided by the [political party UPR](#).

The 'Nuit debout' activists talk about a 'convergence of struggle' yet journalists and activists from these genuinely popular organisations have been forcibly escorted from the Place de la Republique and denounced as 'fascists'. Antifa is an organisation which purports to fight fascism but spends most of its time [attacking all genuine anti-imperialist activists](#) by blackening their name with the label 'fascist'.

Antifa have been active again in the '[Nuit Debout](#)' movement where genuine French anti-imperialists such as Sylvain Baron have been forcibly evicted from the square.

This writer repeatedly pointed out in 2011 that the failure of the left to understand the reactionary ideology of the Arab Spring and the role of US agencies in its planning and execution, would have dire consequences for progressive politics. Now, similar techniques are being used throughout the world in order to criminalize real anti-capitalist agitation and create the conditions of military dictatorship. The objective allies of that strategy are petty bourgeois 'anti-capitalists' such as François Ruffin and Frédéric Lordon; these are the phastamagorical, would-be intellectuals who shine in the streets of the nocturnal, metropolitan dream world so eloquently depicted by Céline.



The representation of imperialism's foreign wars of aggression as 'revolutions' and 'humanitarian interventions', coupled with an infantile advocacy of vacuous concepts such as 'social Europe'- this is the nefarious role played by these post-modern 'revolutionaries', who are the very avant-garde of reactionary imperialism. A malady when this writer denounced it in 2011, pseudo-leftism has now morphed into a serious planetary pandemic. If this form of leftism did not exist, imperialism would have had to invent it. The 'Nuit Debout' movement is now spreading throughout the world. Pseudo-leftist media will zealously present this movement as a global painting of Delacroix's 'Liberty Leading the People' when sadly, it is rather more of a sinister version of the Pied Piper of Hamelin.

The soi-disant "anti-fascists" in this movement denounce as "fascists" those who expose corporate media lies used to justify the crimes of NATO's foreign wars-the foreign wars of capital accumulation waged by the same corporations imposing austerity and class war at home; [but it is they who are the fascists](#), it is they who are the enemies of the working class!

Ideological confusion is the great political illness of our time. Céline describes war and illness as the two 'infinities of nightmare'. One could describe the two contemporary 'infinities of nightmare' as the proliferation of wars of aggression and the triumph of capitalist repression due to the political illness of ultra-leftist cretinism, which has taken over the labour movement in the last 30 years. Until our youth emancipate themselves from the pernicious influence of controlled opposition and pseudo-leftist ideology- which turns them into useful idiots of the monopoly capitalism rather than revolutionaries- their good natured activism is tragically destined to precipitate civilization's journey to the end of the night.

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