

## **The European Union is a War Machine Against the Working Class and the Peoples of Europe**

### **We must break with the EU and the Euro to achieve social change and build a Europe of the Workers!**

This manifesto sees the light of day amid the French **yellow vests** battle, the people's movement that faces the Macron's regime and questions social inequalities. This fight takes place when the French capitalists, trapped in a global crisis of the capitalist mode of production, attack the working class and the people in order to restore their rate of profit.

The European Union, which was built by and for the capitalists, is an essential instrument for that purpose.

The yellow vests' struggle objectively opposes the EU and its policies. It is also developed in France, one of the most influential countries in the functioning of the EU and responsible for the application of brutal austerity plans in other European countries.

#### **The situation in Greece, the most brutal example**

A few months ago, the media announced with great fanfare that, on 20 August 2018, Greece finally "came out of the bailout". They lied viciously, because Greece has been turned into a semi-colonial country where every important decision needs the approval of Brussels and Berlin and all its economy is at the service of the payment of an unpayable debt equivalent to 188% of its GDP.

Greece is the **clearest and most brutal example** of how far the EU is willing to go to save the big European banks and to give a lesson to a rebellious people. After eight years and three "bailouts", the country has been looted and devastated. Labour rights have been savagely cut back. Its GDP has fallen by 30%, wages by 30% and pensions, after 14 cuts, by 50%. The public hospitals funding has decreased more than a half and unemployment exceeds 20%. Out of a population of 11 million, more than 500,000 young people have had to leave the country looking for jobs. Meanwhile, Tsipras' and SYRIZA's administration continue to implement the EU's misery plans.

Although Greece has been the most violent case of austerity policies, all **EU countries and especially those in the "periphery"** have been deeply affected.

#### **The EU, a war machine against workers and peoples**

The EU has shown itself throughout this time as a **machinery of social warfare**, under the baton of German imperialist capitalism in alliance with the French. They have powerful weapons, the **euro and the ECB**, instruments with which they seal their hierarchy over other European capitalisms. In the absence of a national currency, less competitive countries must impose pay cuts on their workers' wages to avoid external imbalances.

**Neither the EU nor the euro are a "neutral" agency or currency**, which can be appropriated by the European peoples. They are, on the contrary, instruments of capital that must be demolished by the working class to halt the capitalist offensive and achieve real change in their living and working conditions.

When the financial crisis erupted 10 years ago, the major European powers bailed out their banks and avoided collapse by resorting to massive public debt, plundering the periphery and attacking public services, wages and labour rights in their countries. The aftermath is obvious: generalised cuts, privatisation and layoffs in the public sector (education, health, etc.), labour and pension counter-reforms, generalisation of precarious work, wage cuts and increase in social inequality.

While the EU has played the **leading role in the worst austerity plans and labour counter-reforms** since the WWII, its defenders present it as a "democratic" bulwark against the far-right. However, the EU policy towards **refugees and migrants** is as xenophobic and racist as the one now applied by Salvini and Kurz in Italy and Austria.

A policy based on detention centres, expulsions and outsourcing of the dirty work to corrupt dictatorships like the Turkish or mafias like in Libya.

The EU has also supported **the scandalous repression of the Spanish State against the Catalanian people**, who want to exercise their legitimate right to self-determination. This repression has been made possible thanks to the Constitution inherited from Francoism.

In general, the EU has been the instrument of the main European imperialist powers to develop their **foreign policy**, with economic agreements for its multinationals, arms sales to bloodthirsty and corrupt regimes such as Saudi Arabia or Egypt or colonial military interventions such as in French Africa or those carried out under NATO's cover and US' blessing.

### **The EU is undergoing a deep crisis**

Despite the attacks on social rights and economic achievements, the European capitalisms **have not managed to get out of the crisis**. Europe has been immersed in a long economic depression for 10 years. Its "economic recovery", anaemic and unequal, has not been sustained by a cycle of productive investments financed by profits but by an increase in the debt. Now, with no fully recovery in sight, a new recession looms on the horizon. It will explode when profits fall, in a context of speculative bubbles and rising interest rates.

On this economic and social background lies the **biggest crisis in the EU since its founding**. The plans to strengthen the EU powers over the states have been filed. Germany is unable to discipline its partners, while its own political stability is in danger. France is shocked by the yellow vests' unrest, which increases Macron's regime instability. The situation in the UK is chaotic and unpredictable. It is preparing to leave the EU without knowing what will happen after that. The Spanish State is unable to solve the Catalan problem.

The generalised wave of **protests in Hungary** is the most important since Orbán came to power in 2008. It is, in the first place, a fight against the "law of slavery" that authorises employers to demand from their workers up to 400 overtime hours (1 day more per week) to be paid in three years. But it is also a struggle against a far-right regime that stifles political and union rights. It is, finally, the spearhead of a growing discontent that destabilises the Eastern Europe, a territory exploited by German multinationals.

### **The growth of the institutional far-right**

The economic and social crisis that hit the working class and broad layers of the petty bourgeoisie has even confronted middle sectors of the bourgeoisie with the financial capital. In this situation of social crisis, the complicity of the union bureaucracy with employers and governments as well as the actions of the mainstream left have led to defeats of the working class, leading part of these layers astray into the arms of the institutional far-right.

Its agenda is spreading **xenophobia, Islamophobia and racism, against immigration, together with chauvinism** that confronts the EU. This far-right is the voice for the demands of middle bourgeoisie sectors in each country. It is based on the radicalisation of the petty bourgeoisie and takes advantage of the worsening of living conditions of the poorest and most beaten sectors of the population to stir up their confrontation with immigrant workers, who are held responsible for social degradation, exonerating the true culprits, the banks and big capitalists.

They are reactionary forces at the far-right of current regimes and are irreconcilable enemies of the working class. We cannot, however, identify them with Nazi-fascist forces in the style of the Greek Golden Dawn, although they take the opportunity to raise their head.

It is important to note the **rhetorical character of their confrontation with the EU**. Marine Le Pen, in the second round of the 2017 presidential elections, announced that France should not leave the EU but renegotiate the agreements with Germany and that her economic programme had ceased to be "incompatible" with the euro. The Italians Salvini and Di Maio (from the Five Star Movement of Beppe Grillo) are also not willing to put at stake the permanence of Italy in the EU and the euro. And the same can be said of all the institutional far-right in other countries.

The Hungarian uprising against Orbán and his regime shows the limits faced by the far-right when in power. It is the best example of mass rejection generated once it reaches office and applies its reactionary policies at the service of capital.

## New Reformism

Throughout these years, the accelerated decadence of the European social-liberal parties has given way to the emergence of a new reformism, that declare themselves for the "re-foundation of the EU". **Their model was, during a whole period, SYRIZA.** In the previous European elections, Tsipras was the hero and reference of Podemos, Mélenchon, the Portuguese Left Bloc, Rifondazione Comunista or the German Die Linke. The problem is that Tsipras, two years later, became the new Troika's hangman in Greece, the price to remain in the EU and the euro.

However, although Tsipras viciously betrayed his people in the July 2015 referendum, Pablo Iglesias (Podemos) did not hesitate to state that he would have done the same, "Unfortunately, it is the only thing he could do" (7/16/15). Now, **Tsipras's old friends do not take pictures with him anymore, because it is no longer an electoral gain. However, they still maintain fundamentally the same strategy** as in 2013.

On April 12, 2018, Iglesias (Podemos), Catarina Martins (Left Bloc) and Mélenchon (La France Insoumise) announced in Lisbon a common campaign for the upcoming European elections and signed a joint manifesto, "Now the People". The manifesto, which could be signed by any social democrat, does not mention the words working class, bourgeoisie, imperialism or socialism. For its subscribers, there are no social classes, only "elites and people". Their objective is limited to the recovery of the welfare state and the promotion of Keynesian policies, which is not only incompatible with the austerity policies of the EU and the euro, but is also a dead end to solve the crisis of capitalism. These neo-reformists want the re-foundation of the EU and exclude leaving the euro. They talk about modifying the EU treaties and the most "radical" among them speak even of a possible disobedience (France Insoumise, which has abandoned its "out of the EU" plan B). But there is no possible disobedience within the EU. For example, either they submit to the ECB or they recover monetary sovereignty and issue their own currency. In the case of Podemos and the Left Bloc, that policy fits perfectly with their main goal: **to join a bourgeois coalition government with Sánchez (PSOE) in Spain and Costa (PS) in Portugal,** within the framework of the EU and the euro.

By acting in this way, these neo-reformist **parties hand over the banner of the struggle against the EU to the far-right**, helping them capitalise on the people's legitimate rejection of the Europe of capital.

We disagree with the far-left forces that oppose breaking with the EU and the euro on the grounds that this would be a "nationalist" exit and that it "paves the way for the far-right". This false reasoning confounds the just popular rejection of the EU with the far-right chauvinism and xenophobia, grossly misrepresenting the reality and providing a left cover to the neo-reformist defenders of the EU and the euro.

## A programme for real social change

A program for real social change should contain the following measures:

- Recovery and substantial improvement of public services so that they are free, public and of quality, cancelling privatizations through expropriation without compensation; the annulment of labour and pension counter-reforms and the end of job insecurity; to ensure jobs and a living-wage for all, which requires the expropriation of capital and control of the means of production by the working class.
- Ensure the right to free abortion, equality for women and labour rights for the youth; to end institutional racism and xenophobia; to ensure freedom of movement and settlement of migrant workers.
- Stop the authoritarian and repressive leaning of the states and ensure the full exercise of democratic rights and freedoms. Dissolve the special repressive forces and promote workers' and popular self-defence against the State and the fascist and racist aggressions. Guarantee the right to national self-determination of Catalonia and stateless nationalities.
- Stop the environmental degradation, combat the climate change beginning with the socialisation of energy companies putting them under workers' and people's control.
- Leave the NATO, dismantle American military bases in Europe and European military bases abroad. End colonial interventions and withdraw the European troops abroad. End the colonial treaties, such as the CFA Franc currencies in Africa, created for the benefit of French capitalism. Stop the sale of weapons. Allow the right to self-determination of all oppressed peoples.

## **A programme incompatible with the EU and the euro**

It is impossible to apply a programme with these characteristics without **stopping the payment of the public debt, expropriating banks and large companies, socialising of investments and establishing workers' control over production**. These measures are **incompatible with membership in the EU and the euro** and can only be carried out based on a general and permanent mobilisation of the masses. Their implementation will require the seizing of power by **workers governments** arising from new institutions, supported by a network of assemblies and people's councils gathered in workplaces and communities, based on delegates accountable at any time.

The EU's savage performance in Greece shows us that a country's revolutionary exit from the EU will certainly face, from the very beginning, the most brutal sabotage. Therefore, it will be necessary to adopt basic **measures of self-defence**, such as the closing of financial markets, the conversion of financial assets and liabilities into a new non-convertible currency and the state monopoly of foreign trade. Only in this way the economy can be reorganised against external sabotage, while the international working-class solidarity is articulated and new victories bring new countries to build a **Europe of workers and peoples, a Socialist United States of Europe**. There is no solution in a single country. Either the revolutionary process extends to other countries or it will be doomed to defeat.

Some will criticise that this programme is not "realistic". To some extent, they are right because it cannot be achieved by "parliamentary" procedures or by the "social dialogue" of the union bureaucrats. It is a programme to truly change the life of the working class, which means that it will demand huge mobilisations and strong class struggles.

## **Organising a united fight**

To fight for this programme means **to gather the unionism of combat against the bureaucracy and rebuild the union movement on new bases; to organise mobilisations based on workers' democracy and the unification of struggles; to organise international solidarity and coordinate the fight all over Europe**, to strengthen the International Trade Union Network.

To fight for this programme means, in France, to fight for the confluence of the yellow vests, the industrial workers and other unionised sectors, and the youth to organise a general strike to overthrow Macron and to open the way to their demands. And abroad, to organise solidarity with the yellow vests.

To fight for this program means to build and organise a **revolutionary force that stands up for it, in each country and internationally**.