

Movement for the
Refoundation of the Fourth International
Document Series

**Volume I:
The World Capitalist Crisis
and the Fourth
International**



**Declarations from the MRFI
and major articles from
its sections**
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THE MOVEMENT FOR THE REFOUNDATION OF THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

Editor's note: This document serves as a brief history of the MRFI. It is from the document "What Is the SWL and What It Stands For" published by the Palestinian section of the MRFI. This details the organizational history and the basic positions of the MRFI. The Socialist Workers League is the Palestinian section of the Movement for the Refoundation of the Fourth International (MRFI). It was created on the assumption that the deepening economic crisis and the growing radicalization of the masses all over the world create the conditions for an international regroupment that will enable a number of organizations which today defend centrist positions to join our international tendency on a principled revolutionary basis as a first step towards the refoundation of the Fourth International.

The historical origins of the movement go back to the bilateral discussions between the ITO (International Trotskyist Opposition) and the Argentinean Partido Obrero (Workers Party) in Detroit, US as well as between the ITO and the Greek EEK (Workers Revolutionary Party) in 1996. But it was in Genoa on March 1997, during the revolt in Albania, that a proposal was made by the Partido Obrero to hold a meeting in which were present the PO, the EEK, the Bolivian Oposición Trotskista del POR, the PCO of Brazil, En Defensa del Marxismo of Spain, the Italian Proposta, Trotskyist League (US), and other ITO supporters from Britain, Denmark, Germany and India.

They issued a document declaring that the United Secretariat of the Fourth International has abandoned the revolutionary program and therefore it is necessary to defeat it politically. The following four principles were proclaimed as bases for the refoundation of the Fourth International:

1. The recognition of the need to struggle for the world socialist revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat.
2. The opposition to the Popular Front policy, i.e. to a block of proletarian and "progressive" bourgeois parties tying the hand of the workers and turning them into servants of capital.
3. The need for a social and political revolutions in the former Soviet Union, Eastern Europe, China, Vietnam, North Korea and Cuba.
4. The need to develop an anti-capitalist strategy based on transitional demands and methods.

The organizations belonging to the MRFI met again in Sao Paulo, Brazil, in November 1997 and issued a new document stating that imperialism has no solution for the international economic and political crisis, which cannot

but deepen until it is solved by the working class through an international socialist revolution and the establishment of a planned economy on a global scale. The document also warned that the bourgeoisie is turning towards a popular front policy in order to defeat the socialist revolution.

The Third International Meeting took place in Buenos Aires in May 1998 calling for the immediate refoundation of the Fourth International in order to provide a revolutionary way out of the present crisis. As a first step towards this goal a call was issued for an international meeting of left parties and groups struggling for the socialist revolution, in order to discuss the program and the organizational forms required for the task. The following organization signed the Buenos Aires declaration, called For a Plan of Action to Refound the Fourth International: International Trotskyist Opposition (ITO), Workers Revolutionary Party (EEK, Greece), Workers Party (Partido Obrero, Argentina), Revolutionary Marxist Association "Proposta" (Italy), Partido da Causa Operaria (Brazil), Oposición Trotskista del POR (Bolivia), Partido de los Trabajadores (Uruguay), Trotskyist League (United States) and Colectivo En Defensa del Marxismo (Spain).

On March 1999, an International Conference of workers and class struggle left took place in Athens, as had been decided previously in Buenos Aires in the Third International Meeting. There, apart from all the organizations and parties who had signed the Genoa Declaration on the Refoundation of the Fourth International, participated also a delegation from the CWI, Valter Pomar, vice chairman of the PT of Brazil in personal capacity, Voix des Travailleurs (a group expelled from Lutte Ouvrière which later dissolved itself in the United Secretariat section in France, the LCR) the Marxist Workers League of Turkey that was not yet a part of our movement but joined it immediately afterwards thanks to the Athens Conference, Rizgari from Kurdistan and a number of far left organizations from Greece (NAR, Left Regroupment—splits from the Communist Party of Greece; sympathizers of the United Secretariat and the Morenoist Liga Internacional de los Trabajadores, etc.).

On January 2000, the Balkan Socialist Center "Christian Rakovsky" was founded following the NATO war against Yugoslavia and EEK's political intervention in Belgrade during the bombings. The Partido Obrero of Argentina and the MWL of Turkey took an active part in it. The other organizations of our movement sent greetings and a series of organizations from the Balkans and Russia participated.

On May 2000 the Fourth International Meeting, together with an International Seminar on "Marxism at the Beginning of the 21st Century" took place in Buenos

Aires where a Plan of Action for the Refoundation of the Fourth International was decided and a Coordination Committee was elected. On the basis of this Plan we intervened in Prague, on September 2000 in the mobilization against Capitalist Globalization and later in Genoa on July 2001. On the same political basis EEK intervened also in the last mobilization of that international movement, in Brussels, on December 13-15 2001, and our movement is preparing its intervention in the center-left-led Forum of Porto Allegre on January 31-February 2002.

On March 2001, the Second Balkan Conference of the Rakovsky Center took place in Athens, dedicated to the interrelated problems of the Balkans and the Middle East, where for the first time revolutionaries from Palestine took part and later founded the SWL of Palestine. The Conference reiterated the main conclusions of the previous meetings and issued a programmatic document containing an analysis of the situation in the region and the main revolutionary demands arising from it.

Important documents of our movement are: the Genoa 1997 Declaration, the Declarations of the International Meetings of 1997, 1998 and 2000, the Declaration against the NATO war in Yugoslavia on May the 1st 1999, the Statement on the Intifada on October 2000, the Declaration of the Coordination Committee against the imperialist war in Afghanistan on November 2001. The latter called for the revolutionary defeat of imperialism and the revolutionary defense of Afghanistan, including an anti-imperialist united front with the Taliban but without granting it any political support and emphasizing that only the working class under a revolutionary leadership is able to defeat imperialism.

With the beginning of the revolution in Argentina, in which our sister organization Partido Obrero plays a central role, the contacts between the different organizations became even closer and the perspective of constructing a world revolutionary party by refounding the Fourth International seems closer than ever.

DECLARATION ON REFOUNDING THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

Genoa, Italy
March 11, 1997

The changes presently occurring in the world situation, specifically the deepening of the world capitalist crisis and the popular upsurge, oblige all organizations claiming the heritage of Trotskyism to refound the Fourth International to offer the workers' vanguard of the world a revolutionary Marxist orientation and organization.

The United Secretariat of the Fourth International (USFI), which claims to be the continuity of the Fourth International, is not the Fourth International and cannot be reformed into the Fourth International. The refounding of the Fourth International requires the political defeat of the USFI.

In our opinion, the basis for discussing the refounding of the Fourth International should underline

- 1) the validity of the struggle for the world socialist revolution and the proletarian dictatorship,
- 2) the need to reaffirm the characterization in the Transitional Program of the popular front as a bloc with the "democratic" bourgeoisie which reduces the party of the proletariat to a support for capital,
- 3) the necessity of the social and political revolution in the former Soviet Union, Eastern Europe, China, Indochina, North Korea, and Cuba, and
- 4) the elaboration of an anticapitalist strategy based on transitional demands and the transitional method.

Associazione Marxista Rivoluzionaria Proposta (Italy)
International Trotskyist Opposition
Partido Obrero (Argentina)
Partido da Causa Operaria (Brazil)
Trotskyist League (USA)

FOR THE REFOUNDATION OF THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

Sao Paulo, Brazil
November 7, 1997

I.

World capitalism finds itself today at an extraordinary impasse. During the last weeks the generalization of the international financial crisis has destroyed the idea that so-called "neoliberalism" would be capable of solving the contradictions of capitalism for a long historical period. The collapse of the (degenerated) workers' states of the ex-Soviet Union and Eastern Europe had injected into the capitalists a great dose of confidence, which was the political basis for the uncontrolled financial speculation of the last years. The worse and worse crashes of the stock markets, the flight of capital, and the political crises that derive from this clearly show the illusory basis of the whole process. In only one decade, "victorious neoliberalism" has exhausted its possibilities and is incapable of realizing its promises of peaceful and progressive capitalist development.

This crisis is rooted in the nature of capitalism and its period of irreversible historical decline. The misnamed "thirty glorious years" actually expanded the parasitic basis of finance capital and exacerbated the uneven development of its international system, which had already led it to two world wars. In the midst of the crisis, capital tried to escape its mortal contradiction by means of "globalization." This led to the virtual elimination of a series of national economies, from then on linked to the dollar, the international reserve currency.

The typical characteristics of imperialism—exacerbated uneven development and the oppression of backward countries—have led to paroxysm. Speculation and monstrous debt reveal the contradiction between the dominant position of the US in the world and the world economy itself. The crisis of overproduction worsens international competition, leading to devaluations, one after another, which explode the "magic of dollarization." In the framework of "globalization" one can see the clear tendency toward the fragmentation of the world market, exacerbated by interimperialist rivalry.

The generalization of the financial crisis reveals the purely speculative basis of the current process. The devaluations of currencies and capital challenge the privatization programs in the capitalist states, the backward countries, and the former "socialist countries." The crisis of the stock markets and the flight of capital cause the loss in only a few hours of all that was accumulated in years of privatization and spoliation. The perspective is of economic deflation and depression in the long run. The collapse of the Albanian "pyramid" was

only the first signal of the collapse of the Wall Street pyramid.

World capitalism lacks a progressive, stable way out, even in the short run. Under pressure, it can only shift the burden of its contradictions to the backs of the workers—through unemployment, labor "flexibility," wage cuts, and cuts in public services and social expenditures—without managing thereby to find a way out of its crisis.

The capitalist decomposition reveals the actuality of world proletarian revolution. For workers' resistance, the period of partial or short-term solutions is past. Only international action of the workers' organizations against unemployment and superexploitation opens a realistic perspective. The reorganization of world economy on a new social basis is posed not only as an historical necessity but also as an immediate one.

II.

The destruction of the bureaucratically deformed workers' states hypothetically might allow the imperialists to go far toward stabilizing their system by completing the restoration of capitalism in these countries and converting them into superexploited semicolonies. But there are insuperable obstacles to this, as there are to the other hypothetical elements of imperialist restabilization: "restructuring" in the advanced capitalist countries, neoliberal penetration of the semicolonies, attenuation of interimperialist rivalries through global agreements on the free flow of goods and capital, and exploitation of the technological advances of the last 25 years.

The imperialists would like to complete the process of capitalist restoration by converting the former workers' states into semicolonies. But they do not have the economic or political-military means to do so, apart from the more advanced Eastern European countries.

The old and new elites of the former workers' states would like to complete the process of capitalist restoration by converting themselves into a financial oligarchy atop new imperialist states.

The perspective for the former Soviet Union, Eastern Europe, China, and the rest of the former workers' states is one of deepening crisis and increasing worker resistance, as the process of capitalist restoration continues.

While assessments may differ as to how far the process of capitalist restoration has gone in these countries, it is clear that in most of them—certainly in the former Soviet Union and China—the process cannot be completed peacefully. Realizing the ambitions of either the imperialists or the rising capitalist classes in these countries would require violence on a terrible scale—

military dictatorship, fascism, national conflicts, and war.

The imperialists had hoped that capitalist restoration in the former workers' states could help restabilize their system. But the Stalinist regimes of these states were an important element in the equilibrium established after the second world war. Their destruction has had and will have a profoundly destabilizing effect on world capitalism.

III.

The whole period of neoliberal attacks in the 1980s and 1990s is closed with the total economic and political failure of neoliberalism. As a result, a series of right-wing neoliberal governments have fallen, including Thatcherism in Britain, which initiated the neoliberal offensive internationally.

All forms of political domination by capital face deep crisis. The old bureaucratic ways of mediating the contradictions between capital and labor through reformist and/or Stalinist intermediaries have collapsed. The bankruptcy of Stalinism after 1989 is irreversible. Social democracy, as well, is disintegrating politically, as the material basis for Keynesian policies and reformist concessions has been destroyed by the crisis.

Out of this historical impasse of capitalism and the inability of the bureaucracies to fulfill their role in the old ways, capitalism turns to new forms of political control of the masses. Class collaboration again is vital for its ends. It is mobilized in new combinations of the "popular front" type under the misleading name of a "center-left" coalition.

This center-left is very different from the political blocs operating with the same name in the postwar period. Then their maneuvers were based on Keynesian measures and concessions. Now there is no Keynesianism or reformism, but the most brutal measures of neoliberalism, which must be imposed on the masses by governments of their own political representatives.

These new popular fronts of class collaboration have also another qualitative difference with the popular fronts of the past. Then they were connected in one way or another with the Stalinist bureaucracy of the USSR, and they usurped the prestige of the October Revolution to tie the working class to the bourgeois order and crush its revolutionary aspirations.

After the fall of the Berlin wall, the implosion of the Soviet Union, and the open turn of the Stalinist bureaucracies to capitalist restoration, the new "center-left" popular fronts not only have no connection or reference to the October Revolution, but, on the contrary, they organize their betrayals in the name of the "failure of the October Revolution and communism," of "the closing of the historical cycle opened in 1917," etc.

In this ideological effort, they have the direct help not only of imperialism and of the restorationist-bureaucratic forces, but also of demoralized elements of the former "far left" in the capitalist world, moving rapidly to the right.

"Pure democracy," as a fraudulent alternative to the so-called "failure of communism," becomes a rallying cry of counterrevolution. The goal of the bourgeois proponents of democracy is not a supra-class democratic ideal, but to paralyze the working class, to undermine popular resistance, to impose the neoliberal counterrevolution against the living standards and social rights of the working masses.

The popular front of today, in contradistinction to the past, is an openly anticommunist "social-neoliberal" agency of imperialism.

As neoliberalism itself has failed to confront the economic crisis, so the center-left popular front is condemned to failure as well. The crucial question is if it will be defeated by the socialist revolution, or extreme right-wing and fascist-like forces will take advantage of its bankruptcy.

IV.

It is urgent for the international working class in this new world situation to arm itself with a revolutionary organization, strategy, program, and theory on a world scale. The challenge on the eve of the millennium in the new world historical conditions can be met only by a workers' revolutionary International.

Such an International can be built only on the continuity of the October Revolution and revolutionary Marxism. That is, it can be only the Fourth International, incorporating all the experiences of this century.

Fighting to supersede the past in a dramatically new world situation, we call for an international campaign throughout the world working-class movement for an international conference to discuss the immediate refounding of the Fourth International.

Movement for the Refoundation of the Fourth International

Workers Party (Argentina)

Revolutionary Marxist Association Proposta (ITO, Italy)

Workers Revolutionary Party (Greece)

Party of the Workers' Cause (Brazil)

Workers Party (Uruguay)

International Trotskyist Opposition (UK)

Trotskyist League (ITO, USA)

Trotskyist Opposition (Bolivia)

"En Defensa del Marxismo" Collective (Spain)

France: Electoral Agreement
Lutte Ouvrière–Revolutionary Communist
League

THE REVOLUTIONARY FRONT OF PROFESSOR JAMES TOBIN

By Jorge Altamira

Prensa Obrero¹ 612, December 17, 1998

Is it possible that two organisations that claim to be Trotskyist (at least for the time being), could subscribe a political agreement without the appearance a single time of the expressions socialism, workers government, direct action or expropriation of the capitalists?

Because this is what has just happened in France, not in an underdeveloped semi-capitalist country, between the Ligue Communiste Revolutionnaire (Revolutionary Communist League) and Lutte Ouvriere (Workers Struggle). The perspective of socialism and of the dictatorship of the proletariat is repudiated in a continent, Europe, where the high rate of unemployment, the continuous sackings, the closures of enterprises, the mergers, the monopolies and falling productivity, and the international crises and the wars, show the historical exhaustion of capitalism in a palpable form and its unstoppable march towards barbarism.

The "Agreement on a Draft Profession of Faith" published in simultaneous form in the press of these organisations, has as its objective the formation of a common list for the European parliamentary elections that will take place next March. They hope, in this way, to obtain a higher percentage than 5% of the vote in order to "move the political panorama of the French left" that is to say, the Communist Party and the environmentalists. As much by its program as by its political objectives, the agreement is in consonance with the politics of the majority of the League, favourable to abandoning all reference to communism and regrouping the whole of the left under a democratic banner. An analysis of the 'Profession of Faith' uncovers something even worse: the enormous confusionism that reigns in the so-called European far left.

"DEMOCRATIC EUROPE"

In the first point of the 'Profession...', "a Europe of democratic rights, where the populations control the decisions" is demanded. This exposition alludes to the circumstance that in the European Union, elected authorities do not exist because the European parliament lacks real attributions and the political-economic

administration falls on a Commission, responsible to a Council of Ministers, while the authorities of the European Central Bank enjoy an immovability that makes them immune even to the directives of the governments that compose the Union.

But what would be this "democratic Europe", which the French 'Trotskyists' demand, but a replica of their respective national, imperialist states, "where the populations control the decisions", through the universal vote, of their elected representatives, of their constitutional tribunals and of their judges and magistrates? The British 'Europhobics' that leads Margaret Thatcher also accuse this Europe of Maastricht of staining the sacrosanct sovereignty of the House of Commons and of violating British democratic practices.

In the same vein of formal democratism, which ignores inequality between the classes and social exploitation, the 'Profession ...' demands "a Europe of real, social and civic equality". But social equality is a countersense under capitalism and civic equality is a synonym of discrimination, since it supposes the demand for citizenship in order to exercise political rights, which is an attack on immigrant workers of other nations. Curiously, the editors of the 'Profession ...' do not seem to realize the opposition that there is between the demand for "citizenship", which they make at every opportunity they have, and the right to the vote for all those that live in the country. Citizenship discriminates (according to national borders). If all these positions of the 'Profession ...' are not a fiction, then they testify to an insuperable confusion.

Equally revealing is the posing of "a Europe that would annul the debts of the Third World, already several times paid to the bankers, a Europe that would plan development with the countries of the Third World with the objective of satisfying the fundamental needs of all."

That is, that a Europe that has not expropriated capital should only renounce to the collection of credits of a public character, not the private ones, and if the later [is] included it should compensate the bankers for an equivalent indemnification at the expense of the Treasury. If it did not happen thus, one would be violating the "democratic rights" of the bankers and one would be appealing to methods characteristic of a proletarian dictatorship, something that the signatories of the 'Profession ...' reject with all their desires. In the framework of a capitalist Europe, the proposal to "plan with the Third World" would have an unconcealed imperialist character, because there would not be a social relationship of equality between the oppressor and the oppressed. So that the future voter does not have to harbour doubts on the social character of the 'Profession ...', in the paragraph that calls for a stop to the privatisations of "quality" public services, it is

¹ Prensa Obrero (Workers Press) is the newspaper of the Partido Obrero (Workers Party) (Argentina).

proposed to "extend the public sector to the companies that benefit from the elementary necessities of the population." But the "extension of the public sector" is nothing other than nationalisation or capitalist statisation, that is to say, that, on the one hand, it should be compensated according to the present value of the invested capital (i.e. paid for by the workers), and on the other, it should be in consonance with the operation of the whole of the capitalist system, including the feasibility of that compensation.

CAPITULATION IN FRONT OF MAASTRICHT

The proposal of "a democratic Europe" is nothing other than the intent of giving an elective content to the institutions of the European Union, which were designed in the treaties of Maastricht and Amsterdam (monetary union and stabilisation pact). This is what there is behind the repeated formula of the League about "breaking relations with the liberal logic" of those treaties. It is for this reason that there is not in any part of the 'Profession ...' demands referring to the national states, as if these are suppressed already by those agreements. The reality, however, is the contrary; the European treaties are for the time being purely artificial creations in order to organize a common politics between the main European monopolies, while the national states continue being the true framework of the class struggle in Europe. With reference to the artificial nature of Europe, the 'Profession ...' does not have any slogan of power, in fact because it does not exist as a political reality, that is to say, superior to the national states and governments. This indicates that the 'Profession ...' has a markedly constitutionalist character, which is to say, that it is a profession of faith about an eventual European democratic state. But the reason why it does not have slogans of power; the reason why it does not pose: down with the capitalist states or out with the governments of class collaboration or that the workers' parties break relations with the capitalists and their governments; the reason of this, is that the so-called French far-left has escaped from the reality of national states and accepted without saying a single word the European fiction, which does not have any other state than the national states which compose it.

We thus have the paradoxical result that the champions of the struggle against the treaties which define the European Union, at the same time accept this artificial union as an accomplished fact and deny the fundamental political reality, that is to say, of power, that it continues to be the national states. This permits the 'Profession ...' to avoid the central question of current European politics, which are the centre-left popular front governments. To this point, the 'Profession ...' does not dedicate one single line, in spite of claiming to be an international political current whose founding program assures that the popular fronts are a last resource of imperialism against the proletarian revolution. The text criticises vaguely the French government of Jospin, because "it multiplies the

gifts to the large employers" but at no point does it characterize it as counterrevolutionary, as imperialist, neither does it call on the socialist and communist parties to break relations with the capitalists (the right-wing Chirac continues to be president of the Republic) and form a workers' government.

It is precisely this capitulation in the face of the accomplished fact of the European treaties that the main mentor of the League expounded in December in *Le Monde Diplomatique*. "It is the moment for renegotiating (these treaties), Daniel Bensaid says, now or never. If not for what reason does it serve the left and their trident of governments in Europe?". In this way, the call that the "Trotskyists" made to the counterrevolutionary workers parties of Europe (SP and CP) is: renegotiate Maastricht. A true shame.

REVOLUTIONARIES OF THE TOBIN TAX

Last September, *Rouge*, the newspaper of the League, announced its adhesion to an international campaign in favour of a tax on the speculative movement of capital, popularly known as the Tobin tax, by its author, a Nobel Prize winner for economy. This happened when from numerous capitalist sources, including the World Bank, the international crisis was attributed to the "volatility" of "short term capital". Well, this tax is also the axis of the position of the 'Profession ...'.

It is clear that a tax on speculative capital supposes the preservation of the regime of capital. But a Tobin tax would not solve any problem of the masses either because the tax would be transferred in the end to consumption, or because it would attenuate the movements of capital. In this last case, financial "exuberance" would be replaced by a "drought" of the same type, which would not be more than the other face of the crisis, in the form of a widespread deflation. It is not superfluous to indicate that the international speculators could benefit directly by this tax, especially after the speculative "volatility" causes the crash of one of the main Funds applied to the speculation, the Long Term Management Capital.

The newspaper of the League assures us that "the governments of the industrialized countries are at a crossroad [because] they find it difficult to break relations with the dogmas of liberalism in spite of the fact that they understand that state intervention is necessary in order to avoid the disorders." That is to say that the capitalists are governed by their adherence to an ideology to the detriment of their interests. For this reason *Rouge* calls for "breaking relations with liberal dogma" (5/11). It acts as counsellor of imperialist, predatory, speculative capital.

The article in question looks truly ridiculous when it predicts that the centre-left European governments will not impose a reduction of interest rates due to their

linkage to "liberal logic" or because they gave sovereignty on monetary politics to the European Central Bank. Three weeks later, exactly, the above mentioned bank with the respective governments announced a spectacular reduction of rates, in full correspondence with the interests of capital although not with the 'logic' of the French 'Trotskyists'.

The Tobin tax of French 'Trotskyism' is not a mere shot to the air; it is a program. Bensaid says clearly: "A true politics of reforms would require wide fiscal reformation, a serious tax on accumulated fortunes, left in speculative fallow, a drastic fall (sic) in the sales tax, a progressive tax on capital, in order to redistribute wealth without 'feeding' demand." It is a proposal of capitalist administration, not only because the workers government is not posed but also because it does not even touch the dominance of capital. In one or another form, to a greater or lesser degree, this "true politics" is in validity in the capitalist countries, in particular in the United States (where there is no sales tax, where the profits from capital are taxed and where a progressive income tax exists). Bensaid is conscious of what he proposes, for this reason he talks of "reforms"; for this reason he rejects like the plague the possibility of "violent incursions into the right of property" (Trotsky) or confiscatory tax to capital (Communist Manifesto). It is located even behind the radical extremes of Lord Keynes, who in his "Treaty" foresaw the inability of the private capitalist to maintain productive resources in full use. The "radical" slogan of Bensaid is: "to oppose citizens to the market" (Le Monde Diplomatique).

There is nothing innocent in all this, because it is a matter of erasing the class position. Last March, Lutte Ouvriere said of the League that "neither morally nor politically, did it claim to be of communism". The 'Profession of Faith' is a confirmation of this characterization, only now Lutte Ouvriere has entered into it.

REFOUND THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

The agreement between Lutte Ouvriere and the League has been well received in most of the so-called far left of France. But not with good reasons. It ignores the program of the agreement, it is unable to criticize it, nor even to begin to see the deep incomprehension that it has of the crisis that has opened up between the fiction of European unity, on one hand, and the national capitalist states, on the other. It greets it because it sees it as a step towards discussion, towards "union in diversity", towards the "decline of sectarianism".

But as much in France as in Argentina this form of reasoning denounces the groups that have failed politically; that have lost their tradition; that could not vindicate program or trajectory; and that want all the others to begin again starting from the mediocre level to which they have fallen.

Lutte Ouvriere has every right to establish an electoral agreement with the League, but not to prostitute the revolutionary program, that is what the League has already done a long time ago and which it ratified again on the occasion of this agreement. Because in fact the Central Committee of the League approved a resolution by 40 votes that established that the agreement with LO is inscribed in the framework of orientation of its last congress, where the majority voted to change their name to that of Revolutionary Democratic Left. That is to say, on the road of complete liquidation of the Fourth International.

Lutte Ouvriere should reject this anti-socialist agreement and vote for the realization of an international congress to refound, immediately, the Fourth International.

WHAT IS THE EUROPEAN UNION? THE PROGRAM OF THE FRENCH TROTSKYISTS

By Jorge Altamira

Presna Obrero 613
December 24, 1998

In the previous edition of Prensa Obrera, we denounced that the electoral union of the two main organisations that claim be Trotskyist in France has as base a program that tries to overcome the world crisis by means of a tax to the movement of the short term financial capital and other dispositions which prevent the tax evasion or the black economy. In the framework of a "democratic Europe", it is to say of an imperialistic Europe governed by representative institutions, the program of the agreement of Lutte Ouvriere (Workers Struggle) and the Ligue Communiste Revolutionnaire (Revolutionary Communist League) is circumscribed to a mere 'tax reform'. As was to be expected, this political content immediately was greeted by the MAS of Argentine and received with shameful affection by the rest of the native Trotskyist spectrum.

"TAX COUP"

The authorship of the proposal corresponds to an "Association for the Tobin tax of aid to the citizen". It was constituted on June 3 last as a consequence of an initiative launched by the monthly Le Monde Diplomatique in December of 1997. The LCR shows it "as a contribution to the development of the democratic resistance to the neoliberal dictates", this began by judging it "a profound critique of the process of liberal globalisation of the economy ..." (Rouge, 18/6)². That is to say that, in opinion of a Trotskyist newspaper, a monthly of French capitalism has removed the class mask of the so-called 'globalisation'. It is lamentable, then, that it does not propose its publication as appendix of the Marx's Capital or the Lenin's Imperialism. Now, it will be necessary wait to know the opinion of the League on the latest book of the speculator George Soros, in which he proposes a limitation on short term capitals by means of instruments not only tax but also legal (exchange control). The owner of all shopping centers of Buenos Aires and a good part of the Patagonia do not have objections about claiming measures even more energetic than those posed in Le Monde Diplomatique and the whole of the French Trotskyism.

² Rouge (Red) is the main publication of the misnamed Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire (Revolutionary Communist League), the French section of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International.

The LCR does not scrimp words in their support to the program of the Association. It says that, in accordance with the estimates of this, 100,000 million dollars could be collected "even if the tax rate is extremely low (0.,05%)". That is to say, that the price to reforming the "liberal globalisation" would be extremely cheap. Even, the League says, "the proposal presents the double advantage of which it cannot be denigrated as 'ultimatic' on the part of the governments and to initiate a dynamic". The French Trotskyist recommends the seduction or the neutralisation of 'the governments' because the matter is not to fight against them but with them. The "dynamic" that the tax would start consist in that "such device would put sand in the mechanisms of speculation". What vulgarity! Instead of a policy to end the domination of the capital, we have that it is necessary to put 'sand', not to the capital but to 'speculation', including the 'speculation' of the independent worker when buys dollars to prevent itself against a devaluation!

The Trotskyist League³ also clarifies that the tax would be collected "essentially in the North". What does this means, that the speculation is beneficial for 'the South'? It insinuates that the weight of the tax would be greater for the markets of the developed countries, so that the Third World would not have why to worry itself; the French intellectuality, as one can see, 'does not confuse' the speculator of the north with the one of the south. Its infeudation to capitalism is so treacherous that it not even realizes that, in such case, also most of the tax collection would end in the treasure chest of the imperialist States. And to what end could these States use that money if it is not for subsidize their capitalists against the capitalists of the rival states, as it happens from always, but every time with greater intensity, between the United States, Europe and Japan? Or it will be for increasing the wages?

PRODUCTIVE CAPITAL IS ANOTHER THING

The League not only distinguishes 'speculative' capital and 'productive' one but also establishes between them a hierarchy in which the 'speculative' capital is the 'worst'. It ignores that the great 'productive' octopuses have a cash flow that overcome their investment needs, thus the capital destined to the speculation comes from the benefits obtained by those 'productive' capital. Something more: the disaster ocasioned by the speculation in the Asian crisis has benefited, fundamentally, not the speculators but to 'productive' capitalists; the first have had to delay the collection of debts, the second (Ford, General Motors, Mercedes Benz, General Electric), however, are buying the bankrupt Asian companies. All this demonstrates,

³ This refers to the Revolutionary Communist League (France) and not the Trotskyist League (US).

beyond the rabidly capitalist character of the proposal, its complete inconsistency. This is inevitable when it is wanted to mix a learned of heard Trotskyism with the wish to save capitalism. In order to rank the 'productive' capital above the 'speculative' one, the League, naturally, must avoid any mention to the 'labor flexibility'.

In the same wave to turn the 'speculation' into the billy emissary goat of the social crisis, and not capitalism, the League embarks against the European Central bank, to which in passing, impute its 'supranational' attributes. The Rouge newspaper (29/10), says that although "political establishment has pronounced for a cut of the interest rate", it lacks "the means to make it come into effect, because the Maastricht Agreement has converted the national central banks and the European bank into independent of the powers designated by the universal suffrage". This separation between 'political establishment', that is to say the imperialist governments, in one hand, and the imperialist banks, in the other side, explain why the League considers advantageous to have the governments of its side by means of the proposal of the Tobin tax ('not ultimatum'). A month later this had been written, the central banks decided to accept the 'political establishment' and to produce a simultaneous reduction of the interest rates.

The defence of the developed national States is, of course, completely reactionary, because this States have exhausted their national possibilities and they have become imperialist. But the opposition between the European States and governments, in one side, and the European supranational institutions, in the other side, as the European Central bank, the Court of Justice, the Executive Commission, the Council of Ministers and the transference of legislative attributions to this last one; this contrast reveals a total lack of understanding of the nature of the European Community. The latter is not a new State, because it does not have the monopoly of the force and because it only can act with the consent of the States that compose it (unanimity or qualified majorities). Its true function consists in reinforcing the power of action of the national States against their workers and the foreign competition, for which it needs simultaneously overcome his own national contradictions, which for the moment are more alive than ever. The tendency to reduce to zero the representative institutions, giving independence to judiciary, to the bureaucracy, to the central bank, to the military units, to the executive power; all this, is previous to any European unit, it is characteristic of the national States, and the pretence of the European unity does not weak it but to reinforce it even more. To try, therefore, to oppose the national autonomy against the European centralisation, or the representative institutions against the supranational one, is equal to demanding that capitalism retrace the path, that is to say, that it is matter of dead end road.

DEFENCE OF THE NATIONAL BANKS

It is not accidental that the League has allies in the highest circles of the imperialistic capital and the 'speculators'. Long ago that the theoretician of Soros, Jeffrey Sachs, is opposed to a European central bank (Cronista, 2/4). Although he recognises that the European union "increases the scale and the competitiveness of key financial sectors as the insurance, the pension funds and the stock markets", he denounces that "the ECB will not be a effective moneylender of last resort", that is to say that it will not be able to rescue the banks or the companies in bankruptcy. "This it is not a hypothetical problem", says Sachs. "The European banking sector is already more weakened than it seems (...) the competitive pressures on the banks of the continent as result of the monetary union almost surely (...) will push more the weaker banks to bankruptcy". That is that the hybridity of functions between the national central banks and the European Bank threatens to promote the bankruptcy of... the weaker speculators. For that reason, according to Sachs, "the European Central bank is the weak point of the (monetary) union".

Consequent with all the exposed positions, in a meeting that it had with the French PC, "the delegation of the LCR proposed that the left forces that reject to sacrifice everything in the altar of the financial markets unite their efforts (...) The LCR ... aims to break radically with the strait jacket of Maastricht ... to which all the governments are submit, beginning with Jospin" (16/6). One week later, in the expectation of an electoral agreement with the PC⁴, the LCR continued demanding "'breaks' with the way in which the government of Lionel Jospin accompanies (...) the social and political model ..." (Rouge, 2/7).

It is to say that, for those who claim to be the French Trotskyist, the question is 'to accompany (...) the model in another way' ('my way', would say Sinatra). To break with the government? No. To break with the bourgeoisie? Either. Then, you know with what? To break with the way of use ('mode d'emploi', as it is reading in medicines of the 'Hexágone').

AND THE RESTORATION OF CAPITALISM?

Above all this, there is another more excellent thing still, if this were still possible. Neither in the program of the electoral union Lutte Ouvriere-LCR, nor in the daily propaganda, do the French Trotskysts clarify how their proposal for a "democratic Europe" must be understood in relation to the politics of extending the European Community towards the east, even to Ukraine, Russia and the Baltic countries. An extended "democratic Europe" would not be another thing that the definitive consummation of the capitalist restoration in all those

⁴ Partie Communiste Français (French Communist Party)

States, which today are in a brutal crisis. Here also the problem is 'speculation'? In such a case, one would be claiming directly the restoration of capitalism. The refusal to pose the Socialist United States of Europe, as much on the part of the League as on the part of Lutte Ouvriere, means an endorsement to the capitalist restoration, which is really the central and decisive question that has to be seen in relation to the European Union from the time of the fall of the Berlin Wall.

The strategic objective is this one, indeed, the restoration of capitalism, and is this precisely what that is not posed at all by those who call themselves Trotskyists, and worse, yes, they propose a "democratic Europe" which cannot be but imperialist and counter-revolutionary.

ATHENS DECLARATION TO BUILD THE WORKERS' INTERNATIONAL: REFOUND THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

Athens, Greece
March 8, 1999

Between the 6th and 9th of March an International Conference of the Workers and the Class Struggle Left took place in Athens (Greece) which had been previously agreed at the international meeting of May of 1998 in Buenos Aires. Its objective was to advance in a united way to the refoundation of the Fourth International. Besides the host party, the Workers Revolutionary Party of Greece, delegations participated from Partido Obrero (Argentina), Causa Operaria (Brazil), the Trotskyist Opposition (Bolivia), the Trotskyist League (United States), the Revolutionary Marxist Association/Proposta (Italy), the Colectivo En Defensa del Marxismo (Spain), the sections of the International Trotskyist Opposition in Great Britain and India and the Marxist Workers League (Turkey). Observing were delegates from Voix de Travailleurs (Workers Voice, France), the Greek Section of the CWI (Committee for a Workers International), Valter Pomar (Vice-President of the PT from Brazil) and organizations of the Greek left such as NAR, a split from the Greek CP. Greetings were sent from the Partido de los Trabajadores (Uruguay) and the Comité Constructor de un Partido Obrero (Chile).

The events of the last year have confirmed, beyond any doubt, the historical character, that is to say, neither conjunctural nor cyclical, of the current world capitalist crisis. Overcoming all the geographical barriers—from south east Asia to Japan, from Russia to Brazil and the whole Latin American southern cone—the reality of the crisis is imposed as an immediate fact on all countries and all social classes, which allows us to characterize it as the most profound, extensive and durable that capitalism has known in all its history. All the theories about the "local" character of the diverse crises have been swept away by events. But there have also been those who see the crisis as a product of the errors of the wizards of political economy, and not as a manifestation of the whole of the contradictions of capital and of its historical tendency towards self-destruction.

That there is a crisis of overproduction and of overinvestment, when the levels of misery and of pauperisation, prior to the crisis, have been extended to the world, demonstrates that we are faced with a great crisis of society, that is to say, a universal one. In a historical period in which social needs increase, world capital enters into a phase of sharp bankruptcy. While the masses of the world live in drought, world capital

lives in flood. This irrationality of the system as a whole is naturally perceived by the different social classes.

CONFIRMATION OF A PERSPECTIVE

Gathered together nine months ago in Buenos Aires, the organizations and parties convoked by this conference, already warned: what are termed "Asian peculiarities"—the extreme fusion between bank and industrial capital; the deep interpenetration between private capital and the state—is the most general tendency that world capitalism is undergoing through coalitions, acquisitions and restructurings. In fact for this reason, the Asian crisis could only be characterized as a concentrated expression of the crisis of the world capitalist system.

"The contradiction between the international development which the productive forces have reached and the national character of capitals, currencies and states is at the root of the current crisis, which thus reveals its world character, not from "models or "politics", but from the capitalist social regime."

FAILURE OF CAPITALIST 'GLOBALISATION'

The so-called "globalisation" that aspired, through the complete liberation of movements of capital, to nothing less than the world harmonisation of the conditions of capitalist exploitation, ended up by generating monstrous economic disequilibria and an unprecedented economic fragility, to the point that its own beneficiaries (Soros!)⁵ now call for regulation and for politics of the Keynesian type, at a moment in which the same crisis has undermined the basis for this type of outcome. Globalisation sought to overcome a regime that was characterized by the subordination of all the national currencies to the dollar on a scale never seen before, that is to say, by the subjection of the monetary regimes of each country to the politics of the Federal Reserve of United States. This regime fomented the great period of international speculation, permitting, from the point of view of monetary politics, the ascents of the stock exchanges, the foreign debts, the gigantic wave of investments financed with credits. The subordination to the dollar gave a relative international guarantee to speculation in the various national currencies. But so that this works appropriately, this currency that functions as a guarantee of value of international circulation has to be a really international currency. But the dollar is, above all, the currency of the United States of North America; it is a weapon of the North American bourgeoisie in the struggle and the concurrences with the capitals of the other countries. It is not a universal currency.

This contradiction broke the Asian process because the currencies of these countries were tied financially to the dollar, but their trade is tied up with Japan. The Asian devaluations were the first manifestation of an international rupture of the national currencies with the dollar, of a threat to the decline of the dollar as a currency that acts as the face of international financing, through the competition of the countries which devalue their currencies. The speculation, instead of valorising capitals, demolishes the stock exchanges, demolishes capitals, produces a withdrawal of speculative capital, a withdrawal of money from world circulation and, as a consequence of this, develops a world crisis.

Capitalism could not give itself that universality to which it fictitiously pretends. Capital continues being a form of appropriation of private and national wealth. It is neither collective nor international.

The most serious consequences of this phenomenon are going to manifest themselves in the USA, which has made use of the fact that the dollar is an international currency in order to subsidize all its industries and pay the deficit of the current account with the issue of money and the creation of a gigantic international debt in dollars. We witness a crisis of international consequences because it has not been manufactured in Asia, but rather is the consequence of a long development that dates from the Second World War.

THE MYTH OF THE "END OF SOCIALISM"

This failure includes the attempt to exit from the crisis through the imperialist recolonisation of the old bureaucratized workers' states. In 1990, as a consequence of the fall of the Berlin Wall, Western Germany absorbed Eastern Germany and world capitalism solved the most important political crisis of the post war period to the benefit of itself. Because this was so, this solution was the economic basis of the speculative expansion of the last decade.

The colonization of Russia, of China and of Eastern Europe, countries that had escaped the control of the world capitalist economy as a consequence of the revolutionary processes was presented to capitalism. The Russian market, in principle, should solve the capitalist crisis of overinvestment. In the face of the dimensions of the market to be supplied, this could give a new lease of life to capitalism and the same could be said, on a much greater scale, of the Chinese market.

The so-called "globalisation" was in fact a lengthy attempt to counteract the tendency of the devaluation of capitals, for which an intense campaign of opening up of markets by means of the privatizations was launched and the demolition of the protectionism of the "emerging countries". But the central piece of this politics was the penetration on a grand scale in China

⁵ George Soros, billionaire capitalist and "anti-globalization" ideologue. Promoter of capitalist restoration and founder of the Open Society Institute.

and the former-USSR. The perspective of reaching these objectives fed the stock market valorisation of capitals, especially in New York. For those who maintain that capitalism has a means of exit, it is necessary to remind them that "globalisation" has in fact been an attempt to exit; this means of "exit", the world crisis, has not been progressing in a linear form, but in leaps, that is to say, [giving way to? doblegando-tranlator] the different attempts of capitalism to overcome them and open a period of sustained expansion of capital. The Russian debacle and the widespread crisis that begins to take place in China has made this perspective a failure.

Like a boomerang, in terms of being a way out for capitalism, Russia and China have become a supplementary and decisive factor of its crisis. This is because their reincorporation into the world market and the full reintroduction of mercantile relationships could only be carried out with capitalist methods that imply the destruction of productive forces, mass pauperisation and the reproduction on an enlarged scale of all their contradictions. This theoretical analysis was confirmed with the Russian crisis of August, which unleashed a period of recession in numerous countries that had been less affected by the Asian crisis, especially in Eastern Europe and in South America.

The prices of the primary products are collapsing, which contributed, for the first time in the post war period, to the fact that world trade declined by 2% in terms of value in 1998. More than half of the nations are in recession. First in August, as a consequence of the Russian crisis; then in October soon after the crash of the LTCM⁶; later in December and finally in January, the world crisis has begun to show itself fully in Brazil, on whose market large North American capitals depend. The devaluation of the Real took place in spite of a "preventative" package of the IMF, of 41,000 million dollars. While the Russian crisis put at risk of devaluation and bankruptcy borrowed capitals and securities (insurance? seguros—translator) or derivative contracts of the order of the 300,000 million dollars, the Brazilian crisis threatens values of about a trillion and half dollars if only the Mercosur bloc is considered.

Connected with this, the perspective of the collapse of China is posed in the short term and the accentuation of the crisis in Japan, which is going through a more important economic depression, in terms of duration, than that of the 1930s. The former Soviet nations and China, instead of operating to attenuate the capitalist crisis, by means of the absorption of merchandises and capitals, as occurred after the fall of the stock exchanges in October of 1987, is driving it forward.

⁶ Long Term Capital Management (LTCM) refers to a the 1997-98 crash of an enormous "hedge fund" in Russia which led to a world wide economic crisis.

FINANCIAL CRISIS AND CAPITALIST CRISIS

In order to counteract the crisis, the armed economic blocs of capitalism do not resist this same development. The 'Brasilia' crisis caused the spectacular devaluation of the Real, faced by a capital flight of more than 60,000 million dollars and, simultaneously, the complete "dollarisation" of the Argentinean economy, exploding Mercosur and its perspective of a "single South American currency", in the image of the celebrated euro. All the capitalist plans did not resist the impetuous development of their parasitic and contradictory tendencies.

The development of the so-called financial sector obeys the necessity of capitalism of overcoming its basic contradiction which reproduces itself unceasingly. It is against productive capital like a Siamese brother to another... The development of the system of credit and banks, the societies for actions and the markets of values, the splitting of capital into productive and financial, the centralization of capitals and the system of public debt, the appearance of fictitious capital, all this obeys the necessity of capital in its totality overcoming the limits that are against its indefinite reproduction. Those limits are, on the one hand, the relatively limited personal consumption of the masses in the face of a growing productive capacity; on the other hand, the restriction that represents production for private profit in the face of the constant revolution in technique and the procedures of production (the tendency of the decline of the rate of profit and the extinction of the law of value). In sum, "the limit of the capital is the same capital."

The financial development facilitates the passage of the capital of a branch of overextended or non-profitable production to another in development that offers greater benefits; it mobilizes those capitals with greater speed, it helps within its own limits to overcome the contradiction between the creation and the destruction of capitals (absorptions); it extends the limits of consumption beyond the wages that it pays to the working population; it unfolds an accumulation of the same (fictitious) capital that acts as much as a credit of a special kind for production as for consumption. This development (parasitic, because it does not create value) acts as a countervailing factor to the capitalist crisis until it becomes the main factor of its explosion. This happens when the overaccumulation of capital, which does not assume a directly productive form, and which has been overaccumulated in order to counteract the limits imposed by the overaccumulation of productive capital, reaches proportions incompatible with the total (gross?) value added such that this last could uproot the workforce.

The crisis is developed in a combined and unequal manner. It is more intense in Africa, Asia, Eastern

Europe and Latin America than in the imperialist countries, in which it has a variable intensity. This leads some to see the crisis as local and others to think that it is neutralisable. In fact, this unequal development of the crisis deepens it. The imperialist attempt to get rid of the crisis aggravates the conditions in the semi-colonies, in the workers' states and in the former workers' states and intensifies interimperialist competition: the crisis that they push away from themselves returns to them.

The combined character of the crisis expresses itself also in the economic fall of Japan and in the beginning of a fall in Western Europe. This character will also be expressed shortly in a fall in the United States. The center of the imperialist system is also the center of the crisis. For the time being, the United States manifests an apparent immunity in the face of the crisis. But as the storm intensifies, partly as a result of the attempt to avoid it also includes the US. At the moment, the crisis is mainly economic and social, but the revolutionary risings in Albania and Indonesia show, in a limited way, its positive potential for the future, as well as the wars in Bosnia and Kosovo shows its negative potential.

THE CHARACTER OF THE CRISIS

Overinvestment is an economic tendency of capital, not a countable measure of national accounts. It could be financed from the exterior and create a foreign debt or it could be financed internally and create an internal debt. The financial economy has had an enormous expansion, as demonstrated by the stratospheric rates that the main stock exchanges have reached, the colossal increases in the public debt, the rise of the investment funds, especially those of pensions; the derivative credits market, whose contracts are considered globally to be more than 40 billions of dollars.

The growing development of the contradiction between the rapid accumulation of financial capital in respect to productive; between this and the lesser rate of average production; between this and the lesser consumption of the masses; between the geometric progression of financial rent and the retarded productive profit; between all this and capitalist profitability as a whole (not only the average profitability but also that of the monopolies); the more and more intense aggravation of these contradictions as a whole, all this characterises the current crisis and the historical stage of capitalist decomposition. The tendency to an absolute pauperisation of the masses, that was unknown in the crisis of the 1930s and the War, is a most fundamental manifestation of the extraordinary difficulties that the process of reproduction of capitalism suffers and it constitutes a concrete experience for the current generation of the masses in relation to the historical destiny of capitalism. The current idle capacity of world industry is the greatest since 1930, which is a sure index of the blockage of the productive forces and of the maturity of the contradiction between these and the capitalist relationships of production. The massive

destruction of industries that has accompanied capitalist restoration in the former-USSR, in most of Eastern Europe, and now in China, is nothing but a brutal manifestation of the enormity of the surplus of capital accumulated in relation to its possibilities of profits and of realization; the "peaceful" centralization of capitals that takes place in the world market assumes violent and overbearing characteristics when it is operated in the territories of the former workers' states. It is not that we are faced by a confiscation of a capitalist by another in the framework of market relationships and the law of the value, but of the confiscation of property by the capitalists which had been confiscated by the revolution in the framework of what was a planned economy. The mechanics of the current crisis begins to reveal the antagonistic social character of the regime of the former workers' states and the world capitalist regime. The looting that produces capitalist restoration assumes, then, the form of a historical contradiction and shows the extension and the depth of the world crisis.

ECONOMIC CRISIS AND POLITICAL CRISIS

Politics is concentrated economics, but the relationship between the one and the other is not mechanical. The democratist⁷ strategy, certainly, has yielded enormous benefits to North American imperialism. It allowed it to present a face to the revolutionary crises posed by the collapse of the bureaucratic regimes of Eastern Europe and Russia. It is the vehicle for a vast economic imperialist penetration in the former-workers' states, in particular in those of Eastern Europe and in China. The democratist politics is the battering ram with which imperialism seeks to demolish the Cuban regime and the one that allowed it to bury the revolutionary situations in central America, in South Africa.

Even in Europe, the democratist politics has played its role as it approves the "peace agreements" which have sunk the Irish national struggle. In Latin America, the democratist cycle is that of the political, economic and financial penetration of imperialism—and of the liquidation of the social conquests of the masses—the most profound in living memory. The economic monopolisation of the continent and the political subordination of its regimes to North American imperialism do not have precedents.

The USA adopted the democratist politics, also, because of its own internal contradictions. The North American bourgeoisie went ahead with a wild reduction of the

⁷ "Democratist" describes the false and anti-Marxist bourgeois idea that civil society has finished with moments of breakdown, from now on society will be the scene of an uninterrupted deliberation, which will perpetually regulate social relations and delegitimise violence. In other words, eternal bourgeois society and the "Revolution is finished."

working wage and of the social conquests of the workers in the framework of Reaganism.

Having exhausted the cycle, it still puts forward the call for a "second generation of reforms": the privatization of the health systems, of education and of pensions and the destruction of social security. In the face of these tasks, the Clinton attacks—with an "egalitarian" phraseology and with the backing of the trades union bureaucracy is vastly more effective for the bourgeoisie than the religious and republican right.

The democratist politics, the democratic deceit, still has viability because the leaderships of the organizations of the masses—the trades union bureaucracy, social democracy, the reconverted ex-Stalinists, the democratist left—is integrated in the politics of "democratic" imperialism. In the face of the lack of political independence of the proletariat, the growing social polarization is not translated into a political polarization on the axes of class. In this framework the ascent of workers struggles that are manifesting themselves in Asia and, in a less marked form, in Latin America, Europe and USA, is an additional reason why the bourgeoisie avoids the "extreme way out". The trades union bureaucracy and the democratist parties of the left have been revealed as infinitely more effective than the right in retarding, and leading to defeat, the struggles of the exploited.

It is certain, on the other hand, that the Asian crisis caused the collapse of the Suharto dictatorship and the debut of the revolution in Indonesia; it is also a fact that the Eastern European crisis (the "financial pyramids") was the cause of the Albanian revolution; it is also true that the economic crisis has accentuated, by dozens of thousands, the workers strikes and the rural risings in China; it is equally sure that the so-called "samba effect" caused the occupation of car factories in Brazil, the blocking of roads and the temporary retreat of the imperialist employers in the maintenance of the massive sackings that had already been put into practice. In Argentina from the commencement of the decline of the "Cavallo Plan", the Santiaguénazo, the Cutralcazo and the Jujenazo⁸ have been produced; The Menem and Peronist government are strongly divided and there is a constant, although irregular, political radicalisation; which could negate the enormous miners strike in Romania, which was unleashed in response to the IMF agreement; without forgetting the importance of the movement of the French masses, since 1985; nor the extraordinary development of the Colombian guerrilla movement, very close to the United States, on the one hand, and to Cuba, on the other, and whose progress has gone in parallel to the economic crisis; in Russia struggles of resistance are developing from the workers; even in the United States the trades

union ebb tide is a thing of the past, as is demonstrated by the strikes at UPS, General Motors, the defence of the sacked workers at Caterpillar, the barrage of strikes of airline pilots. The "experts" attribute this trades union renaissance to low North American unemployment, but what motivates the workers is the fall of the wages, the enormous labour flexibility, the precariousness of employment, in sum, the attacks which the capitalists are obliged to mount in order to overcome the economic crisis.

An inversion of the tendency of popular international struggles exists in relation to the decade of 1985/1994.

CRISIS AND "CENTRE-LEFT"

The combination of the economic wounds with the insurgency of the masses leads the bourgeoisie to important political changes, in which under the form of governments of the "centre-left", in a rightist form, the formulae of class collaboration typical of the popular fronts are renewed. As a whole, the center-leftist governments of class collaboration accede to government when, from ever more wide capitalist circles, "regulation" of the movements of capitals is demanded in order to safeguard the same; public measures in the face of unemployment; organized exchange bands between the main currencies: establishment of regional banks as a counterweight to the IMF. And these demands not only have to be seen with the crisis in its economic aspect but more especially with its 'social' aspect, that is to say, with the tendency of the masses to respond again with struggles, be it the workers and peasants or the students. Although the movements of greatest scale have been the mobilizations of the miners of the Ruhr, at the beginning of 1997, and the strikes of public sector workers, truck drivers and bus drivers in France, on repeated occasions; also there have been combined movements on the scale of Europe and, in the case of Belgium, a gigantic mobilization of masses, that still continues to be organized against the corruption and the official paedophilia. The neoliberal governments or conservatives were removed because they had been constituted in an element of uncertainty of the political situation. The centre-left governments are literally obliged to try to modify the conditions and the politics that their predecessors transformed from factors of stability into factors of interference, on pain of ending up in the same way, but with the added difficulty of having drained the "moderate" solutions. What converted the conservative governments into factors of "disorder" was the exhaustion of their neoliberal politics, the deepening of the world crisis and their inability to contain the masses which reacted to the crisis.

⁸ "Santiaguénazo, the Cutralcazo and the Jujenazo" refer to localized explosions (in Santiago del Estero, Cultralco and Jujuy), popular rebellions in several Argentine.

WORLD POLITICAL CRISIS

The irreversible collapse of Stalinism in 1989/ 91, the obvious failure of neoliberalism of the right and the impossibility of returning to reforms of the traditional social democratic type led to the emergence of the so-called new "centre-left". The capitalist governments try to negotiate the crisis against the workers, to the benefit of big capital.

In Europe, most of the countries are led by this type of government, which not only do not introduce reforms and concessions but rather are responsible for attacks against the past conquests of the European working class and counterreforms.

The conflict between the social needs of the masses and the politics of the governments of the center-left become a source of political tension and uncertainty in Italy, France, Germany and Greece.

The imperialist European Union, in order to face the world crisis and the competition from America, especially with the introduction of the euro and the transition towards monetary union, has to destroy the "rigidities and resistances in the labour markets" in order to introduce its "deregulation", on the road taken previously in the Anglo-Saxon countries, and try to overcome the inequalities and conflicts between the different levels and national interests.

The transformation of the initial euphoria over the euro into its own crisis is due not only to recurrent factors but to structural ones. In spite of all its proclamations, Europe remains deeply divided along national lines. The European Central Bank could not work like the Federal Reserve of the USA; also the divisions between the central bankers, the national governments and between the leading circles of each individual country, impedes Europe from economically threatening North American hegemony, as well as politically and militarily. The European fiasco in the Balkans, from Dayton to Rambouillet, demonstrates it graphically.

FOR THE UNITED SOCIALISTS STATES OF EUROPE

In the face of the impact of the world crisis after 1997, imperialist Europe has to accelerate its social "restructuring", destroying all the previous forms of regulation of the antagonisms of capital with labour. The coalitions of the bourgeois center-left are promoted in order to do the dirty work that the parties of the bourgeois traditional right are unable to carry out.

But these recent political formations, which arose as a product of the crisis, enter in turn into crisis.

In this situation, the LO/LCR electoral agreement for a common list in the European elections of 1999, was able to be, and had to be, a call to struggle against the

European bourgeoisie, their political leaders and the counterrevolutionary social measures, showing a socialist road out of the crisis based on a transitional programme.

But what has happened in fact is that they have failed to do this. In no place does the perspective of socialism appear, not even the word, neither is the most vital slogan of all posed, the United Socialists States of Europe, of the East and of the West.

The question is: do we have the struggle for a "democratic Europe", or for the Socialist States of Europe? Do we have the confiscation of capital, the expropriation of the expropriators, or do we call only for "restricting" the movement of free capitals and their "speculative" benefits? Between these two alternatives there is no compromise. The destiny of the next social confrontations in Europe are linked to this.

A true revolutionary intervention in the European elections should begin with independence of the eventual slogan of a vote to the reformist and centrist parties, of the elaboration and postulation of a true revolutionary platform, without any concession to the "European" party of the bourgeoisie, and expounding, in the first place, the struggle against the reactionary national states and governments to which the "European construction" seeks to serve as a screen against the masses. This should be the starting point for a programme of transitional demands that concludes with measures to expropriate capital and the independent government of the workers.

FOR THE WORLD UNITY OF THE EXPLOITED: FOR THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

In Latin America the tendency exists to respond to the gigantic process of economic expropriation and political alienation through the anti-imperialist political unity of the continent. The resurgence of the struggle for land, especially in Brazil, Bolivia, Mexico and Ecuador, the struggles of the unemployed, the occupations of factories in diverse countries, expound the road in which this unity could concretise itself in the framework of the current crisis. The fight for a workers and peasants conference of Mercosur, expounded already in meetings promoted in the framework of the Conference of the Workers and the Left, should be developed as a point of decisive support in order to develop the independence of class and the alliance of workers and peasants, conditions of a deep anti-imperialist struggle and of [sustained courage? largo aliento–translator].

The perspective of the Socialist United States of Latin America arises again as the strategic weapon in order to break the historical base of North American imperialism, constituting an essential aspect of the anticapitalist struggle on a world scale.

The lash of unemployment has world scope and unifies all the tendencies of capitalist decomposition in the current phase.

The struggle for employment has, for that reason, a world and immediately objective character, being the decisive lever in order to unify the working class of each country and on an international scale.

The politics of a 35 hour working week, expounded, especially, by the European centre-left, is revealed each day more as a lure in order to divert the struggles and introduce the wage cuts, temporary work, that does not pay for extra hours and labour flexibility. Against this politics, against the sackings and against the complicity of the trades union bureaucracies, the watchword of "work for all" should be expounded, distributing the existing working hours between all the capable workers, without loss of salary. This objectively expounds the workers' control of production and the international unity of the workers: an International Conference against unemployment and in defense of the workers should be the objective of all consistent workers' leaders and should be expounded as the specific objective of a world campaign.

In the framework of these and other struggles, the question of the international political unity of the workers is posed as the specific objective for all the organizations that struggle.

The objective of the Workers' International should be consciously and consistently defended, through the elaboration of a transitional programme and the construction of an organization. It is not a matter of trying to build a new international tendency of the enlightened that defends their particular truths and is devoted to an endless settling of accounts with their real or imaginary opponents, but of the construction of the necessary instrument for the world victory of the working class and all the exploited.

This International could only be built as the continuity of the world struggle of the workers, and of the assimilation of all their theoretical and programmatic conquests and concretised in the work of their best thinkers and militants (beginning with Marx) and in the programmes of their Internationals, up to and including their most recent and current expression in the programme and the method of the Fourth International. The consistent struggle for all the immediate objectives of the exploited only has perspective, therefore, if it takes one conscious and politically organized form through the immediate refoundation of the Fourth International.

FOR A PLAN OF ACTION TO RE-FOUND THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

International Meeting, Buenos Aires,
Argentina
May 29 to June 1, 2000

The organizations which met in Buenos Aires carried out their fifth international meeting in conditions which confirm the political basis which in 1997 led to the initiative to re-found the IV International, in order to give to the international working-class vanguard a revolutionary Marxist orientation to face the worsening of the world crisis.

The IV International, based on the method of transitional demands, is the indispensable instrument for the working class to overcome its crisis of leadership and impose the only historically progressive outcome-socialism-to the contemporary crisis.

The current crisis confirms the bankruptcy of the "gradualist" conception which prevails in the most diverse sectors of the left in different countries. This conception sees the tendencies of capitalism in a linear way, pointing out its reactionary tendencies but without conceiving them as a process of increasingly explosive contradictions (in the words of Marx: "capitalism is the contradiction in process") and therefore excluding transformations of quantity into quality. In other words, it breaks the connection between the decomposition of capitalism and its tendency to produce revolutionary situations. The increasingly evident manifestation of these contradictions of capitalism in its present historical crisis forces the workers to adopt a revolutionary position; that is to say, to become conscious of the tendency towards political polarization, the outbreak of profound political crises, and the need for exceptional historical actions on the part of the working class.

The Fourth International, through its program and traditions, has proved to be the most consequent and conscious historical instrument for the preparation, development and achievement of the victory of the revolutionary proletariat. The immediate re-foundation of the IV International is the foremost obligation of all militants and workers' organizations conscious of the duties and tasks that emerge in the present political period.

THE SCOPE OF THE WORLD CRISIS

The generalized collapse of the stock exchanges of the principal countries in the last three months has shown the limited reach of the recovery from the so-called Asian crisis that began in Thailand in the middle of

1997 and culminated with the devaluation in Brazil in the first months of 1999. The chain of currency devaluations that provoked the crisis in Asia has only served to accentuate international competition and to demonstrate the enormous excess of capital that, on a world scale, has lowered the rate of profit in spite of the reduction of salaries, of the lengthening and intensification of the working day, of the rationalization of the methods of production applied in the principal branches of industry, and of the great capitalist mergers-i.e. of the greater centralization of capital. The principal reason for the failure of these so-called mergers and acquisitions of enterprises was the fact that these operations were above all directed to obtain financial profits which affected industry only marginally, since most of them involved great economic groups related to the financial and service sectors.

The accentuation of international capitalist competition provoked by the Asian devaluations has frustrated the hopes that the productive rationalization led by North American capitalism could raise on durable terms the level of the international rate of profit. It revealed once again the world character of the law of the tendential fall in the rate of profit. The North American commercial deficit already reaches the figure of 400 billion dollars a year and the surplus of foreign goods has begun to affect the profitability of the great US monopolist corporations. The US attempt to absorb, in the form of imports, the world glut of commodities, which supposedly turns the North American commercial deficit in a world factor of stabilization, is based on the illusion that the dollar can be a universal monetary standard and not, as it effectively is, an instrument of struggle of the North American bourgeoisie against its capitalist rivals. The necessity of protecting the dollar by raising the interest rate forces the American bourgeoisie to increase the burden of the US public debt, which is already the world's largest.

This situation sets limits on the continuation of the giant speculation in Wall Street, fed by a policy of monetary emission (from 6 to 8 per cent annually) within the framework of stable prices and a low interest rate. The stopping of this speculation will suddenly reduce the North American market, which is nowadays the principal market for world commerce. In the same way, as a great part of this speculation was financed by idle capital from Asia and Europe, which is the counterpart of the North American deficit, the accentuation of this deficit will lead to a flight of capital from the US and to the devaluation of the dollar-which would in its turn unravel a huge worldwide deflation and the possibility of a complete dislocation of the world market, as the North American currency has become the only measure (albeit fictitious) of value in the world market. This happened because, since the "dollar crisis" of 1971, the international monetary system lacks a fixed anchor and rests on the capacity of the North American government to impose

"order" in the intertwining of politics and economics at a world level.

The thousands of millions lost by the major speculative funds, like Soros' Quantum or Tiger Management (the second most important in the United States) constitutes just a foretaste of the perspective of collapse in the present crisis. The international speculators have begun to adjust their operations to a prospective fall in Wall Street, which will affect the value of the dollar, because it implies an exit of capital. But independently of this, it will profoundly affect North American society, whose consumption and investments are strongly dependent on the gains of the stock market: the "dot.com" Internet enterprises are not financed by their own capital but by the selling of shares; the mergers were realized, not with money, but through the exchange of shares; the family indebtedness is about 150 per cent of their incomes; and 50 per cent of families have investments in the stock market. Those who had definitively buried the law of labor value in order to sing praises to the miracles of the "new economy" today stand in awe at the collapse of the shares of the "high-tech" companies and the beginning of a chain of bankruptcies. The value of the companies is not determined by their so-called "potential" or by subjective preferences, but by the capitalization of their profits-i.e. in the last instance by their rate of profit.

The rise of the North American interest rate, aimed at containing the speculative spiral, is already 50 per cent since the middle of 1998, when it was reduced in order to rescue the LTCM and the dozens of banks that sustained it. This tendency will have an enormous depressive effect, not only in the United States but also-indeed, specially-in the peripheral countries, which are burdened with huge and growing external debts.

Capitalism, taken as a whole, has reached long ago such a point of maturation, that the law of labor value, which regulates production for exchange and for profit, has become a definitively narrow base to develop the forces of production. That is the historical reason for the lack of alternatives to the crisis that has been unfolding for more than a quarter of a century.

ASIA

The perspective of the world crisis is clearly revealed by the case of Japan, which has entered into its twelfth year of depression, despite an massive injection of 2 thousand billion dollars of state funds into the economy and a negative interest rate. The only alternative to this depression would have been for Japan to accept the bankruptcy of its monopolies in order to eliminate from the market the excess capital and thus raise the rate of profit and increase the motivation for investment; but this would have deepened the world depression. Now Japan adds to its continued over-accumulation of capital the virtual bankruptcy of its state, which accumulates 10 thousand billion dollars of debt as against an internal

product of 4 thousand billion dollars. If in order to rescue the state Japan attempts to repatriate its capital invested in foreign countries, that will accelerate the financial collapse of the United States and Europe. Japan has been forced to open its own market and to enable the displacement of some of its monopolies by US corporations, especially in the financial and service sectors, which constitutes a blow to its aspiration to play a decisive role in the world market. At the same time, nevertheless, its recent decision to create an Asian system of financial protection with the support of South Korea and especially of China, demonstrates that the crisis accentuates the international rivalry between the United States and Japan, and this tends to increase the instability of all of Asia.

None of the countries affected by the crisis of 1997-98 has returned to its previous position. The situation of Thailand, Indonesia and the Philippines has worsened and these countries are on the brink of a new economic depression. The condition of South Korea's monopolistic corporations, especially of the powerful Hyundai and Daewoo, has deteriorated. China faces a generalized collapse of its state enterprises and a wave of gigantic struggles against the unemployment that will result from it.

THE CRISIS OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

One of the most powerful symptoms of the disintegrating tendency of world capital is the continued devaluation of the euro, which was created in order to stabilize the international monetary system, i.e. to endow the international monetary system with a double anchor and to broaden the economic, political and financial basis for capitalist speculation. This devaluation of the euro reflects the loss of competitiveness of the European bourgeoisie vis-à-vis the strong economic rationalization of the United States, which has dislocated the European Union due to the unequal links of its member countries with the international market.

The international monetary and financial disequilibria are playing havoc with England, where the overvaluation of the pound, submitted to the same speculative process of the dollar, has unleashed a wave of industrial bankruptcies of the principal international firms. The news that the Frankfurt Stock Exchange is in the process of absorbing the London Stock Exchange, which would mean the loss of the last bulwark of the English bourgeoisie, means that the United Kingdom's policy of balancing between the United States and Europe can lead to a great national crisis.

As if all this wasn't bad enough, the European bourgeoisie fears, more than the devaluation of its own currency, a devaluation of the dollar, which would naturally be accompanied by a financial crisis. This would immediately bring down most of the fragile center-left governments and put on the order of the day the

governments of "national union" with a Haider inside. In Europe, the enormous political weakening of the right in recent years, including its fascist-like sections, puts forward the possibility in some countries of the creation of popular front governments, which this time would have the support of the pseudo-Trotskyists who have passed to the democratizing camp.

This dislocation is accentuated by the veto to the integration of the Eastern European countries, which closes the only way out offered to them by the European Union. The capitalist restoration in Eastern Europe confronts its major crisis now, because in order to advance toward integration with the international market the ex-Soviet countries would have to give up their limited political autonomy, allow their economic takeover by foreign corporations, and, in the case of some of them (Poland), face the mass confiscation of its farmers.

The decision to constitute a European political directorate led by Germany and France (especially the former) reveals that the European Union is not the United States of Europe but a directorate of the strongest imperialist bourgeoisies of the continent. The world crisis has revealed the utopian character of the United Capitalist States of Europe and shown its reactionary character. The European Union is a synonym of wars, political reaction, oppression and confiscation of the backward countries.

The crisis of the EU confirms what Marxists have anticipated: that the European Union is not a territory for new democratic conquests. It also uncovers all the left charlatanism of both Stalinist and pseudo-Trotskyist origin about the Europe of "democratic rights." The decision to build a European Union army of between fifty and sixty thousands troops reached in the European summits of Helsinki (Finland) and Sintra (Portugal) shows the growing military appetite of the European imperialists. The building of a European army independent of NATO, however, is laid aside at the moment. For that reason, American imperialism, despite its contradictions with European imperialism, does not obstruct to the building of this force, even if it is the expression of a potential inter-imperialist military crisis. The European military intervention in areas outside the limits of the EU assumes a complementary and subordinated character to the American intervention through NATO. That is what happened with the Italian intervention against the Albanian revolution of 1997. The European Union is behind the NATO intervention in the Balkans, which creates the ground for new wars.

That is a conclusion of the utmost importance, which those who fight for the Fourth International must bring to the European workers. Against a bellicose, oppressive and exploitative European Union we put

forward the demand: Down with the EU, its states and institutions! For a socialist struggle against the Europe of NATO and the imperialist bourgeoisie! For the launching of a European-wide program of struggle for the building of a Socialist United States of Europe, from the Atlantic Ocean to Russia!

AFRICA: AN EXAMPLE OF THE CAPITALIST PUTREFACTION

The African catastrophe is an acute and extreme expression of the world crisis; as shown by the downfall of South Africa's and Zimbabwe's currencies—two countries whose economies were considered modern, as least as far as their export sectors are concerned. The same is true of all the countries south of the Sahara and of Ethiopia-Eritrea, whose civil wars were ignited by the ruthless international struggle for the appropriation of minerals and raw materials and for the control of a glutted world market, and by the fear that the bankruptcy of very powerful monopolistic enterprises (De Beer, Anglo) could cause a general fall of prices. The fictitious state apparatuses of the African countries have been ground to dust and that, in turn, has led to the horrible situation of hunger and mass diseases. The world bourgeoisie will try to put all this (which is nothing more than a pitiless manifestation of its own world crisis and of its own destructive tendencies) on the account of Africa's backwardness, of which it is the main responsible factor. Black nationalism of bourgeois or petty-bourgeois content was swept off by the world crises, as shown by the conduct of its leading figures, from Mandela to Kabila. Only a broad independent alliance that should encompass the proletariat of South Africa, Nigeria, Angola, the very small number of wage workers of other countries, and the pauperized masses, will be able to bring about an African rebirth within the framework of a socialist mobilization in a world scale.

LATIN AMERICA

The peripheral countries have been totally ruined by the crisis. In Latin America, the "successful" SAP (Structural Adjustment Programs) have simply collapsed, as shown by the examples of Bolivia, Peru, Ecuador, Colombia, Paraguay, Argentine and even Brazil, whose external debt as a percentage of the GDP has grown even more as a consequence of the devaluation.

The increase of US rate of interest precludes any possibility of implementing a deflationary adjustment policy in the Latin American countries. In spite of the great increase in the rate of exploitation that the SAPs made possible, they were unable to secure to the Latin American bourgeoisie a stronger position in the world market. They served above all to enrich the imperialist monopolies of services and to counteract the tendency of international capital to collapse. The Brazilian devaluation and the Ecuadorian dollarization provide the

clearest example of the bankruptcy of the wrongly called neo-liberal model.

Now the crisis of this economic policy is reaching its terminal stage in Argentina, Colombia and Peru. Besides, those countries are also experiencing a political crisis, which has reached different degrees of development in each one of them. The crisis has involved the Mercosur, which was looked at by the Latin American bourgeoisie as a perspective of continental development. A growing section of the US bourgeoisie wants to obtain new possibilities of investment and speculation by turning the Mercosur into a monetary appendix of the USA. In order to do that, it supports the creation of a single convertible currency for the Mercosur countries. One expression of the pressure to implement this plan is the demand to dollarize the Argentinean economy. But an immediate dollarization in Argentina, when the US is implementing a deflationary policy and in the middle of a strong internal recession, could lead to a crisis of revolutionary characteristics. This would be a second version, at an infinitely higher scale, of what happened in Ecuador at the beginning of the year 2000.

The Latin American political crisis is aggravated by the economic decomposition and by the great mass mobilizations. The indigenous insurrection in Ecuador, the "water war" in Bolivia (where the insurrection of the peasants and workers extended to the police and army troops), the occupation of public buildings and big land properties by the Brazilian MST, the student strikes in Mexico, the peasant mobilizations in Paraguay, the political crisis and the demonstrations against the frauds in Peru, the open decomposition of the Colombian State, and the highway blockades in Argentina; all this is part of a single continental process. In Colombia, the "peace talks" between a government that is falling apart (it has no control of the congress, the army and much less the paramilitary) and the guerrilla are but a cover for the accelerated preparation of the American military intervention. But imperialism does not count, as in the past, with the possibility of supporting this armed intervention with military dictatorships like those of Onganía or Geisel. The presence of democratic liberties and of mass organizations means that the perspective of an imperialist intervention in Colombia will most probably provoke generalized political crises and popular upsurges in Latin America.

The pseudo-democratic experience in Latin America in the last 20 years was marked by an unprecedented transference of economic resources into the hands of imperialism, which has led to the bankruptcy of the remaining nationalist and leftist petty-bourgeois movements. The Chavez experience in Venezuela (who, in order to pay the external debt, has reduced the oil production, fired thousands of workers and closed state industries); the "leftist" experiences of the Frente

Amplio in Montevideo, the PT in Porto Alegre, the FMLN in San Salvador and of all the organizations represented in the Sao Pablo Forum (characterized by their servilism towards big capital and their absolute inability to answer the most elementary demands of the masses); the Frepaso in Argentina; all these tendencies are disappearing, though at a different rhythm, under the impact of the global crisis. All these experiences point out the same conclusion: no bourgeois or petty bourgeois tendencies will be able to offer a way out of the present historical crisis, or to obstruct the tendency towards the outbreak of a general revolutionary crisis, no matter how eager they are to assume the role of counter-revolutionary firemen.

In face of the menace of Yankee aggression in Colombia, of economic disintegration of the continent and of the mass struggles that extend from Rio Grande to Tierra del Fuego, we call for a campaign of continental mobilization against the imperialist intervention under the following program: Confiscation of the landlords and handing over of the land to the peasants! Expulsion of imperialism! Expropriation of the banks! No payment of the external debt! Workers' control of production! For the Socialist United States of Latin America! In order to lead this program to victory it is necessary to overcome the center-left and "movementist" tendencies by means of the construction of revolutionary parties and of the Fourth International.

An indirect manifestation of the depth of the crisis is the appearance in the imperialist countries of a current that intends to limit its most barbarous expressions by regulating capital movements with taxes. The belief that it is possible to combat the capitalist crisis by means of a policy of "redistribution of wealth," and in particular with the application of the so-called Tobin Tax (a tax of 1 per cent on the international movements of capital), that would serve to constitute a "fund for the elimination of world poverty," is not only utopian but also reactionary. The basis of this movement, called ATTAC, is the supposition that it is possible to correct by fiscal means the tendency of capital to parasitism and decomposition. The proposal of ATTAC does not take into consideration the class nature of the state and of all its instruments, including the fiscal ones. It ignores the politico-economic unity between state budgets and the state itself as well as the determination of the character of the state by the capitalist society on which it is founded. Lastly, it ignores that the fiscal system is but a tool of the bourgeoisie, not only to prop up capital accumulation and extract surplus value by extra-economic means, but also to wage war and oppress the masses. It attempts to rescue "productive" capital, ignoring that it is but a Siamese twin of "speculative" capital, that both are a product of the extraction of surplus value from the working class as a whole and that therefore both are equally interested in its exploitation.

Under the rule of capital, the fiscal system (both direct or indirect taxes) is always, in the last instance, a system of confiscation of the workers and small producers for the benefit of the big capitalists. Even a "Tobin tax" would suppose the strengthening of the state power of the bourgeoisie against the workers and, at the same time, an increase of the taxation burden on the direct producers.

Against this reactionary utopia, we advance the transitional demand which has figured in the program of all Marxist parties, from the Communist Manifesto to the Transitional Program: a progressive and confiscatory tax on the big capitalists as one of the transitional measures of the workers' government in its struggle to create a socialist society. This tax must be applied on all forms of capital, whatever their origin (the so-called fictitious capital is nothing else than hypertrophied finance capital, the fusion of bank and industrial capital). To uphold such a program it is necessary to re-found the IV International.

THE WAY OUT FOR CAPITAL

The long duration of the world economic crisis, which continues, with progressively more intense explosions, since the beginning of the 1970s, shows both the limits of the world bourgeoisie's ability to impose its "solution" and the outlines of the program by means of which it tries to find a way out of the crisis. It aims at achieving a complete restructuring of the international division of labor, directed by the big capitalist enterprises and under the hegemony of the United States. But this process of restructuring implies a massive destruction of surplus capital in order to raise the rate of profit of the remaining monopolies, an unprecedented increase in the exploitation of the international work force, and an opening up of the national markets on a huge scale. That means the complete absorption of the old anti-capitalist states (the USSR, China and their ex-blocs) in the world market, the liquidation of the remaining autonomy of the peripheral countries, and a radical change for the worse in the position of the workers in the imperialist countries-i.e., a period of exceptional political crisis and immense struggles.

The crisis shows that the re-insertion of the ex-workers' states in the world market and the total colonization of the semi-independent countries (Brazil, India, South Africa, Indonesia, Australasia) cannot be carried out without the previous restructuring of the relationships between the US, Japan and Europe, and without the liquidation of the social conquests and the democratic rights-especially the freedom of organization-of the workers of the metropolises. The widening of the EU to the east, for instance, is now conditioned by the necessity of previously carrying out regressive political changes within the EU.

The NATO war against the Balkans has been very instructive in this sense, because the military occupation has led to a standstill due to, on the one hand, the contradictions between Europe and the United States (which have different interests and objectives in Europe, the Middle East and Central Asia), and, on the other hand, the contradiction between the political resources that had to be mobilized to reach these targets and the democratic and constitutional character of the political regimes in Europe and the US and the presence of popular organizations. The refusal of the Pentagon to employ ground troops in war zones; the opposition of Europe, and the internal opposition in the United States, to the antimissile "defense" proposals of the Pentagon; the new rivalry between Europe and the United States in questions of "defense;" the opposition that has developed due to the world economic crisis, the fall of the stock markets and the monetary crisis: all this represents an absolute limit to any tentative of re-colonization in the old and in the new periphery of the capitalist metropolises, as long as the present system of political relations persists. That is proved by the incapacity of imperialism to set up a protectorate in Kosovo.

There is not such a thing as a single global counter-revolutionary front. For that reason, all the talks about a Yankee conquest of Central Asia, the establishment of a cordon sanitaire around Russia and China, and the creation of a new NATO where national armies, employing standardized equipment and directed by a central command by means of satellites, will carry out the functions of the old Roman legions, are but political fantasies. The development of the global economic crisis, the level of struggle and organization of the masses, and the crisis of direction of the international working class; all these factors condition the capacity of action of world imperialism.

The Balkans' War has served to trace the lines of political delimitation within the left and taught a number of essential lessons to those who fight for the Fourth International. While some currents, like the United Secretariat, have been on the side of imperialist pacifism, calling for a "political solution" instrumented by the European Union, those who fight for the re-foundation of the Fourth International have been at the head of the struggle for the expulsion of imperialism from the Balkans, and for the socialist unity of their peoples. We were the only international current able to produce an internationalist and revolutionary alliance: the Socialist Balkan Conference Anti-NATO, which led to the foundation of the Christian Rakovsky Center, composed of parties and organizations of different Balkan countries and Russia. This Conference raises a revolutionary and internationalist program against the bleeding of the Balkans: NATO out of the Balkans! For the revolutionary overthrow of the restorationist cliques! Self-determination of the peoples! For a Socialist Federation of the Balkans!

THE IMPASSE OF CAPITALIST RESTORATION IN RUSSIA

At this stage of the global crisis, imperialism is employing the bureaucracies re-converted to capitalism in order complete the process of capitalist restoration in the ex- workers states. NATO forced the Yelstin regime to support the imperialist front created to bring down Milosevic, and helped Putin to "stabilize" the convulsive Caucasian zone by means of a brutal repression of the Chechen national struggle.

The Chechen War shows clearly the tendency of the Russian State to disintegrate, which is but an expression of the impasse of the whole process of capitalist restoration. Neither Yeltsin nor Putin have been able to replace the bureaucratic-military centralization of the Russian periphery by Stalinism with the attraction of the "progress" which supposedly would be the result of capitalist restoration. On the contrary, the regions try to separate in order to avoid collapsing together with Russia. Chechnya, like other regions, was only ready to unite voluntarily with Russia as a result of the October Revolution, which, bringing down by revolutionary methods the bureaucratic-military centralization of the Tzarist regime, offered to the Caucasian peoples a free democratic association and a perspective of a cultural and social development within the framework of a planned economy.

Capitalist restoration can offer neither one nor the other. That is why Putin launched a war of national oppression against the Chechen nation, with the support of the Russian oligarchy and of international finance capital. That is why the London Club was ready to cancel billions of dollars of Russian debt and the OCDE⁹ is ready to support a Caucasus "stability pact" similar to the Balkans' "stability pact": in order to introduce, at whatever cost, the "free market economy" in the ex-bureaucratized workers' states.

The national aspirations of the Caucasian peoples will bear fruit only through a common fight against Western imperialism and the Russian bureaucracy and oligarchy. The defeat of the new exploiting regimes by the national movements of the Russian periphery is in the interest of the Russian proletariat. We are against the national oppression war of Putin against the Chechen nation. Without the victory of proletariat against the restorationist bureaucracy and without the establishment of a proletarian dictatorship there will not be freedom for the Chechens or for any other of the oppressed nationalities of the former USSR.

The crisis of august 1998 showed the limits of capitalist penetration in Russia as well as the enormous social and national convulsions it implies. It led to a world

⁹ Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

financial crisis, as testified by the bankruptcy of the LTCM and by the financial frauds perpetrated by the Republic Bank of New York, the New York Bank and the main Swiss banks. Another major crisis in the relations between the Russian oligarchy and the global bourgeoisie is still ahead, which they try to avoid by enlarging the field of capitalist exploitation and privatizing the huge Russian agricultural sector. The new stage of the restoration, which will take place simultaneously with an international financial crisis, threatens to provoke unprecedented convulsions in the Russian society.

THE SOCIAL NATURE OF RUSSIA

The fate of the social transformations inaugurated by the 1917 October Revolution has not been decided yet. The bureaucracy has destroyed the workers' state but is still far from having consolidated the restoration of capitalism: it employs the state, as a coercive factor, to protect a set of proto-capitalist social relations. Even before the privatizations, the Russian state no longer existed as a workers' state because, under the leadership of the restorationist camarilla, the state property had lost its social character to become a source of private accumulation for the bureaucracy, thus paving the way for capitalism. Precisely that is what is going on in China at the moment.

The world bourgeoisie and the restorationist bureaucracy are still very far from having imposed a capitalist society on Russia. The bureaucracy has appropriated the state companies but has been unable to give rise to a sustained process of capital accumulation within the framework of a market economy. The privatized companies lack external markets; they even find it difficult to sell raw materials abroad. Russia lacks a banking system, a legal system, and a tax regime. It does not have a labor market as yet, so that the law of labor value is still not the regulating principle of economic life. The bureaucracy has restored private property but not the social relations typical of the regimes based on private property.

The Russian working class is a section of the world proletariat. The present-day generation has not experienced the Bolshevik victory, the Stalinist counter-revolution, and the war against Nazism. But as soon as it begins to struggle for even the most elementary immediate demands, the Russian working class sees itself forced to return to the traditions of the October revolution; that is why, seventy years later, the figures of Trotsky and Stalin reappear as a matter of daily discussion in Russia. Putin, who praises Stalin in order to promote the bureaucratic centralization of the state, has introduced a factor of political clarification vis-à-vis the Yeltsin era, when the restorationists appeared as the "left." All this shows that also from the subjective point of view, from the point of view of the consciousness of the masses, the fate of the social transformations inaugurated by the October revolution has not been decided: their final destiny will be determined only by a huge class struggle

on an international scale. As Trotsky explained in *The Revolution Betrayed*, the October Revolution lives on in the mortal crisis of capitalism. We invite all the groups and militants who fight against capitalist restoration in Eastern Europe to join the movement for the re-foundation of the Fourth International.

The same goes for China, whose entrance to World Trade Organization means the commitment of the bureaucracy to close and privatize (this is already happening) thousands of companies and "obsolete" mines and to open up the Chinese economy to an unprecedented penetration of finance capital. The massive influx of capital in China means that imperialism will monopolize entire industrial branches. The entering of China to the WTO means the beginning of a tendency towards becoming a semi-colony and suffering a similar disintegration to the one provoked in Russia by international capitalist penetration.

The restoration process in China has increased to an enormous degree all the inequalities (social, regional, between the countryside and the city, between men and women) and created an acute social tension. As a result of the closing and privatization of state companies established by the agreement with the United States, several millions of workers are going to be laid off, who will add to the mass of one hundred million rural unemployed. This has already led to a series of strikes, manifestations, highway blockades and factory occupations on a scale never seen in the world. The world bourgeoisie shows a very lively preoccupation about the development of events in China. The world capitalist crisis, with its own methods, has enlarged the historic space of the socialist world revolution on an unprecedented scale.

CENTER LEFT AND POPULAR FRONT

The rise of center-left Popular Front governments not only follows the emergence of great mass struggles (and even of revolutionary situations) in Latin America, Asia, and Africa. It is also a generalized phenomenon in Europe, the birthplace of imperialism, and it may also be a reality in Japan. This means that the Popular Front, in the form of "center left" or "united left," that in the past was the main instrument of the counterrevolution in Spain, France (1936) and Chile (1970-73), is being used now, in a still primary stage of political polarization and political development of the masses, as a sort of "preventive popular front." It is a sure indicator of the progress of the crisis and of the fears of imperialism about its potentially revolutionary consequences.

The rapid political exhaustion of the democratizing and "progressive" petty bourgeoisie and of its "left" allies in power may open a revolutionary perspective if the working class is able to reach the crucial conclusion: the need for a class party, for a peasants' and workers' government, for the unity of the international

proletariat. The condition for this political evolution is the existence of a revolutionary vanguard, fourth-internationalist, organized in a class party; that is why it is necessary to proceed to re-found the IV International as quickly as possible.

The argument that the center left and the popular front are only paving the way for the return of the right only reveals a contemplative and defeatist view of the situation. It may also open the road to revolution if there is an active revolutionary vanguard. The parties that assure that the policy of the center left prepares the terrain for the right have therefore a linear comprehension of the political crisis. Besides, this statement leads to the conclusion that the only way out would be for the center-left governments to "correct" themselves in the bourgeois sense. This exactly what the *Partie Communiste Française*, the *Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire*, and in general the United Secretariat and all the reconverted Stalinists propose.

The organizations that fight for the re-foundation of the IV International call *Lutte Ouvrière* to break with its passive attitude on the international level and to intervene decisively in the process of discussion and organization to re-found the IV International.

COUNTERREVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENTISM OR REVOLUTIONARY PARTIES AND THE IV INTERNATIONAL

On the eve of new and stronger economic and political convulsions at an international level, imperialism cannot rely as it did in the past on the strength and authority of the Stalinist or leftist bureaucracies. The Social-Democratic parties are but a shadow of what they were; Stalinism is an unburied corpse; the nationalists of different sorts have degenerated into a gang of thieves. That is why the imperialism employs huge resources to prevent the political polarization. While it is forced to go to war or leaves repressive regimes to do its dirty work, it keeps the democratic option in reserve; a "democracy" characterized by an unprecedented capitulation to the demands of the imperialist robbers, who also have a total control of the mass media and of the different churches and cults. The complete lack of revolutionary direction of the proletariat allows imperialism to deal even with the most developed guerrilla movements. No authentically revolutionary movement can ignore the importance of the democratic option as an instrument of contention, control and dissipation of the mass movement by the imperialism. It is necessary to help the workers to overcome this obstacle by their everyday experience, following strictly the rule that history can jump stages but the revolutionary party cannot jump the stages of the evolution of the political consciousness of the masses.

The "democratic" environment and the deep social differentiation between a fraction of the petty bourgeoisie

and the desperate masses constitute the milieu in which left movementism develops, fed by Stalinism, nationalism, Social Democracy, and especially by academic intellectualism. Left movementism concentrates in itself all the counter-revolutionary vices that have plagued the workers' movement in the past: the practical movement it is all, the strategic objective is nothing; the struggle of parties and tendencies should be replaced by a "pluralism" in which the revolutionary tendency would renounce to wage a life-and-death struggle for its ideas; the popular will is represented by 51 per cent of the votes, and not by the proletariat carrying behind it the middle strata of the population; down with the proletarian dictatorship (inside democracy everything, outside democracy nothing); for an organization without clearly delimited boundaries and therefore against an organization centralized in order to lead the struggle. A long time ago Engels warned that pure democracy would be the last bulwark of the counter-revolution, and this prognosis was later confirmed by the Popular Front experience. Movementism is therefore a program against class independence, against the construction of a political direction for the working class, against the socialist revolution as the only possible solution to the mortal crisis of capitalism.

In Latin America movementism finds a more developed expression because there the decomposition of the old workers' movement and of the old left is more pronounced. Its organic links with imperialism are clearly shown by the experience of the Sao Paulo Forum, which a few years ago organized in Mexico a meeting in which took part Lula, Chacho Alvarez, Cuauhtemoc Cardenas and a several ex-guerrilla leaders under the auspices of the Mexican Jorge Castaneda and especially of the US Democratic Party. The main parties of the Forum support to the present governments of the region: the Uruguayan Batlle, the Brazilian Cardozo, the rightist Nicaraguan Aleman, etc. In Brazil the official direction of the Workers Party (PT), has opposed the occupation of buildings by the MST (Landless' Movement). In Argentina, Alvarez and many of those who were member of the PC's Central Committee until the creation of the Frepaso now form part of the Alianza's repressive and pro-imperialist government. The Sao Paulo Forum reveals the ties of the United Secretariat of the IV International with imperialism, as shown by their shameless participation in the Rio Grande Do Sul's government (Brazil). The Forum's official section in Argentina is Izquierda Unida (United Left), which is also integrated by the Trotskyist *Movimiento Socialista de los Trabajadores* (MST).

The importance of the Sao Paulo Forum stems from the fact that in Latin America it is possible to feel the symptoms of approaching revolutionary convulsions, which has clearly revealed the counter-revolutionary character of the policies advocated by the Forum.

Different sectors of the European left have found the means of practicing a pseudo-internationalism through their support for the ATTAC movement that, supposedly as a way of "fighting against globalization," proposes a solution to the crisis within the framework of imperialist capitalism (the application of the Tobin Tax). That is not surprising, since ATTAC originated in sectors of European imperialism and its traditional spokespersons, including publications that have surprisingly opened their pages to a "revolutionary left" that they repudiated before.

The political limitations of the great Seattle mobilization are due more to the political influence of those sectors than to the presence of "trade unionists, ecologists and lesbians." The supposedly "free trade" sponsored by the WTO is a fiction, because the WTO treaty is anything but "free" and has submitted world trade to a series of regulations that reflect the interests of the capitalist monopolies (its systematic violation is, on the other hand, an expression of this same inter-imperialist fight and of the world crisis). But the struggle against "free trade" leads nowhere; it is actually reactionary. The power of capital is concentrated in the state, including the relations between states developed in order to protect themselves mutually from the threat of social revolution. The struggle against the states that organize the attacks against the workers and the oppressed nations is the only possible basis for true internationalism, which begins with the struggle against the enemy in its own country. It is, in sum, a policy of pressure in order to reform the bourgeoisie. With the opposite perspective, i.e. with an independent workers' perspective, we call for a campaign in the US culminating in a conference in an important American city.

Left movementism is really the last resource of the counter-revolution in its fight against the working class and its revolutionary parties. When all the mechanisms of state repression fail, the bourgeoisie's only way out is to dissipate the energy of the working class-if it lacks a program, a clear policy, and a revolutionary direction and organization-by means of some sort of "popular front." Movementism can make a sharp turn to the right if it has to confront a revolutionary direction with popular support, although it is more probable that it will disintegrate before as a result of its own contradictions, of the political crisis and, of the advance of revolutionary socialism. Between left movementism and the party oscillate in a centrist way those who proclaim the need to build the revolutionary party and the IV International but never see the opportunity of carrying out this purpose.

FOR A REVOLUTIONARY POLITICAL DELIMITATION

The so-called United Secretariat (USFI) has succeeded in making a synthesis of all the anti-revolutionary policies existing in the left-in the name of the IV International!

The IV International must be re-founded in order to end with this political fiction.

After repudiating the proletarian dictatorship in the name of "democracy" and of dissolving its main sections in popular frontism, the USFI has become part of the practical and theoretical international front for left movementism as an alternative to the construction of a revolutionary party and, of course, as an alternative to the International. The USFI is not a party but a block of careerists practicing entrism in all the existent movements.

A USFI's recent left front in Portugal, the Política XXI coalition, praises the "already dead" socialism for having helped to "humanize" capitalism, thus making it viable. The demand for the "democratic pluralism" against "left authoritarianism" already includes the principle of dissolving the party in the left movementism, based on the very undemocratic principle that political disagreements must not be discussed but hidden in the name of the "plurality of opinions." Left movementism is an obstacle to the development of the political consciousness of the workers.

The explicit vindication of capitalism and movementism go together because the later is but an instrument of the former. In Brazil, the leading part taken by the USFI in the Rio Grande do Sul's government and in the Porto Alegre city government has shown its counterrevolutionary characteristics. The USFI not only practices a capitalist policy (respecting and increasing the subsidies to the big enterprises created by the former government, destroying the social security system by means of a policy which is even worse than that of the national government led by the rightist Fernando Henrique Cardoso) but also is one of the causes of the rightist evolution of the PT government. The USFI has used all the political and repressive instruments of the state to fight and defeat the powerful teacher's strike in the state of Rio Grande do Sul. Not surprisingly, the bureaucratic distribution of scraps of bread through the "participative budget," theorized mainly by the USFI, is a policy officially supported by the World Bank.

The USFI has gone a long way in its advocacy of anti-revolutionary policies. Its French section, the Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire, is ready to abandon the name "Communist" and repudiates Lenin, Trotsky and the October Revolution, whom it sees as the precursors of Stalinism. It is the logical conclusion of a long political degeneration.

These are not isolated examples but central questions of an international policy aimed at rescuing capitalist society in the name of "internationalism." The USFI has publicly supported the imperialist "stability pact" for Yugoslavia and the Balkans through prominent capitalist mass media. The same is true of its support for

the "humanitarian"(?) intervention of imperialism, through the UN, in East Timor.

For the USFI's revolutionary and fighting militants there is no other way out but to denounce this policy, leave this treacherous organization and join the effort to re-found the IV International in order to save the historical flag of Leon Trotsky from being used for a counter-revolutionary anti-workers policy.

A CAMPAIGN FOR THE RE-FOUNDATION OF THE IV INTERNATIONAL

The international meeting of Buenos Aires reaffirms its appreciation about the historical character of the present capitalist crisis and the relevance of its proposal to re-found the IV International in order to overcome the crisis of leadership of the international proletariat. We reaffirm the declarations of the previous four meetings and the four programmatic points of the Geneva Declaration of 1997, and we verify its correctness in the practice of our struggle.

Nevertheless, we understand that it is necessary to take a more decisive step forward in the world campaign for the re-foundation of the IV International by adopting a plan of action. We must make a wider use of the political method employed the Buenos Aires meeting: panels, agitation and mass public meetings. We must attract new organizations to the re-foundationist struggle and develop in the working class and the oppressed masses of the countries where we militate the consciousness of the need for a Workers' Revolutionary International. In order to do that, we will develop a more close and organized coordination of the parties that support the Geneva Declaration.

The success of the proposal to re-found the IV International demands of its participants the greatest political and organizational clarity. This means that we put the fight for the re-foundation of the IV International and the activities and campaigns related to it in the center of the political activity of its supporting parties. We commit ourselves to impulse in our organization's publications, which must have a regular character, a systematic campaign for the re-foundation of the IV International. We therefore add a fifth point to the four of the initial Geneva Declaration: all the members of the movement for the re-foundation of the IV International commit ourselves to issue publications, on a regular basis, in which we will make a systematic campaign for the re-foundation of the IV International.

With these political and organizational proposals, we call to prepare an international conference with delegates elected by the rank and file of each one of the parties and organizations that support this campaign, in order to elaborate definitely the program and the methods of organization and intervention in the international class

struggle of our parties, as a real global party, as a real international, as the IV International.

Buenos Aires, May 31, 2000

Partido Obrero (Workers' Party, Argentina),
Partido de los Trabajadores (Workers' Party, Uruguay),
Oposicion Trotskista (Trotskyist Opposition, Bolivia),
Partido de la Causa Operaria (Workers' Cause Party, Brazil)

Comite Constructor del Partido Obrero, (Construction Committee for a Workers' Party, Chile)

En Defensa del Marxismo (In Defense of Marxism, Spain)

Workers' Revolutionary Party, (Greece)

Marxist Workers' League (Turkey)

Against the Bosses' International

**FOR THE REVOLUTIONARY
INTERNATIONAL OF THE
PROLETARIAT AND THE OPPRESSED
FOR THE WORLD SOCIALIST
REVOLUTION**

Genoa, Italy
September 14, 2000

The G8 summit in Genoa is held at a moment of great unpopularity of meetings of supernational organizations like the G8, the International Monetary Fund, the World Trade Organization, etc., the numerous "internationals" of the capitalists. This time the G8 Summit takes place in a period where NATO puts again the Balkans in flames, Zionism is confronted with the heroic Palestinian popular Intifada, and the world capitalist crisis is aggravated profoundly with the slowdown of the US economy.

The idea is more widespread today than ever before that every time the "powerful" get together, the problems of the world increase and millions of people suffer the consequences.

In the last ten years all the major problems of the planet have been aggravated: increasing poverty, continued worsening of the conditions of life and work, wars and conflicts of various kinds on all continents, environmental catastrophes, old and new epidemics... The balance of all the supernational organizations (including the United Nations) and all the "development" programs is catastrophic: all the problems have been aggravated to the extreme.

The explanation is simple: the function of these supernational organizations is to sustain the profit system. They are the arena for the struggle of the rival interests of the multinationals, which have reached an absolutely unprecedented level of concentration of wealth and power (but entirely in line with what Lenin foresaw in his study of imperialism).

**THE BOSSES' POLICIES ARE SIMILAR ALL
OVER THE WORLD...**

In economic crises, which follow each other ever more closely around the world, the IMF intervenes, granting loans that serve only to guarantee the solvency of the affected countries and the international financial system (as always under capitalism, profits are private while losses are socialized).

The conditions imposed to obtain the loans are the same, although with other methods and other governments, even in Europe:

- Privatize everything possible (productive infrastructure, public services, social security, health, education, etc.);
- Reduce direct wages, indirect wages (the so-called welfare state), and deferred wages (pensions);
- Reduce workers' rights (above all through "flexibilization", that is, the extension of precarious or temporary labor) and in general all democratic rights;
- Apply scientific discoveries and technology without precautions; dispose of the environment and nature without controls; obtain raw materials at least cost, the main producers of which are "third world" countries, which therefore see their own conditions constantly worsen.

Today not only the "third world" is devastated by terrible poverty, which constantly generates migratory waves, but also in more industrialized countries workers suffer a constant worsening of living conditions.

Capitalism is a system which always counterposes the rule and the ever-increasing wealth of the few to the poverty and the dispossession of the many. Globalization of finance capital is nothing else than the latest phase of imperialism. Imperialism is not an ideological or outmoded term. It is the highest stage of Capitalism, its epoch of decline and today as ever before threatens humanity with barbarism.

The antiglobalization movement must clearly recognize imperialism as its adversary, and this means to take as an adversary every imperialist power: not only American, but also European imperialism, its multinationals, its banks, its governments, be they center-right, center-left, or social-democratic. In Europe the struggle against imperialism at home is a central duty of the movement and a condition of its full political autonomy.

The "powerful of the earth" want to avoid having the manifest contradictions become explosive and in some places put in question the rule of their system. In these international meetings they discuss the tools to be adopted, which range from more or less direct military intervention (yesterday the "humanitarian war" against Iraq and Yugoslavia, today Plan Colombia in Latin America) to the crumbs of "aid" and "cooperation" sometimes distributed through the NGOs (nongovernmental organizations).

THE DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES OF THE MOVEMENT

The international antiglobalization movement, which from Seattle to Prague to Genoa contests the summits of world imperialism, is a fact of great political value: it has shown and shows that the great powers of the planet and their order can be and are being opposed by increasing sectors of the world population, particularly by the young generations. That all the social, environmental, humanitarian, and "peace" causes constantly stamped on by the ruling policies can reply to those policies in a united way on international scale.

As always happens, the movement, in itself, expresses a series of generous, but often confused and contradictory, impulses. In broad outline, three tendencies can be identified in the movement:

- A naïve pacifist tendency that is opposed only to the more devastating consequences of the system, promoting a "nonmarket" economy (third sector, "fair" trade, ethical finance) which would cohabit with the multinationals: an absolutely unrealistic perspective or, worse, serving the system's need for consent. Equally misleading are the campaigns to boycott some multinationals, as if there were good and bad multinationals, or bad multinationals and good small and medium national enterprises. This sector makes a dangerous fetish of nonviolence, which helps to legitimate the attempt of governments to divide the movement into "good" and "bad" and, therefore, in the final analysis, to legitimate repressive measures against the movement.
- A neo-reformist, class collaborationist tendency that identifies the enemy as "neoliberalism". But neoliberalism is not a bad policy of capitalism replaceable with a good policy of the same capitalism. A struggle against neoliberalism without a struggle against capitalism is an empty phrase and a deception. If the enemy is neoliberalism, the solution is a series of neo-Keynesian reforms: a "social" (or social-democratic) Europe with somewhat less flexibility and somewhat more social agreement than in the United States; the Tobin tax, a limited tax on the speculative movements of capital, proposed thirty years ago by an adviser to Kennedy and demanded today by a part of the big financial capital to make the international markets less unstable; or the hypocrisy of the "participatory budget" on the model of Porto Alegre (Brazil), where the population is called to express itself on the minimum part of the municipal budget, while the most of it answers to the constraints set by the central government or finances benefits for... the multinationals. At times those who advocate these solutions seem to propose "radical" methods of struggle, in sharp contrast with their so-moderate goal.

In fact, this radicalism often serves merely the purpose of image or to get purely symbolic victories.

- A revolutionary tendency that seeks to destroy the existing system, which by its nature includes poverty, violence, wars, and the destruction of the environment. This tendency doesn't ask capital to be social, democratic, environmentalist, and peaceful. It grasps all class, democratic, environmental, and "peace" demands against capital and for its overthrow. Only the overthrow of capitalism can liberate a future of progress for humanity with rational use of the great discoveries of science and technology in the service of people. What failed in the USSR is not socialism but Stalinism. What failed is not economic planning, which guaranteed to those populations great social conquests today canceled by capitalist restoration. All the reasons for the antiglobalization movement in the final analysis lead back to a fundamental necessity: to return to humanity the power to determine the wealth that it produces and its relationship with the environment and with life.

FOR THE SOCIALIST REVOLUTION, FOR THE REVOLUTIONARY INTERNATIONAL

What is more irrational and inhuman than an economic and social system in which a war or more unemployed can cause euphoria on the stock exchanges and, vice versa, the end of a war or more employed can cause their depression? What is more irrational than an economic system in which the growth of poverty (recession and unemployment) is determined by an excess of produced wealth (overproduction)? What is more hypocritical than a celebrated international "democracy" in which two hundred multinational colossi in struggle for control of the world economy concentrate in their hands an uncontrolled and uncontrollable power?

Only a socialist revolution can end these true monstrosities. Only by breaking the power of the capitalist colossi, returning to social ownership the means of production and reproduction of life, under the control of the workers and the people, only by this is it possible to create the conditions for democratic planning of the economies of single countries and the world, a planning that redefines basic priorities to the desires and needs of the broad majority of humanity.

This future makes sense today only from the perspective of the international class struggle. The workers, the fundamental component of the Seattle mobilization but still a minority in other demonstrations, must join with the other sectors of the movement.

We must work to build an international revolutionary organization to unify the mobilizations globally and give them an anticapitalist political perspective. To the numerous internationals of the imperialists, we must counterpose a new revolutionary international. We must take up again the attempt, unfortunately not successful in past decades, to build the Fourth International.

The struggle for the Revolutionary International of the proletariat through the refounding of the Fourth International is growing inside the movement today: it is the banner and the perspective that can guarantee him a future.

Another world is certainly possible and necessary, but its only name is international Socialism, built through the destruction of the rule of the bourgeoisie and the power of the proletariat.

We create in struggle the indispensable tool for the victory of the socialist Revolution, the new International of the proletariat and the oppressed: the refounded Fourth International!

Smash the IMF, NATO, the European Union—Forward to the United Socialist States of Europe!

*NATO out from the Balkans!
For a Balkan socialist Federation!*

*Smash the Zionist State!
Victory to the Intifada!
For a united, secular, socialist republic in the whole historic territory of Palestine!*

*Expropriate the expropriators!
For world Socialism!*

Movement for the Refoundation of the Fourth International

Workers Party (Argentina)

Revolutionary Marxist Association Proposta (ITO, Italy)

Workers Revolutionary Party (Greece)

Party of the Workers Cause (Brazil)

Marxist Workers League (Turkey)

Workers Party (Uruguay)

Trotskyist League (ITO, USA) *

Trotskyist Opposition (Bolivia) *

En Defensa del Marxismo" Collective (Spain)

Marxist Workers League (Finland)

Ukrainian Trotskyist Opposition (ITO, Ukraine)

Committee for the Construction of the Workers Party (Chile)

Socialist Workers League (Israel/Palestine)

* International Trotskyist Opposition (sections of Great Britain, India, Denmark, Germany)

Statement by the Coordination Committee of the Movement for the Refoundation of the Fourth International

ARGENTINAZO¹⁰: A NEW STAGE OF THE WORLD REVOLUTION

November 2001
Rome, Italy

Under the impact of the world capitalist crisis and a decade of social struggles, the Argentinean popular masses opened a new stage in the development of the world socialist revolution with their rebellion in the historic days of December 2001.

The capitalist economy of the country is in ruins; the bourgeois political system as a whole is in shambles and the question of political power itself is posed. The radicalization deepens and the "interim" pseudo-solutions of the ruling class fail. Starting from the battle cry "Fuera De la Rúa – Cavallo" ("Out with De la Rúa and Cavallo"), the Argentinean people now is demanding "Que se vayan todos!" ("Out With Them All!"). The rejection of the corrupt system of the bankers and of the stooges of the IMF is total. The issue of an alternative political and social power is posed point blank.

The working class plays the leading role in the upsurge of the masses and is the only social force able to Argentina out of the crisis by re-organizing from bottom to top the country on new social bases.

The Partido Obrero, the Trotskyist Party of the vanguard of the proletariat in Argentina is in the forefront of the revolutionary struggle. Its program shows clearly the way out:

- Cancellation of the foreign debt
- Nationalization of the banking system and re-nationalization of the pension funds
- Workers Control
- The capitalists have to pay for the crisis. Nationalize the companies that fire workers. Jobs for everybody!
- Popular Assemblies in every neighborhood and district to organize the distribution of food and to fight back the economic disorganization caused by the government and the capitalists
- For a national workers and popular mobilization to overthrow the whole corrupt and bankrupt political and social regime and replace it by a sovereign Constituent Assembly in the provinces and nationally.

¹⁰ Argentinazo can be roughly translated as "Argentine Peoples Rebellion" refers specifically to the events in Argentina on December 19 and 20, 2001.

- Down with the capitalist government of the usurpers and IMF stooges! For a workers government based on the Popular Assemblies!
- IMF brigands and Yankee imperialists out! For the socialist unity of Latin America!

The initial steps of the Argentinean Revolution have already had a huge impact, not only on the world economic crisis of capitalism, but also on the working class and the oppressed masses all over the world. Scenes reminiscent of the assault on the Winter Palace in October 1917 are a source of inspiration for the revolutionary struggle for new Octobers, in conditions of a Great Recession ravaging all the capitalist countries, both in the imperialist centers and in the semi-colonial periphery. From the "people of Seattle and Genoa" in America and Europe to the Palestinian Intifada and the oppressed peoples resisting imperialist barbarism and war in Central Asia and the Middle East, from the Balkans and Russia to Latin America and Africa, all the exploited and oppressed, all the fighters for social and national emancipation live today with the rhythm of the Argentinean events. The world looks at itself in the revolutionary mirror of Argentina.

We issue a call to all the workers and popular organizations internationally, to all the fighters for freedom and social justice, to all the revolutionaries, to organize everywhere acts of class solidarity with the Argentinean workers, pickets in front of the Argentinean embassies, etc. We call on them to unite and fight on the same revolutionary road, for the overthrow of the imperialist-capitalist joke, for world Socialism.

We address our call to all vanguard fighters in the working class and the class struggle Left: it is time NOW to move boldly forwards to forge the indispensable instrument for the socialist revolution, the workers revolutionary International!

For the Immediate Refoundation of the Fourth International!

Long Live the Revolutionary Popular Rebellion in Argentina!

Forward to the World socialist Revolution!

Movement for the Refoundation of the Fourth International

Workers Party (Argentina)

Revolutionary Marxist Association Proposta (ITO, Italy)

Workers Revolutionary Party (Greece)

Marxist Workers League (Turkey)

Workers Party (Uruguay)

Trotskyist League (ITO, USA)

Trotskyist Opposition (Bolivia)

"En Defensa del Marxismo" Collective (Spain)

Socialist Workers League (Israel-Palestine)

MOVEMENT FOR THE REFOUNDATION OF THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

web links

- | | |
|---|---|
| Associazione Marxista Rivoluzionaria
Progetto Comunista (AMR)
Revolutionary Marxist Association Proposta (ITO,
Italy)
http://www.progettocomunista.it/ | Partido Obrero
Workers Party (Argentina)
http://www.po.org.ar/ |
| Comite Constructor de un Partido Obrero
Construction Committee for a Workers Party (Chile) | Partido de los Trabajadores
Workers Party (Uruguay)
http://www.internet.com.uy/rfernand/tribuna/tt210/index.html |
| "En Defensa del Marxismo" Collective (Spain) | Εργατικό Επαναστατικό Κόμμα: (EEK)
Workers Revolutionary Party (Greece)
http://www.eek.gr/ |
| International Trotskyist Opposition (ITO)
http://ito.gn.apc.org/ito.html | Marxilainen Työväenliitto (MTL)
Marxist Workers League
(Finland) |
| Partido da Causa Operária (PCO)
Party of the Workers' Cause (Brazil)
http://www.pco.org.br/ | Oposicion Trotskista
Trotskyist Opposition (Bolivia) |
| Socialist Workers League (SWL/P)
(Palestine)
http://www.swlp.org/ | Trotskyist League (TL)
(ITO, USA) |

Sympathizers

- Asian Workers League
The Proletarian
<http://proletarian.mine.nu/>
- Workers Action (US)
<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/WorkersAction>