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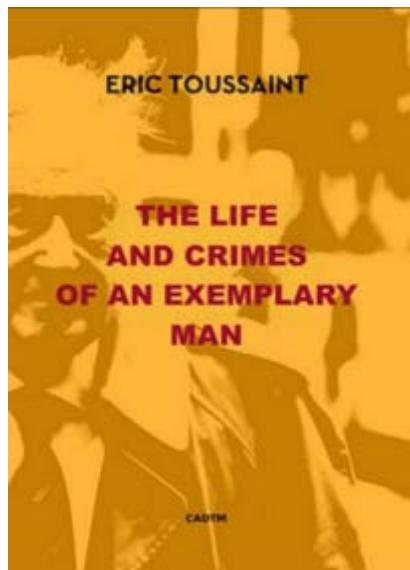
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The Life and Crimes of an Exemplary Man

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8 May by **Eric Toussaint**

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THE AUTHORS

Eric Toussaint is a historian with a doctoral degree in political science from the universities of Paris VIII and Liège. He is the President of CADTM Belgium (www.cadtm.org). He has written many essays on geopolitics including *The World Bank: A Critical Primer*, Pluto Press, London, 2008, and *A Glance in the Rear View Mirror. Neoliberal Ideology from its Origins to the Present*, Haymarket Books, Chicago, 2012. He has also written several works with Damien Millet, including *Debt, the IMF, and the World Bank: Sixty Questions, Sixty Answers*, Monthly Review Press, New York, 2010, <http://cadtm.org/Debt-the-IMF-and-the-World-Bank>. See also Eric Toussaint, doctoral thesis in political science, presented in 2004 at the Universities of Liège and Paris VIII: "Enjeux politiques de l'action de la Banque mondiale et du Fonds

monétaire international envers le tiers-monde” (“Political aspects of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund actions toward the Third World”), <http://cadtm.org/Enjeux-politiques-de-l-action-de>

Aminata Traoré is a Malian politician and writer. Her books in French include *L'étau. L'Afrique dans un monde sans frontières*, *Le Viol de l'Imaginaire*, *L'Afrique humiliée*, and *L'Afrique mutilée*.

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Introduction by Pauline Imbach and Damien Millet

As financial and political scandals come and go, the names of important personalities pepper the international press, but in general, we only remember scattered details.

Jacques de Groote, the subject of this book, is an interesting example. He was Belgium's executive director at the IMF and World Bank for nearly twenty years, and has recently been condemned in Bellinzona, Switzerland for “aggravated money laundering”, “fraud”, and “document forgery.” This story received a great deal of media attention in Europe and beyond throughout 2013.

What interests Éric Toussaint, who has radically criticised the IMF and the World Bank for several decades, is the emblematic role played by Jacques de Groote during a historical period

of these two important international financial institutions to which the major media outlets accord so much attention. It is impossible to criticise them or their actions and unimaginable to question their existence in any way. Somehow, they are above all reproach. Their failures, and the serious damage resulting from them, have all been caused by conditions beyond their control. They enjoy unlimited intrinsic legitimacy. Being protected by immunity in the exercise of their functions, those in charge are never called to account. Since their creation in 1944, neither of these institutions has ever been taken to court despite repeated violations of human rights.

These two institutions are under the orders of the dominant governments and the big multinationals, oscillating between private interests (political, economic, and financial) and the interests of the great powers.

This fascinating book, which can be read like a historic novel, highlights these different aspects with examples taken from the career of Jacques de Groote. Éric Toussaint practices neither insinuation nor defamation; he sticks to the facts, basing his enquiry on clearly defined sources.

The narration takes us through the Congo of Mobutu, infamous for the harshness of his dictatorial regime and the personal fortune he amassed on the backs of the Congolese people. Then it is on to Rwanda where our hero helps his friend Van Den Branden, a baron and CEO of a major mining company. Killing three birds with one stone, de Groote acted in favour of the institutions he was representing, his friend, and the regime of General Juvenal Habyarimana. The saga continues in the Czech Republic with the fraudulent privatisation of MUS (*Mostecka Uhelná Společnost*), one of the principal Czech coal mines. Belgium and its kingdom's interests are also part of the narrative, as is the generalisation of neoliberal policies starting in the 1980s, and pressure groups, political friendships, and alliances. The operations take on a worldwide character: trials in the U.S. and Switzerland, a pipeline in India, World Bank and IMF success stories in Mexico, relations with the big international private banks, and on several occasions clear conflicts of interest.

The backdrop of this work remains the international financial institutions that are so often guilty of infringing upon and violating human rights. Lifting the curtain to unveil their actions is essential. It goes without saying that they must answer for them, as must their Directors and representatives. It is crucial to analyse the powerful methods of domination at work all over the planet for the last seventy years. The CADTM has endeavoured to make this radical critique for over twenty years, and has published numerous analyses enabling us to understand the deathly logic commanding major international decisions.

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