



GREECE

THE CHALLENGES OF THE EUROPEAN PROLETARIAT

by Orlando Landuci

Writer's Introductory note

The article that we present bellow was written in May, 2015, months before the signature of the 3rd memorandum between Greece and its creditors, led by Germany, in command of EU's policy. The pace of the political process in Greece has been accelerated by the crisis itself and, since then, we have seen how ephemeral the counterrevolutionary reformist mediations could be as they come up and fade away at the heat of the astounding decomposition of the capitalist system, that turns reforms impossible. Tsipras's government maneuvered via a referendum, which remarks his bonapartist role by placing himself as the only one capable of applying the measures imposed by the Troika (now called Quadriga) because of his relationship with the masses. After the victory of the "No" in the referendum, Tsipras signed the 3rd memorandum of understanding, he resigned to the government, liquidated the left wing of Syriza and, after purging his own party, he came back to government, along with his partners of the nationalist right wing of ANEL, by the elections on September 20th. The catastrophic defeat of Syriza's Left Platform and of its troupe of centrists from the postwar Trotskyism must not be measured only by the meager electoral result on September 20th, when the new grouping, Popular Unity, a re-edition of Syriza, did not reach the necessary votes to access the Parliament. Syriza's purge showed how impotent broad anti-capitalist coalitions made up of reformists and pretended revolutionaries joined by a plain stateist program are and the impossibility of confronting the rotten system by means of the intervention in the superstructure of bourgeois institutions (and in this case, imperialist institutions). However, postwar Trotskyism has not learned the necessary lessons: they keep on vindicating the "No" in Tsipras's bonapartist referendum, thus sowing expectations in this kind of mechanisms that tear apart the working class's initiative to put it in the hands of the imperialist government. And they keep on insisting with



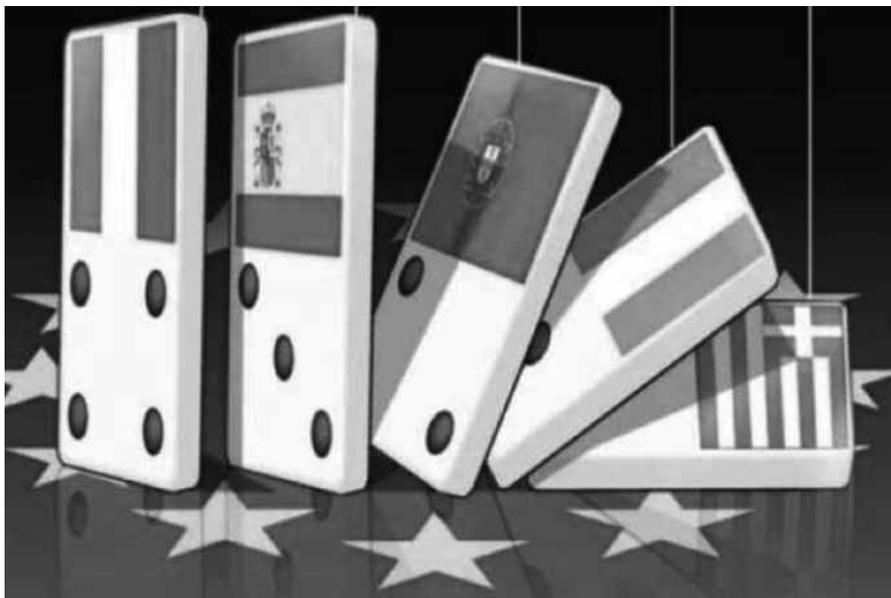
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the line of coalitions, either with the PU (Syriza 2) or with Antarsya. Thus, they distract the proletarian vanguard from the true way-out: to attack capitalists in production, which is the support of their class rule, by recovering trade-unions and developing the revolutionary struggle with the labor methods to seize power and impose the dictatorship of their own class. This will require, not a confusing mix of intellectual and “left politicians” in a coalition, but a revolutionary party with a clearly defined labor character in its program, composition and strategy, a national section of an international party, the reconstructed IV International. Class struggle in Greece, in presence of a new Tsipras administration whose task will be to implement the dire measures of the 3rd memorandum, is far from having reached a balance point due to the deepness of the crisis in the country, the acceleration of the EU crisis that is now feeling the impact of the migratory wave that menaces to crack the institutions of the Union. But, above all, due to the historical crisis of the capitalist system, a worldwide society torn out by the survival of the borders of obsolete national states from the viewpoint of the development of the productive forces and the insurmountable contradiction between two antagonist classes that struggle among the trends of class war, between imperialist counterrevolution and world proletariat revolution.

The Greek crisis has become the subject of the theoretical-political and programmatic debate among the international left currents in general, and of Trotskyism in particular. The victory of Syriza on January 25, 2015 -with 37% of the votes, which implies, for the first time, the rise to the government of a party that places itself in the political spectrum at the left of Socialdemocracy- has revived the debate. The matter is a cornerstone, given the situation the Hellenic country is going through, taking into account the attacks that the working class is suffering and the struggle experiences that it has been performing. But it is a discussion that goes beyond borders, since what is in question is one of the most ambitious imperialist projects formulated in the postwar period: the utopia of the capitalist unification of Europe. Therefore, it is not a debate just in the field of mere theory, but it starts from facing the task of the moment for every revolutionary: how to regenerate a communist vanguard at an international level, starting by the rich experiences of a new generation of fighters confronting the capitalist attack. Trotskyist centrism -that we, from the COR, characterize as postwar centrism, because they are currents that were not able to escape the wrong theories that their mentors (Mandel, Cliff, Moreno, Lambert) elaborated at the end of World War II- sways between a scholastic of authority quotes in field of what they for sure consider "the theory" and the most rancid political opportunism, that leads their programs to move further and further from the dictatorship of the proletariat.

PART 1: Europe in the epoch of crisis, wars and revolutions

Greece and the crisis
The world capitalist crisis stroke hard the European Union, specially from 2010. Greece is one of the weak links of the EU, and since 2008 is going through a deep recession, along with the debt crisis, which is perhaps the most discussed element in the field of journalism and academy. In fact, the debt

problem centers today the negotiations between Syriza's new administration and the former Troika -now euphemistically called "institutions"; at the request of Tsipras and his ministers- which continues to be the same mechanism of imposition of economic policies to Greece. The IMF, the European Central Bank (ECB) and the EU are the ones responsible for ensuring imperialist capital the returns of their speculative investments on Greek capitals, the ones invested in banks as well as in sovereign bonds. Short after taking office, Tsipras' administration and Syriza showed all their class limits, having started the negotiations with these organisms and allowing them to continue deciding on the economic course of the country, in spite of some bargaining. At this point we must be very clear: since its beginning as an electoral coalition Syriza has always had a program of State capitalism measures, a reformist program of State intervention as a way to weather the catastrophic consequences of the capitalist crisis in Greece, always defending the membership of the country in the European Union. When we talk about Syriza's successive capitulations we are saying that its leadership ended up ignoring even the limited measures with which it had created expectations among the petty bourgeois and working class sectors that took part of the movements and strikes against the Troika. The weakness of these movements -because of the confusion of aims of the new generation of fighters that is confronting the crisis and because the unions are to the present day led by the union bureaucracy linked to the Greek Communist Party (KKE, Kommounistikó Kómma Elládas) and to the remaining of the PASOK, that prevented the proletariat from becoming leadership by encouraging its action merged into the masses- are the elements that explain the arriving of Syriza to power. To which it must be added the general crisis and the crisis of bourgeois two-party-system, mainly the bursting up of the social democrat PASOK. But at the same time, the paralysis of the new government and the giving up of social gains at the request of the Troika show how utopian it is to look

for at least the most elemental grants to the masses and the proletariat in the stage of general decomposition of capitalism. There's no place for reforms anymore. But it is necessary to study the rhythms and times in the relationship between the government and its social social base, as wells as between the government and the unions, in order to elucidate the revolutionary potential of the intervention of revolutionaries, the dynamics of classes and in the need of the penetration of revolutionary propaganda and agitation in the ranks of working class organizations. That is the sense of taking some examples from the modifications that Tsipras and the leadership of Syriza had to introduce in their program -which is obviously not a revolutionary program, but rather an electoral platform-, and later the actions taken by the bourgeois government. In the first point of the political platform that Syriza presented for the election in 2012 defined "To make an audit on the public debt. Renegotiate its devolution and suspend the payments until the economy has recovered and it gets back to growth and employment."¹ Later on, in the minimum program of Thessaloniki elaborated to demonstrate that the measures advanced by Syriza were feasible under capitalism and to calm imperialist financial centers, Syriza centered the problem in a negotiation: "We are willing to negotiate and are working in the building of the broader alliance possible along Europe".² From the suspension of payments to negotiation, and finally the government ended up sharply paying debt maturities to the IMF along April and May 2015. The payments to the IMF have been financed by the transference of emergency funds of public enterprises and local entities to the national State. Meanwhile, in the negotiations Syriza is leaving in the way other promises, before considered to be set in stone. For example, it is going further in privatizations of enterprises, such as the Piraeus Port and airports; preventing the recontracting of dismissed workers in the public sector. Raising of minimum wage and pension have been suspended as well as other points proposed to "confront the

humanitarian crisis” within the “minimum program”: free electricity for 300.000 households under poverty line, food subsidies to 300.000 with no incomes, guaranteed housing, etc. Below, we delve into the characterization of Syriza, as of now, it is necessary to note that the heart of the matter that they are discussing, the Greek government on the one hand, and the Troika on the other (now the “institutions”), is presented as the issue of refinancing the debt or not, and, in any case, the deadlines and conditions of this refinancing. The economic crisis that affects Greece is superlative and the figures are eloquent: a spectacular rate of unemployment over 25%³ (over 29% for women and near 60% for young people), over 34% of households are under the poverty line, a public debt that reaches 175% of its GDP (some 317 billion Euros⁴), a fall in industrial production that despite it showed an annual growth of 1.7% in February this year⁵, it is still at 87% of its level of 2010, etc. Truly, Germany had a determined policy in face of the crisis, which had recessive consequences for the whole of the Eurozone and also for other countries of the EU, known as austerity policy. Nonetheless, the catastrophic economic and social crisis that Greece is going through is the expression of a much deeper crisis, the crisis of capitalism in its imperialist stage, of its decomposition. We will never insist enough on this, because it is a fundamental element from which to start to elaborate a revolutionary program. Since one thing is to confront the particular policies that a sector of imperialism applies to try to weather the crisis by the means it has at its reach and determined by the antagonisms with other imperialist states and by the relation of forces between fundamental classes, that is to say, to limit to just confront austerity policies with a program of defense of the Welfare State and in general to the intervention of the capitalist State in economy. Another very different one is to understand that under capitalism in its imperialist stage, there is no progressive way out from the point of view of the proletariat, neither to the future of humanity. The trends within the workers’ movement

sway –in the imperialist epoch of crisis, wars and revolutions- between revolution and counterrevolution. Any program that intends to achieve partial pseudo-reforms for the working masses without overthrowing the power of the bourgeoisie, by encouraging the bourgeois State’s intervention in economy, acts as a brake on the proletariat in its struggle for revolution. That is why, historically, Syriza, Podemos, the Front de Gauche, etc, are all counterrevolutionary leaderships that must be confronted by revolutionaries by revealing the profoundly anti-worker character of their program, which core is bourgeois statism. The revolutionary trend within the world workers’ movement is the one that struggles for an independent and internationalist policy of the proletariat, for the destruction of this bourgeois State and the imposition of a workers’ State. The range of organizations of the centrist Trotskyism comprises the currents that intend to erase the borders between these opposed and irreconcilable trends, contributing –with their theories and confusing (centrist) program- to the general confusion of aims that reigns among the masses and the vanguard in its initial experiences of struggle against the capitalist offensive. In their confusion, they end up turning –sooner than later- in planks of counterrevolutionary leaderships of new-style reformism without reforms, so the combat against centrist leaderships, specially in unions, is a fundamental task for revolutionaries. This task cannot be split from the central task: to regenerate an international communist vanguard that propose itself to overcome the crisis of revolutionary leadership, a task that can only be carried out through a bitter struggle for the leadership of the proletariat in the living process of class struggle. That said, we understand that the debt crisis is a secondary expression of a crisis that affects the capitalist system as a whole, which puts in the center of the scene the dislocation of the balance reached since the American imperialism became hegemonic at the end of World War II. This balance, established in the struggle between two systems, communism and capitalism,

is at the base of the construction of the “European project” and its later expansion –which incorporated Greece to the European Economic Community (EEC, embryo of the current EU) in the early ‘80s. The character of being weak links of the EU’s imperialist chain that have countries such as Italy and Spain, and also Greece –though with a smaller economy-, is given by the place these countries took in the international division of labor as members of the EU. From there, we can better understand the crisis of the Greek economy, historically very weak, with low productivity of labor and with a central role in the field of international trade –or what is now called logistics, that is to say, distribution and exchange over commodity and machines production. To date, Greece has the biggest merchant fleet in the World, although it has lost ground to the competition. Even though its GDP in percent shows a huge weight of tourism, its place in world economy is similar to a great distribution center. First, of commodities, through its fleets and ports; and then, of financial assets, becoming since its entrance to the EU a privileged door for the penetration of the imperialist financial system –European as well as American- into the Balkans and, therefore, in territories of the former workers’ States in the orbit of the USSR (Albania, Bulgaria, Romania) and the former Yugoslavia. In this role, the Greek capitalists have always present themselves as secondary partners of more powerful imperialist capitals, mainly USA. The entrance to the EU put the Greek bourgeoisie in an orbit nearer to Germany, France and England. The bursting of the economic crisis in Greece since 2008 is an expression of the international crisis and particularly of Germany incapability to lead the Euro bloc towards a competition that could beat its Yankee competitor. Of course this last project has much of utopia, being its foreseeable failure determined by the weakness of old Europe’s economy, fragmented in multiple national markets –which was a limit that precisely the imperialist EU aimed to overcome. This expansion of the territorialisation of capitalist profit finds today enormous obstacles.

The utopia of Europe's capitalist unification

The problem of Europe's capitalist unification was posed by the maturity of capitalism itself, which, by reaching its superior stage, imperialism, opened the door to what the III International called a critical epoch, leaving behind an organic epoch of more or less harmonic expansion that provided material foundations to workers' reformism in imperialist countries that obtained super profits with the exploitation of colonies and semicolonies. The burst of World War I marked historically the change of epoch, with the beginning of the epoch of imperialist decomposition, of crisis, wars and revolutions. In the face of this, a sector of the bourgeoisie as well as a sector of the social patriot wing of the II International led by Kautsky, began to theorize on the possibility of unifying Europe to avoid new wars. This was nothing but the war slogan of the warmongering imperialisms put in other terms, pacifist and utopian, based—in Kautsky's case—in his pseudo-theory of ultraimperialism, which is a theoretical reflex of the interests of labor aristocracy and union bureaucracy in their relationship with the State along the previous organic epoch. Not in vain the generals of the Entente had the motto of going to war to put an end to all wars, and the German monarchy that of "organizing Europe"... under the boot of Kaiser William. This debate would be taken to the revolutionary wing of the International that would later found the CI. Lenin, in 1915 would explain that although the slogan of the United States of Europe posed in the CC of RSDLP in its political aspect, combined with the struggle for the democratic republic against Russian, German and Austrian monarchies is correct; it is nevertheless unilateral, as it doesn't take into account the economic aspect, that should be found precisely in the passage to the imperialist stage. "From the standpoint of the economic conditions of imperialism—i.e., the export of capital amid the division of the world by the "advanced" and "civilized" colonial powers—a

United States of Europe, under capitalism, is either impossible or reactionary." ⁶ And he goes on: "A United States of Europe under capitalism is tantamount to an agreement on the partition of colonies. Under capitalism, however, no other basis and no other principle of division are possible except force. [...] and strength changes with the course of economic development. Following 1871, the rate of Germany's accession of strength was three or four times as rapid as that of Britain and France, and of Japan about ten times as rapid as Russia's. There is and there can be no other way of testing the real might of a capitalist state than by war. War does not contradict the fundamentals of private property—on the contrary, it is a direct and inevitable outcome of those fundamentals. Under capitalism the smooth economic growth of individual enterprises or individual states is impossible. Under capitalism, there are no other means of restoring the periodically disturbed equilibrium than crises in industry and wars in politics." ⁷ Therefore, there is no possibility of a real political unification of Europe under capitalism, given the anarchic character of production, the persistence of concurrence, now taken to the superior stage, between fractions and "gangs" in Lenin's words, of capitalists merged with national States. The capitalist unification of Europe under the utopia of peace, à la Kautsky, parts from the theory of the possibility of organizing and planning capitalist production at an international scale, denying the contradiction that tears apart the bourgeois society between social production and private appropriation of profit and between the international character of production and the persistence of national States — States that as such have a determined class character, they are bourgeois States. The contradiction between two antagonist classes in society—that reformists (complete counterrevolutionaries) dream of conciliating through the State or, better, through the European or worldwide Superstate— is what determines the fundamental trends of the present stage, the critical epoch, between proletarian revolution and bourgeois counterrevolution. That's

why, for Lenin, the superior stage of capitalism is also the epoch of transition from capitalism to a higher economic and social structure, socialism⁸. But this transition will not be pacific neither will it be able to be carried out from a simultaneous revolution in all the countries, given the primacy of the law of uneven development; "the socialist revolution, [which] should not be regarded as a single act, but as a period of turbulent political and economic upheavals, the most intense class struggle, civil war, revolutions, and counter-revolutions." ⁹ The text from Lenin that we quote, of 1915, doesn't have a permanentist perspective, and it was difficult indeed it had it when the seizure of power by the soviets in Russia was still not consummated, revolutionary event that allowed to found the III International and sophisticate the Marxist program from the experience of the first triumphant proletarian revolution and the problems of the international content of the dictatorship of the proletariat in its struggle to death against imperialist bourgeoisie. Nevertheless, and through the deepness of Lenin's dialectical thought, he gets to unveil the true character of the pacifist and conciliatory dream of Kautsky and co. "Of course, temporary agreements are possible between capitalists and between states. In this sense a United States of Europe is possible as an agreement between the European capitalists ... but to what end? Only for the purpose of jointly suppressing socialism in Europe, of jointly protecting colonial booty against Japan and America." ¹⁰ World War I was the midwife of the Russian Revolution. And while the leaders of world imperialism tried once again the utopia of peace between capitalist States with the League of Nations, all the strategic problems as regards the sharing out of the world among imperialist sides burst again, based on the defeat of the revolutionary proletarian movement in the '20s and '30s, in World War II. The rise of American imperialism and the consolidation of a counterrevolutionary bureaucracy in the USSR, as well as the defeat of the proletariat, marked the preparation, development and outcome of the War. The coming out

of the war was a moment full of hesitation for the victorious American imperialism, that found itself obliged to make a deal with the Stalinist bureaucracy to establish a relative equilibrium that would allow it to assume its tasks as hegemonic Power; hegemony based on the accumulation of capitals and fordism, that enabled a high labor productivity. What did, however, go through the whole post war period –which did not lack revolutionary processes such as the experience of the Greek civil war- was the struggle between two systems; which must not be confused with the vulgar conception of “Cold War” between two Powers in geo-political terms, but a struggle between the forces of capitalism and those of communism. Only within this struggle between two systems can it be understood the outcome of revolutions such as the Cuban, the Chinese or the Yugoslav, in which nationalist petty bourgeois leaderships were dragged to the orbit of the USSR. In this struggle between two systems the EU has its origin, through out the first germs that were the coal and steel agreements between France and Germany. A great support for the European unification came from the USA, that motorized capitalism’s recovery in Western Europe with the central aim of stopping the moving forward of communism. Thus, the Marshall Plan appeared and fordism was introduced into European capitalist production. But between political aim and economic measures there are mediations, which are workers’ parties and unions. The role played by the CPs, which collaborated with the economic reconstruction of the capitalist Europe, must not only be looked up in the pacts held by Stalin with Churchill and Roosevelt, but also in the possibility that one of the hypothesis posed by Leon Trotsky in his writings for the outcome of WWII would come true: that social contradictions would get into the bosom of bourgeois State. To Social Democrats and union bureaucrats, this will mean the materialization of their gradual reforms program within capitalism, through the rise of the Welfare State. From the point of view of revolutionaries and of the dictatorship of the proletariat, it is a

policy that tends to the conservation of capitalism, by imposing a Bonapartism based on State intervention in economy disguised in imperialist democracy, a political superstructure that will allow the recreation of capitalism’s social basis in an economically destroyed Europe. This social basis included a petty bourgeoisie artificially sustained by the State, and it will also incorporate a minority layer of the labor movement, a labor aristocracy fed with the crumbs of overexploitation, not only of the workers of some colonies and semicolonies in a World that is now dominated by the USA, but also of the increasing immigrant labor force. The policy of European unification in the EU rounds all this off. But we must be clear, as Lenin said, it is a temporary agreement between capitalists and between the European Powers only on the way to drawn together socialism in Europe. And all this, under USA’s attentive surveillance, with its military bases stationed in the continent; and their dollars putting the feeble European industrial machinery to work, seeking for a rebound to exorcize the ghost of communism that haunts the continent. The economic growth that allowed the reconstruction of Europe on the basis of an unprecedented destruction of capitals during the 6 years that the war lasted, to which there should be added years of civil wars in particular countries such as Spain (before WWII) or Greece (after), under the leadership of USA, enabled the strengthening of old bourgeoisies in the main European imperialist countries, specially Germany, and also France. These bourgeoisies then also betted to the second aspect of the agreements between capitalists and Powers that Lenin described, to defend together the positions in the world market of imperialist competitors, mainly USA and also Japan; not forgetting that the mortal enemy never ceased to be the USSR and communism. However, this agreement has always had a decadent character –given, of course, imperialist decomposition- but also because it was no longer about the struggle for colonies that Lenin talked about, but a concurrence controlled by USA’s hegemony -that in fact was shared with the USSR- and wi-

thin the framework of the struggle between two systems, a policy capable of canalizing the democratic aspirations of the nations in Asia and Africa, that achieved a purely formal political independence at the cost of a bloodbath on revolutionary processes in those countries. This opened the door for the USA of vast territories that before had been colonies of European countries. Nevertheless, the development of imperialist capitalism, that is to say, the deepening of its putrefaction, marked by the historical tendency of capitalism to the fall of profit rate, began to undermine the postwar equilibrium. The different sectors of financial capital were obliged to reinforce concurrence among themselves, and at the same time, attack the foundations of the class armistices crystallized in the Welfare States; all this within a period marked by class struggle, in which the action of reformist and bureaucratic leaderships prevented the proletariat from escaping the petty bourgeois movements that made their numeric weight prevail. Precisely in the decade in which Greece and other countries like Spain and Portugal entered the EU, it began the capitalist offensive determined by the crisis of the ‘70s and the attack on unions, with the defeat of great struggle of service sectors in USA and the miners of the NUM in the United Kingdom. This offensive ended up in a defeat of world proletariat, with the fall of the Berlin Wall and the dissolution of the USSR and the beginning of the assimilation of the countries of the Sovietic Glacis to capitalism. We remark this because, in a sense, in Greece the Welfare State as a policy of capitalists to integrate social contradictions to the State wasn’t completely developed. Previous to that, they had to recourse to the defeat of the struggle movement leaded by petty bourgeois leaderships like ELAS/KKE –born in the mid ‘60s- through a bloody military dictatorship, after which Greece ended up becoming member of the EEC and developing its particular two-party democracy, with the foundation of the PASOK as Social Democrat Party and its alliance with the union bureaucracy. Currently, the enormous limits that the

utopia of unifying Europe under capitalism is enduring have an expression in this diverse level of development of capitalist economies among imperialist powers, mainly France, Germany and a series of countries of second order but with a strong historical industrial development that are around those, and the periphery of Europe, in which Greece appears as one of the weakest links. This uneven development presents a combination of old economic structures –uneven and different-, that necessarily are unable to become a new bourgeois super State, and in fact the European Union is very far from being so. The old bourgeois States that come up with the rise of the bourgeoisie, and the stabilized in a “European System” through violent confrontations between both “imperialist sides” in two World Wars are still there. None of the European institutions has replaced them, although it is true that the sovereignty of small countries such as Greece is a fiction-as shown by Syriza’s impotence while seeking for a room for maneuver to negotiate with the most concentrated imperialist capital. But we must not be fooled by capitalist propaganda. This fact is not just because Germany now dominates Europe through the Euro, but also that –under imperialism- every bourgeois State is only a part of a chain of bourgeois States. Outside de EU, if Greece hypothetically took the option of reestablishing its old national currency –the Dracma-, as the Stalinist of the KKE and its satellites pose, along with the nationalist right, the Dracma would go back to playing a subordinate role in the monetary system guided by American imperialism. At its turn, the very possibility of the bankruptcy of the Euro exposed the hesitant nature of this monetary system. In any case, a sector of the Hellenic bourgeoisie would have the chance to negotiate in a little more direct way with the USA the terms of its minority position in the stake of imperialist business, just that. And all this over the foundation of new attacks against the labor movement, such as it would be an immediate and brutal devaluation. Some currents would tell us that we cannot say that the EU is just a temporary agree-

ment among capitalists and among bourgeois States because it has been there for decades. This abstract form of thought, measuring time by the calendar, rather than the rhythms of class struggle and economic phenomena, has nothing to do with Marxism. The temporary agreement is determined by the fact that it’s based on a temporary balance, the postwar equilibrium, that is in a deep crisis. Precisely today it begins to show the possibility of its fracture, that would mean the deepening of the confrontation between the antagonistic tendencies of revolution and counterrevolution, determined by the existence of social classes under capitalism. The leaders of the main European imperialist countries believed –at a certain time, specially after the fall of the Berlin Wall and the downfall of the USSR- that they could avoid the crisis of their bourgeois project by incorporating the territories of the former workers’ States to their supranational structure. In fact, imperialism was obliged to do this, but at the same time -with the incorporation of Eastern Germany and then, in a progressive way, the countries of the Glacis- it introduced greater contradictions to the EU, adding to the combinations of structures more or less uneven and different among more or less advanced countries from the capitalist point of view –each one with its unsolved historical problems- countries where capital had been expropriated, with very weak proto-bourgeoisies and proletariats that had gone through the historical experience of the proletarian dictatorship. Capitalism’s inability –in its imperialist stage- to create new States, let alone a new European super State, can be verified in reality, as well as the contradictions that it creates and the acceleration of the rhythms of the process of class struggle that the combination of these uneven and different structures induces. We are talking about how the “advance” of the EU towards the East is reaching an unbridgeable limit at the border with Russia, where it crashes with States in assimilation process to the imperialist system that the world crisis itself hinders, since the war burst in Ukraine, close to becoming an open civil war. At the same time,

the capitalist crisis forces the imperialist bourgeoisie to break the class balance by banishing the remains of the Welfare State, thus creating movements and labor struggles within the Powers, as shown by the strikes in late 2014 and early 2015 in Germany, Belgium and France, as well as the centrifuge processes in the countries that we have described as weak links. We reaffirm that the EU is mortally wounded, that its time is another, and that whatever new that comes out from it’s ruins will be determined by the storms of class struggle, that revolve in the confrontation between proletarian revolution and capitalist counterrevolution, between socialism and barbarism.

What is Syriza?

The initial fears of European government provoked by the victory of Syriza make sense, not because of the policy that Tsipras might deploy. Neither is it about –or at least not mainly- the electoral calculations that now PODEMOS might win in Spain, specially after its absolute domestication with the launching of its electoral platform before the Autonomic elections on May 25th 2015¹¹. What worry Merkel, Holland and co. is the historical process that European countries are going through, in which the decomposition of the State system goes further and further with quick steps. The mass processes given rise to by the implementation of cutbacks are being today channeled by these coalitions formed at the heat of these events, and are showing the crisis of the parties that supported the Welfare State, like the former Social Democratic parties. The destruction of the Welfare State performed by European imperialist governments, with their cutbacks and attacks to the gains of the working class, undermine at the same time the social armistices of the postwar period, going towards the breaking up of the balance between classes. Social Democracy, that held –along with some CPs- the leadership of mass labor organizations, was a necessary foundation to allow capitalists integrate –at the end of WWII- class contradictions to the State through the Welfare State. The role of managers of the

imperialist State, at first supported by labor aristocracy and labor bureaucracy, led Social Democracy to turn into Social Imperialist, leaning more and more on petty bourgeois layers fed by the Welfare State. Today, in the face of the crisis of the Welfare States and the postwar equilibrium that gave rise to them, the radical left coalitions such as Syriza long to go back in time to the previous situation, taking the place of the old Social Democracy but without having the material basis that allowed for that structural configuration. Here is the profoundly utopian nature of their project. Even in the case of Greece that, as we said above, never had a full Welfare State, and nevertheless its shadow incarnated in a "social" European Union –at the taste of well-thinking university little professors- is the one that hangs over the head of Tsipras. To go back to the old structures –before their evident historical crisis posed by imperialist decomposition- is a reactionary utopia indeed, that tears apart between imperialism's aggressive policy to subjugate the working class in its struggle for markets against its competitors and the resistance of a new generation of labor fighters. That is why the crisis of Social Democracy is concomitant to the rise of this kind of groupings like Syriza, Podemos, le Front de Gauche, etc., all with different programs but with a characteristic in common: their little or non existent organic relation with unions and the working class in general. The compromise of Syriza with the European Union is measured, rather than by its speeches, by its negative to make an appeal to the German proletariat to help Greece, a basic measure even for any progressive syndicalist. It is a policy that is perfectly completed by the one of the German bureaucracy, who tries to stabilize the "European system" while it negotiates wages downwards for its own fellow workers. An example: "Confirmation of German unions' lack of solidarity with other European unions and workers was apparently given by Berthold Huber in 2012, then General Secretary of IG Metall. First he blamed Spanish unions for the fate of the Spanish economy. Having obtained 'too high wage increases' they would be

responsible for undermining the competitiveness of Spanish companies. Then, he argued that the Spanish labour market should be restructured to re-gain competitiveness. Finally, he criticized the planned strikes in some Southern European countries for the European-wide trade union mobilization of 14 November 2012 as 'voluntaristic nonsense'.¹²⁷ In fact, the position of German labor aristocracy on which these kind of traitor bureaucrats lean on is relatively the most solid one, given the central role of the German State in the EU; but, nevertheless, it has seen how union leaders have been handing back their gains. There have come up, it's true, critical trends within IG Metall and the German union central, the DGB, that are in solidarity with the Greek workers, for example. However, they limit themselves to claim for less austerity. While a leadership capable of confronting the bourgeois State is not built up, that is to say, a revolutionary leadership and therefore internationalist, these kinds of critical wings within bureaucracy will be nothing but superstructural expressions ready to deceive the most combatant sector of the proletariat. A revolutionary caucus that develops its political activity in Greece should aim to struggle against the Statist program and ideology of Syriza and the whole of coalitions that try to make organic what is inorganic in order to strengthen bourgeois institutions in the face of the yet initial manifestations of the world crisis in the political field. The way is to develop revolutionary fractions within the proletariat, that is to say, in its mass organizations, the unions, to struggle for the organic unity and the revolutionary intervention of the European labor movement, beginning with its central ranks, the German and the French, who, in the struggle to recover centrals and unions from the hands of bureaucratic leaderships, confront the attack of imperialist States. This policy is opposed to these coalitions (Syriza, PODEMOS, etc.) that lack of any labor base and try to spread the democratizing ideology and the program of defense of the Welfare State that belong to the middle layers and labor aristocracy, from the streets to Parliament, trying to recreate

the foundations of the bourgeois State and put a break to its decomposition. A policy that is thoroughly counterrevolutionary.

PART 2: The programs of the left

Putting pressure on the bourgeois State

The victory of Syriza has meant a strong pressure for the groups of postwar-centrism. With the false argument of not breaking relations with the masses, which they intent to reach in a direct way, that means, erasing on the one hand any class delimitation and leaving aside on the other the struggle against mediations for the leadership of the proletarian vanguard, many of these currents have welcomed this election victory with more or less emphasis. They theoretically justify this by saying that Syriza's triumph would be an expression of "a turn to the left of the masses", and from there they derive their policy and program. We'll start by reviewing that there are currents that vindicate themselves part of the Trotskyist tradition that we cannot even consider as centrist since they are part of or support these kind of coalitions. Xekinima, the Greek group of the CWI-CIT, whose main currents are based in the USA and the UK, is not part of Syriza but it is member of "initiative of the 1000", conformed by the members of Syriza as well as the less successful in the ballots –but equally reformist-Antarsya coalition. We must say that the German group of the CWI-CIT, Sozialistische Alternative (SAV) is integrated to Die Linke, party conformed by former bureaucrats from the CPs of West and East Germany, including members of the former Stasi, the secret police of the Democratic Republic. Xekinima denounces that the leadership of Syriza looks for a compromise with the EU, but at the same time it promotes a policy of "bringing pressure from bottom-up" to change the government's course. "In this situation, the Syriza government could shift to the left and even to carry out policies which are far beyond what the Syriza

leadership now envisages.”¹³ That’s why it orientates itself towards mobilizing the masses, whose turn to the left has expressed in elections and from which it has won a “breathing space” (!) to force the next government make this hypothetic turn. “I think that a major effect of this government on society, in the first instance, will be to provide a breathing space for the working class and the social movements [...] Our main task is to do all we can to help build and strengthen the power and independent action of the working class. [...] The only solution to the crisis is the application of socialist policies and a socialist programme. Any government which doesn’t provide these policies will end up in crisis.”¹⁴ Let’s start by putting into question any breathing space for the labor movement, since—as we have explained above—the consequences of the crisis are still striking on the Greek proletariat, the only breathing space is the one that the bourgeoisie has won when the wave of strikes that went along the country in 2013 and 2014 was stopped by the expectations spread by the unions’ leaderships and—why not to say it—by these left currents like Xekinima, whose true role is to cover the left flank of Syriza’s government, current manager of the bourgeois State. And it is in the conception of State expressed by this leader—that is not exclusive to the CWI-CIT, but of the whole of the reformist left and even centrist Trotskyism—where the origin of the disastrous policy of these currents is found. Because it is IMPOSSIBLE that the bourgeois State implements “socialist policies and a socialist programme”, and even less that by the management of this or that “left” government the working class would be allowed to organize in an independent way. Because the bourgeois State in the stage of imperialist decomposition in which we are living intervenes in economy to disorganize the proletariat, to tie its organizations to the parties of bourgeois democracy and thus it tries to reestablish its balance. In this quest for a “breathing space for grass-root organization”, Xekinima becomes an instrument of the bourgeoisie to confuse the proletariat. And this is very clear when we read

the kind of “socialist policies” that they claim to Tsipras’s bourgeois government: “we call for Syriza to enact debt repudiation, to introduce a living wage and living pension, massive investment in welfare, health and education. A socialist programme also entails taking the big corporations into public ownership, under democratic working class control and management, for the benefit of the majority.”¹⁵ But that is not socialism, but a State-capitalist policy copied from the program of Social Democracy, today destroyed by the crisis. The policy from SEK, Greek section of the Cliffite International Socialist Tendency (IST), led by the British SWP, is not very different. The SEK (Socialism from bellow) is part of the anticapitalist coalition Antarsya, a reformist multi-colored grout that is only different from Syriza because it is a minority but that also seeks to be an electoral expression of the “social movements”, with an anti-austerity policy and a Stateist program, similar to the one advanced by Xekinima. Cliffism is characterized as a current that broke up with Trotskyism in the ‘40s, by its theory that the Workers’ States never existed and that what was achieved in the USSR was at the most a State capitalism. In this way, not only did it left aside the banners of defense of the USSR, but it also drew the guidelines of a gradual transition from capitalism to socialism that founds its current policy of broad coalitions to reinforce the “struggle from the bottom-up” and put pressure on the new government. It criticizes Syriza’s leadership and even its “left wing” for not wanting to develop the struggle against austerity in the work places, but at the same time it characterizes Syriza as left government on which a “workers’ opposition” must be exercised (!?). “The electoral victory of Syriza on 25 January dramatically changed the conditions for the labour movement and the left in Greece. The period is a big challenge. Syriza won the elections with a promise of hope. The challenge is whether this hope will continue. This perspective makes the need for a left working class opposition today greater than ever.”¹⁶ Beyond all denounces, the SEK orientates itself as an

opposition inside the regime, bowing down to the new government by vindicating its progressive character. Then, it details what they call “immediate measures” to give “a perspective to the struggles of the working class and its hopes”: “debt relief and cessation of payments; rupture with the EU, the ECB, the euro and the IMF; nationalisation of the banks under workers’ control; stopping privatisation and renationalising all the large state enterprises that have been privatised; prohibition of sackings; smashing racism and the fascists.”¹⁷ Once again, a program of State capitalism measures to which the SEK adds the question of workers’ control. The theoretical fundamentals are clear: there are no Workers’ States, but State capitalism that must be controlled by the workers’ rank-and-file; that is why the program focuses on putting pressure from the left to Syriza’s government and make the workers’ control go further, not understood as a method for the working class to gain its class independence by confronting the foundations of the capitalist State in production, but as a control measure from the rank-and-file under capitalism on the bourgeois State’s apparatus itself; we suppose that this is to—in an undetermined future—complete the transition to socialism, without proletarian dictatorship. The author clarifies: “Left opposition doesn’t mean just talking — it means activity to win back jobs, reopen public services, fight racism, and so on. It also means clear anti-capitalist politics raising the issue of workers’ control — something which frequently arises in the high-level political debates taking place in workplaces across Greece.”¹⁸ The article, published in the theoretical review of this current, ends as follows: “Through these steps we can ensure that the left government in Greece will not be the last, but can be continued.”¹⁹ That means, in an open capitulation to the bourgeois State, Syriza must be defended and at most extend its State-capitalist measures by exercising loyal “workers’” opposition and, thus, build up a party based on a lax coalition with counterrevolutionaries of all colors; nationally based, never international.

The entrism policy of the US and the Madelites' crisis

Since the French LCR –leading current of the United Secretariat of the IV International- voted to dilute itself in the NPA, the current that once was the main reference of postwar centrism internationally has ceased to have an independent life and its publications are sporadic and unclear. Its political and theoretical organs have been replaced by the opinions of university professors that are members of the NPA. This political dissolution has a foundation in the explicit abandonment of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat made by the LCR in the early 2000's, with the simple aim of not embarrassing the petty bourgeois public opinion and embark in a limitless electoral fever that led them to the creation of the NPA. The Mandelite theory is in a deep crisis, since its mentor developed the outline based on the postwar situation and the Welfare States – with Mandel's invention of the definition of Neocapitalism to describe the integration of an aristocratic sector of the proletariat to this State; and not only describe, but also adapt to it and thus reduce the program. Currently, the upsurge of the new coalitions of the so-called radical left have pushed a further step towards the political disaster of this current, when the groups linked to the US, Izquierda Anticapitalista and Revolta Global, from Spain and Catalunya respectively, have voted to dilute themselves in PODEMOS. Meanwhile, the Greek group OKDE-Spartakos was urged to vote for Syriza in 2012, which the group refused and generated a crisis with the leadership –if it can be called so- of the US. The “entrism” into PODEMOS has also generated crisis, with the expelling of militants and break ups in Andalucía and Madrid. However, the resistant elements that have refused the policy of entrism must yet process these experiences and break up with the classical Mandelite conceptions that lead them to keep on advancing the program that they share with the rest of the centrist currents rooted in statism, adap-

ted to the nowadays conditions of the “masses' consciousness”, and recover the concept of Dictatorship of the Proletariat long ago replaced by the one of “Socialist Democracy” and finally buried in order to create anticapitalist coalitions, impotent in the face of the challenges of the crisis.

Syriza and the “left turn of the masses”

The Morenoite currents that we will call classical, the LIT, whose main group is the PSTU from Brazil and the UIT/CI, continue repeating the old model of presenting a program with a few slogans with the aim of mobilizing undifferentiated masses –that actually make reference to movements in which the petty bourgeoisie is the center in a “permanent mobilization” to demand on the bourgeois State for supposedly progressive measures and thus make the consciousness of these masses move onward. The proletariat as a subject disappears in this model and it is replaced by the revolution itself, understood as a movement where another class, the middle class, prevails. The program is then a bridge “in consciousness”. Let's see what the UIT poses for Greece after the triumph of Tsipras: “Syriza 's victory shows that the masses are becoming radicalised and seek a change to the left. The massive vote for Syriza (Greek acronym for Coalition of the Radical Left) shows that there has been an electoral turn to the left. [...] The electoral victory of the left and the installation of a government headed by its leader Alexis Tsipras, open a new political stage in Greece. Millions of workers and youth have high hopes and expectations for change. Millions of workers in Europe and the world will also be expectant.”²⁰ In face of this turn to the left of the undifferentiated masses, where the workers appear as a passive subject of expectations, but detached of any reference to their role as a class in their relationship with the means of production, the UIT warns: “workers should not give any blank check to the new government. The Greek working people must continue to rely on their mobilization to enforce the changes to which they

aspire to end the adjustment and achieving a reversal of the situation. [...] In that sense we must point out that this would not be the way the new government of Syriza would adopt. Tsipras has committed to finish with the adjustments and to increase wages. But instead of suspending all debt payments, Tsipras and Syriza leaders speak, for example, of a “renegotiation” to keep paying in better conditions.”²¹ Then, the UIT affirms: “This is why we reaffirm that the need remains for the working class to be independent of these governments and to be a protagonist with its struggle, with its own organisations, with its mass meetings and by helping to form a new revolutionary socialist leadership in these processes.” But, which are the means and with what program will the proletariat be able to achieve that leadership? “In this path we call to the Greek workers, youth and the rank and file of Syriza, to its most militant sectors, to demand with their mobilization, for the government of Tsipras and Syriza to take a break with an economic model based on the indebtedness and looting, which breaks with the Troika and the EU and which ceases to pay the debt. And that an emergency plan be drawn including substantial measures to exit the crisis such as the nationalization of banks and the re-nationalization of all privatized enterprises and properties, among others. From there will come the mass of money to give fair wages and pensions, work and health and education.” After warning about Tsipras's intentions, the UIT orients its work to put pressure, once again, on the government of the bourgeois State so it carries out a Statist program. Of course, such program has nothing to do with socialism, and it disarms, let's not say the masses, since we are Marxists, but the proletarian vanguard in its preparatory tasks. The Morenoites' political line seeks to give a solution to the crisis of leadership from the political super-structure, it focuses in the management of the State, more or less beneficial to “the masses”, and it abandons class struggle within the heart of capitalism, production. It is here – although they might question the currents that support the government from the left-

where the UIT does not differ from them. And the worse thing is –by taking the problem of the leadership from the point of view of the consciousness of the masses in relation to the demands on the government and its eventual fulfillment, they recreate a purely national idea of leadership, when it's not there –as we defined above- where the way-out to the crisis is to be resolved, but in class struggle which has an international content. The policy of the LIT-CI also waters from the most orthodox Morenism, and limits itself to advance a program of State-capitalist measures to unmask the government, that appears not to have a determined class character, since it is asked to “break up with capitalists”. “In the face of German ultimatum, Syriza must apply its programme of writing off the debt and ask for a moratorium. And although Syriza has never discussed the possibility of leaving the Eurozone, it should embrace that option as the only way to apply their emergency programme against the social catastrophe. If the European imperialism replied blockading the financing of the Greek banks, the natural response is the nationalisation, and the control of capital transfers, to prevent money flight. But the option made by Tsipras is to preserve the property of these bankrupted banks, that survive as the parasites of the big sharks that pillage the country. In order to break with the dictates of the European imperialism embodied in the EU and the ECB, the government has to break the commitments to the Greek bourgeoisie, the coalition with the Independent Greeks party (ANEL) and with New Democracy, Tsipras' guest in the presidency as a symbol of his compromise with the status quo.”²²

The problem of the EU, the Euro and the workers' government

We wanted to leave these points for a special section since, as we've seen, the Morenoite currents, and not only them, demand on Tsipras's government to break up with

the EU and the Euro. The struggle against the EU and the break up of the Euro are in general terms correct propositions, as well as not paying the debt –this slogan is essential to confront the attack of imperialist bourgeoisie against workers. The problem is that to advance the slogan of breaking up with the Euro as a measure to be taken by the bourgeois State not only opens the door to any kinds of stage formulations within the revolution –“first, break up with the EU, then, fight for socialism”-, but it represents the danger of ending up creating expectations in a bourgeois way-out of coming back to the Dracma and establish a new balance in a new relationship with American imperialism based on an anti-labor attack in all the line through a devaluation. We have dealt with this points above. Having said that, what is the correct approach from the point of view of the interest of the world proletariat for this question? The only correct position is to consider the problem from the point of view of the dictatorship of the proletariat, which approaches the matter from the class point of view, in its economic foundations, in production. Otherwise, there is the danger of falling in abstract formulations of the problem of the socialist unity of Europe. There are two examples: on the one hand, FT/PTS, that because of its eclectic theory, always tend to hesitation. In previous articles, trying to start an argument and confronting with nationalist way-outs advanced not only by the reformist left but also the xenophobic right, the PTS defines a socialist unity of Europe without saying how this would happen. It is not clear whether the revolution would be simultaneous in every country, or if, otherwise, and this would be more serious, the workers' government should have to respect a pretended and non-existent foundations of economic and institutional unity inherited from the EU. This last conception is very dear to Social Democrats and, in fact, is Syriza's official line: to socialize the EU. In an article written in the election's eve, that took Syriza to power, the FT defines: “In face of the crisis of the Europe of capital and its governments, in order to overpass

the fragmentation of the labor ranks, fight xenophobia, anti-immigrants policies and to win over the middle sectors pauperized by the crisis, that on the contrary could become the social basis of the far right, it is necessary to put this struggle against governments, the “troika” and imperialist institutions of the EU in the track of imposing a workers' government that struggle for the Socialist United States of Europe. This is the only progressive way-out for the workers all over the continent.”²³ Let's analyze the formulation. Under the definition of Socialist United States of Europe, it is introduced the idea of multiple “workers' government's”, that will be in charge of struggling for theses Socialist United States. And this is always –as good centrists they are- “in the track of”, not as a practical task –either preparatory or immediate. The PO, that in time extols itself in a quite scholastic debate on authority quotes with the PTS to defend its electoral support to Syriza in 2012 –and that at its turn meant the crisis of its international group, the CRCI, because of the Greek's group, EEK, rejection to this capitulation- had previously posed a very similar definition to this last one of the FT/PTS. “The democratizing left doesn't propose the rejection of the debt nor the political break up with the European Union (and of the European Union) to build up a political union of a different social content: the Socialist United States of Europe (governed by workers), including the Russian Federation”²⁴. The rejection of the debt is correct, the break up of the European Union would be better defined as its destruction, but this would imply to pose something which the PO as well as the PTS refuse: the proletarian revolution, to conquer the Dictatorship of the Proletariat. And it is from here where we can better understand the debate on “workers' government” addressed in 2012 by these currents, even more after their electoral experience took them to get Parliamentary seats in Argentina. The workers' government, that would federate in a Socialist United States, is posed as a government of parties pretended as independent from the bourgeoisie but within the frame of the bourgeois State.

The governments are not the ones that moderate, but the States. This leap in the dark is the magical trick that the PO as well as the FT/PTS rehearse “to dialogue with the masses”, without being clear on the determined character of that “social content”, we assume that socialist, but, as we have seen above, doesn’t say anything if it doesn’t define as a class content. The Socialist United States of Europe are an empty slogan if it doesn’t come along with the tasks of socialist revolution, the destruction of bourgeois States members of the EU and the seizure of power that will rise the working class as ruling class. Without the dictatorship of the proletariat, that unity is a scam to end up supporting the idea that the workers can give a response to the crisis from political superstructures, from the intervention in the political regime, either elections with the slogan “workers’ government” or the pressure of the masses over institutions, leaving aside production and, therefore, unions as institutions that group the central contingents of the proletariat and that must broaden its functions, incorporate the great workers’ masses and confront the attacks of capitalists with a revolutionary policy.

The program and the revolutionary party have an international character

The international content of the revolutionary program is based on the character of the imperialist epoch, in the trends of the productive forces to break national borders and in the international nature of the proletariat as a class. The task of imposing the Socialist United States of Europe can only be posed, as Lenin said, through the method of the international socialist revolution, that is not a unique act, but it goes through a whole epoch of violent political and economic convulsions, of extreme class struggle, of civil war, of revolutions and counterrevolutions. Leaning on the experience of the Russian Revolution, processed in the programmatic conclusions of the III International and systematized

by the program of Trotskyism, we understand the Socialist United States of Europe as the political form of the dictatorship of the proletariat, and we can only conceive them in that way. It is the experience of the federation left by the USSR, that according to the definition of the III International, it is not a State but a system of States. The dictatorship of the proletariat, which content is international, will need to broaden its productive base, not only developing productive forces as it confronts the siege of the bourgeois world, but extending its material base by incorporating the growing battalions of the world proletariat. This doesn’t mean that the Greek workers couldn’t do anything until the more concentrated battalions of the German proletariat intervene, all on the contrary. The struggles that our capitalist enemies present to us are unavoidable, since the epoch of imperialist decomposition poses the matter of our classes’ survival. Some currents, for instance, justify their adaptation to the Greek petty bourgeois sectors by the relatively little importance of industry in the country. This is unbearable for a Marxist, because we don’t consider ourselves cadres of a national party, but cadres that have the huge task of reconstructing the IV International. It is necessary that the best elements of the Greek proletarian vanguard assemble, clarify their positions in the face of bourgeois policies, as well as those of their agents within the labor movement –union bureaucracy- and the siren calls of the counterrevolutionaries of reformism without reforms and centrists that cover up their left flank. Not only because in that way they will be better positioned to defend themselves from the attacks of imperialist bourgeoisie, but also because thus they will be able to make an appeal for the gathering together of the European proletariat to confront the bourgeoisie and their States. The task of revolutionaries is to fight for the regeneration of a communist vanguard, not only at a European level, but worldwide, drawing the lessons of current class struggle, from the experiences that a new generation of fighters develops. The task of the moment is the struggle for the reconstruction of

the IV International based on the theory of the permanent revolution and on the program of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Endnotes

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7. Idem
8. See Lenin, Imperialism, the highest stage of capitalism (a popular outline). January-June, 1916
9. Lenin, On the slogan for a United States of Europe.
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22. Ricardo Ayala y Felipe Alegría. Ante la capitulación de Syriza al chantaje de la UE. 28/02/2015 [On Syriza's capitulation to the EU blackmail. There is no way out but canceling the debt immediately. Translated 03/05/2015]

23. Statement of the FT-CI. "Frente a las elecciones griegas y las ilusiones en Syriza." January, 23 2015.

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