

# Resolution on the World Situation

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*The 4<sup>th</sup> Emergency Euro-Mediterranean Conference, which met in Athens, Greece, on 26<sup>th</sup>-28<sup>th</sup> May, adopted, among other resolutions, a Final Declaration that took up the world situation and regional questions in quite a comprehensive manner. We publish below this text, adopted unanimously on the last day of the Conference.*

The world capitalist crisis, after ten years of economic stagnation, social devastation and political convulsions, continues and sharpens with no solution in sight.

All the extraordinary measures taken by governments and central banks after the Lehman Brothers debacle, the rivers of liquidity to the imploding financial system at a gigantic social cost under a permanent regime of the most draconian “austerity” on the popular masses, has failed to bring an end to the world slump, a **Third Great Depression** in the history of world capitalism. On the contrary, they have produced the social, economic and political conditions for new explosions.

The incapacity of the capitalist system itself to find so far an exit from this crisis demonstrates its advanced historic decline and its strategic impasse after the failure

both of Keynesianism in early 1970s and of neo-liberalism in 2007-2008.

All the contradictory tendencies of the last decade are now intensifying, the slide to barbarism but also the drive of the pauperized masses to seek a way out of the crisis through resistance, rebellion and revolution.

The structural systemic crisis of global capitalism is disintegrating the social fabric everywhere, plunging the immense majority of humanity to depths of sufferings and misery and pushing the system itself to the brink of a precipice: a slump with millions of unemployed and many more millions in underpaid “flexible” labor slavery in Europe and America; an unstoppable tsunami of desperate refugees from the South and East to the North and West, to the gates of the imperialist centers that have produced their destitution in the first place; regime crisis, decay of parliamentarianism and turn to authoritarian rule, a near collapse of the major parties of the bourgeoisie, rise of the far right and of fascism, of racism, xenophobia, Islamophobia, and anti-Semitism in Europe and America, and of reactionary obscurantist “takfirism” in the Middle East and Africa; imperialist military interventions or wars by proxy in the Middle East, Asia, Africa, in the Eastern borderlands of Europe, with the NATO and US standoff with Russia and China threatening to expand imperialist war internationally.

America, as the most powerful capitalist country in the world, is the center of the world capitalist crisis. The post-Brexit European Union, in a process of disintegration, is a most vulnerable frontline target, together with China and Iran, of US capitalism’s efforts to export its own crisis. The election of Donald Trump to the White House is both the highest political manifestation so far of the decay and crisis of the global capitalist system and a powerful, unpredictable factor for its acceleration. Protectionism, economic nationalism and “America first” policies under Trump are means to overcome decline by an international offensive on a world scale, risking, among others, a dislocation of the world market.

The impending regime crisis in the US itself with the unprecedented clash between the personal rule of the Trump Administration and the intelligence services of the state- the worst political crisis since the Watergate scandal raising again the question of impeachment of the President- displays a deep split within the US ruling class; and this crisis in political power is playing itself out in conditions where millions of people are mobilized against Trump from Day 1 of his inauguration, escalating the mass movements already generated by the capitalist crisis, the Occupy movements, the Black Lives Matter, even the mass support around Bernie Sanders before his shameful capitulation in the Democratic Convention.

This upsurge in the US uniting, first of all, the most oppressed and overexploited layers – workers, Afro-Americans, Latinos, women, immigrants, other minorities and for the first time, Muslim and Jewish communities- is the manifestation

of a new powerful international wave of struggles world-wide that follows, after retreats, capitulations and blows, the previous first wave of mass mobilizations produced by the world crisis in Southern Europe, and the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), from Tahrir to Puerta del Sol, Syntagma, and Taksim in 2011-2013. Now, the rise of the US popular movements comes on the heels of the “French Spring” of 2016 with the General Strikes, occupations, mass demonstrations and the “Nuits Debout” in the squares against the anti-Labor Law, the movement of a young generation around Jeremy Corbyn, the non-stop social upheaval that takes turns in the various countries of the Balkans, the huge mobilizations in South Korea to bring down the President, and the General Strike of a full 100 million workers in India and the most recent wave of struggles and general strikes in Brazil.

World politics moves in a most unpredictable, non-linear way, through feverish zigzags to the right and to the left, posing acute and urgent challenges to the masses of the exploited and the oppressed, to their political organizations and social movements, and to the revolutionary left itself.

### **The EU in terminal crisis?**

The EU in a process of disintegration meets, interacts and interpenetrates with the chaos in the Middle East and North Africa. This is manifested most clearly in two countries where these two processes merge: a *Greece* already devastated by the diktat of the EU and the IMF, living a twin tragedy, its own humanitarian disaster combined with the tragedy of thousands of refugees trapped under appalling conditions in a destroyed country ; and *Turkey* in deep crisis, already involved in the wars in the region and with the Kurdish people, in internal civil strife and facing the rising despotism of Erdogan’s regime.

Undoubtedly, Europe, the birth place of capitalism now in historic decline, will become an arena of social battles superseding everything that happened in its historic past, full of blood and fury.

60 years after the launching of the initiative by the ruling classes in Europe of its economic and political integration, the entire project proved to be a disaster in every sense:

*a disaster for the working class and the poor popular strata in the member States of this imperialist Union, facing constant destruction of jobs, wages, pensions, health services, education under a permanent “State of exception”*.

*a disaster particularly for the people in Central-Eastern Europe and the Bal-*

*kans*, where the eastward expansion of the EU and NATO to recolonize the former Soviet space and a Mafia-style restoration of capitalist exploitation led to de-industrialization, destruction of the living conditions of the absolute majority, enrichment of a tiny minority of oligarchs and corrupt politicians, and mass immigration of the impoverished people.

*a disaster for peace*, both in Europe, from the EU's role in the Yugoslav wars to the current Ukrainian debacle and NATO's belligerent expansion to the borders of Russia, as well as the series of European imperialist aggression in Libya, Syria, the Middle East and Africa.

*a disaster for millions of refugees, victims of European and US imperialism*, who, searching for decent conditions of life in their quest for survival, face a "Fortress Europe", a cynical EU closing the Western Balkan road, signing an infamous deal with Erdogan's Turkey and then condemning the refugees to drown in the middle of the Mediterranean and in the Aegean sea, or to be interned in new concentration camps, or to be victimized by racists, fascists, the police and the military, or to be pushed back to their destroyed homelands.

*a disaster for the environment and of all conditions of life* destroyed by capitalist greed

*a disaster for the capitalists themselves* as the world capitalist crisis, gave a fatal blow to the euro-zone, led to an undeclared bankruptcy not only Greece but the entire European banking system, including Deutsche Bank, the biggest bank on the Continent, ignited poisonous nationalism, xenophobia, fascism and racist hatred, fed all national and imperialist antagonisms, and intensified the centrifugal forces of disintegration, starting with Brexit.

### **We have to organize, resist, fight, and win!**

The intensification of all these contradictions produce conditions - despite the prevailing pessimism, particularly among the fragmented, confused and retreating Left- for new class confrontations, even revolutionary developments on the European Continent.

But to fight and win, we need to draw the lessons of recent and past strategic experiences, particularly from Greece, Spain, Portugal, France and Italy.

The huge radicalized mass movements in Southern Europe in 2010-12 has propelled, with some lag naturally, towards governmental power left reformist formations such as Syriza in Greece or movements like Podemos in Spain, as well as blowing wind into the sails of others such as the Left Bloc in Portugal, the IRA in Ireland and, most recently, the *France insoumise* of Mélenchon in France. Syriza, was celebrated, particularly by a defeatist liberal, international left, as the para-

digm of a “radical anti-capitalism” for social change, beyond the “old” dichotomy between reform and revolution, through the parliamentary election of “left governments” supported by mass extra-parliamentary social movements. But Syriza, fully accepting from the start, the framework of the EU and of capitalism, seeking desperately a class compromise and class peace in conditions of class war, with the EU, the IMF and the ruling classes of Europe and Greece, not surprisingly capitulated to these forces in July 2015, betraying popular expectations and the popular will expressed in the Referendum on the Troika’s ultimatum and threat for a Grexit. From the 2015 Memorandum onwards and now again in 2017 with the new one linked to the second review of the so-called “bailout program”, Syriza has implemented the harshest “austerity” measures that even the Right could not have imposed without facing the danger of a revolutionary overthrow. A similar right wing trajectory is followed by Podemos in Spain. In Portugal, the social-liberal, pro-EU government of the Socialist Party is in power, implementing austerity measures thanks to the support of the Left Bloc and the Communist Party.

The lesson is clear: ***there is no middle road or space for class compromise and class collaboration with the capitalist class and the imperialist EU!*** The result is here to be seen by all: the political collapse of nearly the entire traditional Left in Europe, both the openly reformist or the new fake “anti-capitalist” one, in Greece, in France, in Italy, and elsewhere. The ***political independence*** of the working class as the hegemonic force of all subaltern classes against the ruling class is the prerequisite for avoiding social catastrophe, defeating the demagogues of the rising far right and fascism, and a victorious, socialist outcome to the crisis. And this independence and hegemony can be achieved neither by sheer combative trade-unionism, as the experience of the struggle against the El Khomri Law in France has shown, nor by dispersed, spontaneous, unorganized, minority direct action, nor again by any “movementism”, and even less by dissolving into so-called “broad movements” around a charismatic personality like the left nationalist reformist Mélenchon. What is urgently needed is ***revolutionary political organizing, in other words, anti-bureaucratic, internationalist revolutionary parties of the working class and a revolutionary International.***

The European bourgeoisie has proved historically its absolute incapacity to unify the Continent either by means of war or by a “peaceful” economic process. The EU in decay is threatening now all the pauperized masses of Europe to starve them and bury them under its ruins. The call by right wing- or “left”- nationalists for a return to the straitjacket of the bourgeois Nation State is a recipe for disaster. The poisoning of economic life with nationalism leads to fascism and it is condemned to fail in overcoming the capitalist crisis. ***No compromise, no concession but a declared war against any manifestation of racism, of discrimination against the***

*immigrants, the refugees or any community oppressed because of its national-ethnic origin, religion or sexual orientation. No borders, unity in struggle of all the oppressed and exploited!*

Only the working class - “native”, migrant or refugee, employed or unemployed and the vast nomadic proletariat moving between “flexible”, underpaid work positions - can and is forced to put an end to the crisis *by expropriating the expropriators*, all the banks and strategic sectors of the economy, re-organizing it on new, socialist bases, a democratically planned economy under workers’ control and workers’ management. To unify the Continent, on the ruins of the imperialist EU, into a *United Socialist States of Europe*.

The workers and the poor in Europe cannot emancipate themselves without solidarity and a common struggle together with all the oppressed against all forms of discrimination of gender, ethnic-national origin, religion or sexual orientation. A common struggle with the immigrants and refugees, as well as with all the peoples in the Middle East, Asia, Africa or Latin America oppressed by imperialism is necessary.

## **Central and Eastern Europe and the Balkans**

Central-Eastern Europe (CEE) and the impoverished Balkans are being turned into a powder keg by imperialism, US and EU, in their quest for the encirclement of Russia. The Balkan countries are gradually being prepared for “accession” into an EU that is itself in insurmountable contradictions and therefore keeps many countries in the ante-chamber. The “integration” of the region with the EU has been transformed from a pipedream to a nightmare. All the while, the bait of a future “accession” is used to keep the Balkans under the hegemony of the EU. For this reason, the region is even being robbed of its history, the appellation “Balkans” being replaced by the anodyne “South Eastern Europe”.

The region is shaken with constant unrest, national conflicts, the rise of far right governments in Hungary and Poland - but also recurrent social rebellions in Romania, Moldova, Bulgaria, Slovenia, Montenegro, Macedonia, Kosovo, Serbia and Bosnia. Even in Poland, more and more brought under the control of a despotic PiS government, a victorious “Black Strike” of women took place against the extension of the anti-abortion law by the ultra-conservative regime. We refuse to capitulate either to the EU/NATO interventions and manipulations or to national-ethnic hatred. Here too internationalism in action is indispensable for survival and exit from the inferno. *Kick out EU/US/ NATO imperialism, their military bases and their puppets from Central-Eastern Europe and the Balkans! Expropriate all oligarchs,*

***re-industrialize under workers' control and management on the basis of a democratically planned economy according to social need and in line with concern for the environment! Down with chauvinism, active solidarity among the peoples, for a CEE-Balkan Socialist Federation!***

## **Former Soviet space – Ukraine and Russia and Transcaucasia**

From the initial phase after the disintegration of the Soviet Union, it became clear that capitalist restoration was interconnected with the US and EU imperialist plans to fragment and re-colonize the former Soviet space exploiting its resources under oligarchic regimes thinly disguised as bourgeois “democracies”. As the contradictions of the capitalist restoration process were sharpened and became more and more insoluble, particularly after the eruption of the world capitalist crisis, this imperialist effort of re-colonization under local semi-dictatorial puppet regimes has intensified. An extreme and clear example is what happened with the economic-political collapse of Ukraine into a “black hole”, the EU Eastern Partnership” project that failed and the open intervention by NATO and US imperialism establishing a puppet regime of oligarchs and fascist followers of Stepan Bandera in Kiev launching a war against the resistance in the Southern-Ukrainian industrial workers centers of the Russophone Donbass region.

As the 2<sup>nd</sup> Euro-Mediterranean Workers Conference in 2014 and its related Appeal had stressed: *“The NATO-sponsored aggression in Eastern-Southern Ukraine threatens not only the Ukrainian people with a bloody generalized civil war and the peoples of Ukraine and Russia with a fratricidal war, but as well all the peoples of the region, of Europe, East and West, and world peace. We have to stop them by an international mobilization of the workers and popular movements!*

*No confidence can be placed in the secret diplomacy between the rulers of US, EU, Russia, and Ukraine, which works as a smokescreen for geopolitical games and negotiations between imperialists and oligarchs competing at the cost of the peoples themselves in Ukraine, Russia, Eastern and Western Europe, and all over the world.”*

Three years later the situation remains a disaster. It has even become worse as a result of the so-called “Minsk agreements”, the sanctions of the EU and the US against Russia, and secret diplomacy between the Kremlin and the West for a mutual “grand bargain”.

Opposing imperialist intervention and war in Donbass, opposing uncompromisingly both Ukrainian Bandera fascists and Great Russian nationalism, we stand firmly on the internationalist political basis of the previous Euro-Mediterranean Workers Conference: ***Kick out imperialism and fascism from Ukraine! The fake Verkhovna Rada of oligarchic Mafias has to be immediately dissolved. Workers***

*Councils have to be formed everywhere and elect delegates to a new, real Verkhovna Rada, in a **united, independent, socialist Ukraine ruled by the Councils of its workers and people** and not by gangsters at the pay of Washington, Berlin, or Brussels.*

In Transcaucasia, under the cross-winds of the pressure of imperialism and of Russia, the former bureaucracy has donned itself the garb of *parvenu* bourgeois and is pushing the exploitation of the proletariat to its limits, extending the working day, keeping down wages, and robbing the working class of its social gains in such areas as education, health and housing. This new bourgeoisie is engaged in diverting the attention of the masses from exploitation and misery by fanning ethnic-national tensions, most clearly in the case of Nagorno Karabagh that pits the peoples of Armenia and Azerbaijan against each other, and the closing of the border to Armenia by Turkey, which blocks trade from Armenia and further condemns that country already in dire economic straits to further poverty. The Aliiev regime in Azerbaijan is a copycat of the Erdoğan regime in Turkey. As for Georgia, since 2009 that country has been paying a high price for the dirty work its former president, Saakashvili, has played in favor of the US vis-a-vis Russia. That villainous politician has abandoned his own country to be accorded the dubious honour of being appointed governor of a state in federal Ukraine, quite a feat in the modern world, although not unfamiliar in the royal circles of medieval Europe.

### **Kick imperialism out of the Middle East and stop sectarian carnage!**

The Arab revolution, in particular in Egypt and Tunisia, overturned decades-long dictatorships, put an end to a long era during which there was no victorious revolution internationally. The Egyptian revolution in particular was one of the most powerful mass uprisings in modern history, fighting three different power structures successively. Two of these it managed to bring down, but it was finally stopped by the military coup and the Bonapartist regime of General al Sisi in mid-2013. The recent release of Hosni Mubarak from prison is an affront to the heroic struggle of the Egyptian people and shows that the revolution has been beaten temporarily. The Tunisian and more markedly the Egyptian revolutions had a clear working class dimension, but the revolutionary tasks that derived from this dimension were not met because the political independence of the working class from nationalist and liberal bourgeois forces was not established. So it lost the possibility to become the hegemonic force in the revolution leading it to final victory. One of the major reasons for this and the consequent defeat of the revolution is the absence of a revolutionary proletarian party, the creation of which is a burning question in

all of our countries.

Imperialism intervened and spread chaos in the Middle East to stop the Arab revolution: the inferno in Syria and Libya, the al Sisi dictatorship in Egypt, the atrocities in Yemen. The so-called “Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant”, ISIL or Daesh, is a Frankenstein’s monster created by imperialism itself and its regional allies, Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Erdogan’s Turkey in the forefront, in their quest to transform the Syrian popular uprising of 15 March 2011 into a civil war on sectarian bases, casting Sunni against Alevi (and regionally against the Shia). Social misery in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) as well as racism and discrimination against Muslim and Arab marginalized populations in the imperialist heartlands, all this aggravated by the economic crisis that creates large pockets of unemployment and poverty in the metropolitan centers, act to throw young Muslims into the arms of the barbaric Daesh.

As a direct result of imperialist intervention, no less than three countries in the Middle East (Syria, Iraq, and Yemen) and one in North Africa (Libya) are in the throes of many-sided wars that pit a multitude of actors against each other, resulting in a bloodbath that is hardly comprehensible for the peoples of the world. In Syria alone, some 65 countries, most of them as docile followers of the so-called Coalition led by the US, and many non-state organizations are at war. The so-called “Syrian revolution” is long dead. It lives on as a figment of the imagination of left-wing movements out of touch with the realities of the country. The Syrian crucible is the harbinger of a Third World War that senile capitalism is threatening to draw the whole world into. The refugees are without a shred of doubt the victims of these imperialist policies, but are treated as the new pariahs of the world and pushed beyond the borders of Europe on the basis of a dirty deal between the EU and Erdoğan’s Turkey.

The heroic Kurdish people, the only force which really resisted Daesh victoriously in Rojava, Syrian Kurdistan, faces new dangers emanating from the intrigues of US imperialism, secret diplomacy, and the intransigent denial of Kurdish rights even beyond its borders by the Turkish state. Its recent position as the land forces of the US in its fight against Daesh, on the verge of turning into a strategic alliance with imperialism, threatens the emancipatory character of the decades-long struggle of the Kurdish people.

The new Trump administration will escalate the horror. It covers for the far right

Netanyahu government in Israel, expanding the settlers' colonization of Palestinian land and even planning for the annexation of the West Bank, to complete the Nakbah (Destruction) of the Palestinian people. Plans are also being advanced for the exploitation of the natural gas off the coast of Palestine, implying that the Palestinian people is going to be robbed of a lucrative resource that rightfully belongs to it. This year is the Centenary of the Balfour Declaration, that sinister *profession de foi* on the part of British imperialism that provided Zionism with the opportunity of establishing a "Jewish home" in Palestine, thus establishing the historical basis of the enslavement of the Palestinian people. Let us rise to defend the rights of this persecuted people in order to make self-determination possible for them. The Palestinian question can only be solved through the defeat of Zionism, the full implementation of the right of self-determination of the Palestinian people, including the right of return of the refugees, and the establishment of a free, secular, united, socialist Republic on the historic territory of Palestine on the basis of the coexistence of Jew and Arab.

Furthermore, the strategy of the Trump administration is to exploit the reactionary Sunni-Shia divide to form a war alliance of the oligarchic Arab regimes in the region, under the leadership of Saudi Arabia and the complicity of the al Sisi dictatorship in Egypt, with the warmongers in Israel, for a confrontation with Iran and its regional allies. This will play into the hands of the Saudi kingdom, probably the most reactionary state on the face of the earth today ruled by a band of *rentiers*, in its quest to seize ever greater sources of fossil fuel, and the AKP government in Turkey, in its obsessive effort to make its leader Erdogan the "*Rais*" of the entire Sunni world.

Everything shows that any solution to the ills of the MENA region is predicated on the eviction of imperialist forces from the region. Only when imperialism is cast out can the peoples of the region start to heal their wounds and overcome their differences. The festering dynamics of a sectarian Sunni-Shia war on the scale of the Middle East and beyond threatens not only the populations but also the age-old civilization of the region. This tendency is now joining hands with imperialism and Zionism. Carnage can only be stopped by a broad front of anti-imperialist and anti-Zionist forces that fight also against the reactionary regimes in their own countries. Only a Socialist Federation of the Middle East and North Africa will provide the final solution to all the ills of the region.

**Urgent response necessary for an urgent situation**

The drive to generalize the imperialist war is more dangerous than ever, it threatens all the peoples of the world- and ***we have to fight everywhere to defeat imperialism and war***. Even before the advent of Trump, US imperialism in collusion with its European allies was feverishly working through every means available towards the encirclement of both Russia and China with the purpose of bringing them down on their knees when circumstances permit. This dogged policy, accompanied by the drive to control the Middle East because of its energy resources, will, in all probability, lead the world to the catastrophe of a Third World War, sooner or later. The dramatic alternative posed by Rosa Luxemburg during the First World War is more topical now than ever before: ***Socialism or barbarism***.

The Emergency 4<sup>th</sup> Euro-Mediterranean Workers Conference in Athens, Greece, on May 26-28, 2017 appeals to all the forces of the international working class movement that are loyal to the revolutionary ideas of Marxism, to all genuine communists, to all who are struggling for the emancipation of the oppressed, to all freedom fighters to gather our forces in order to stop this drift into barbarism.

This year is the Centenary of the Great October Revolution, which created the first durable workers' state in history. All the rest of the revolutions and other types of transition to the abolition of capitalism in the 20<sup>th</sup> century were, to a considerable extent, the offspring of this fountainhead. Let us take our inspiration from the October Revolution, strive to create anew an international movement that will lead all the struggles for emancipation, avoid the mistakes of the past, and create the bases of a classless society on the international scale that will forever rule out the barbarism that capitalism in decline is driving us into once again.

Voted unanimously, 28 May 2017