

Call for an international mobilisation against public debt to pay tribute to Thomas Sankara

On October 15 1987, after four years as head of Burkina Faso, President Thomas Sankara lost his life following a coup d'état. He had fought for the dignity of his people and for a new upsurge of liberation of the African continent with a new generation of state heads devoted to the service of their peoples and able to stand up to the imperialist powers. Thomas Sankara was undoubtedly assassinated for his struggle against neo-colonialism and more specifically against modern slavery due to public debt.

In July 1987, at the organization of African Unity (OAU) summit, before all the African leaders, Thomas Sankara, a pioneer in the field, denounced the debt system implemented by the Western powers obviously with the cooperation of some leaders of the South to confiscate the peoples' sovereignty.

That new system meant to oppress the African, Latin American and Asian peoples was mainly based on the implementation of the structural adjustment plans (SAPs) imposed by the Bretton Woods institutions (IMF and World Bank) with the support of the former metropolises and in favour of the Northern multinationals. Aware the major international creditors would threaten his life in response to this ultimate struggle, Thomas Sankara called for a united front against public debt. His appeal was unfortunately not followed at the time.

Twenty-five years later, whereas the debt system is still confiscating the popular sovereignty and impoverishing the large majority of the African population, the peoples of the North, too, are victims of an unprecedented debt crisis. The collapse of the housing bubble and the bank rescue undertaken by the states with no public consultation – which has worsened the burden of public debt, a large part of which is illegitimate – prove Thomas Sankara was right when he was denouncing the « Casino » economy.

Over the last thirty years, far from flashlights and TV cameras, the financial world has opposed the peoples, causing millions of deaths. Previously, only shared by the Southern countries, the conditionalities and austerity measures have spread to the North, plunging the peoples into devastating confusion and anguish. The present situation in Greece, Portugal or even Ireland where the IMF along with the European Union and the European Central Bank (ECB) intervene directly in internal state affairs, reminds us of the situation of the South in the 80's.

Over the last thirty years the peoples in the South have been fighting against the diktat of the creditors and in particular that of the IMF and the World Bank, two anti-democratic institutions serving the financial markets, as well as that of the large private banks and multinationals that set off today's economic crisis.

In our world of crisis and to resist the various attacks against the populations through the worldwide austerity policies, time has come for the world's peoples, South and North, to respond to Thomas Sankara's call by presenting a united front against public debt.

In response to Thomas Sankara's call and to pay tribute to his pioneer struggle and as a result to the November 2 2011 Niono Call, (<http://www.cadtm.org/Appel-de-Niono-Mali-pour-un-front>), we, Burkina Faso organisations and social movements as well as much more African organisations and social movements, appeal to an international meeting and to a South-North dialogue about Public Debt, in Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso), from 13 to 16 October 2012, with a celebration day in memory of Thomas Sankara on October 15 2012.