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Europe

Towards an anti-capitalist pole

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For several years the organisations of the European Anti-Capitalist Left (EACL) have built links and met regularly to debate, gain familiarity and try to act together on a continental scale. On May 31 and June 1 2008, such a meeting in Paris allowed a step forward to be made: around a hundred representatives of 37 organisations from fifteen European countries debated over two days the capitalist offensive and how to pass to the necessary counter-offensive, the evolution of social democracy and the Communist Parties, the dynamic of the class struggle.

The debate brought out convergences and confirmed common reference points on the main anti-capitalist measures and the necessity of a clear policy of independence in relation to social democracy. All the organisations present reaffirmed the necessity of rejecting all policies of parliamentary or governmental coalition with social liberalism, social democracy or the centre left. These key references for the reconstruction of a new workers' movement and an anti-capitalist alternative did not exhaust all the indispensable debates needed to elaborate a socialist project, on the diverse experiences in Europe, on the key questions – the formulation of a European anti-capitalist programme, the problem of war, the eco-socialist response to the ecological crisis – and on the form and content of the socialism of the 21st century.

This success was of course linked to curiosity about and sympathy for the initiative of the LCR, the construction of a new anti-capitalist party (NPA), but there was more. A historic change of period has been working its way through the workers' movement and all organisations, for several years. This process has perhaps reached maturity in a series of countries. The conjugation, in the context of capitalist globalisation, of the current crisis of capitalism, of the redoubling of attacks on social and democratic rights, and the social liberal evolution of the traditional left, opens a space for the radical left.

The organisations present in Paris on June 1, 2008 decided to meet again before the end of that year and to pursue the debate on how to create an anti-capitalist pole in Europe, in particular at the European elections of June 2009.

This was done on December 13, 2008 in Paris. Once again it was the LCR and the NPA, then in construction, who took responsibility for the organisation of the meeting. A smaller meeting – most of the 12 organisations from Greece present in June could not travel this time, investing all their energies in the youth anti-government mobilisation while others had national meetings on the same day – it made progress towards the setting up of an anti-capitalist pole at the next European elections and also in affirming national links (for example the Belgian LCR and the Socialist Party of Struggle – PSL, ex-MAS – have since decided to participate together in the European electoral campaign in the context of the European anti-capitalist left pole). The Polish Party of Labour (PPP), the Socialist Party (SP) of Sweden, the Anti-capitalist Left (IA) from the Spanish state, the Critical Left (SC) from Italy announced their willingness to engage in a common European campaign alongside the NPA of France, attempting to create an anti-capitalist pole at the European elections. It is unquestionably a step forward, the statement adopted by the anti-capitalist currents and organisations of Europe witnesses to a will to discuss and act together.

The crisis, like the social resistance to the plans of capitalist restructuring of the governments of the European Union has obviously had an accelerator effect. The discussions on the situation in Greece have certainly shown that it did not amount to an isolated example.

This type of meeting is also useful for “thinking Europe”: the common points of situations in the context of the crisis, but also their specificities in the unequal development of the social movements. For all the delegates, and here there

is a difference with other left currents, it is not simply about attacking the excesses of finance capital or returning to the welfare state, as Die Linke proposes in Germany. It is necessary to break with capitalism, satisfy the demands and social needs of the popular classes and to do that to attack the property and power of the employers.

In the same sense, unlike the majority of forces grouped inside the European Left Party, the anti-capitalists reject participation in governments or parliamentary coalitions with social democracy and the centre left. For what is at stake in all these discussions is the emergence of a new political current on a European scale: an anti-capitalist pole. After social democracy, the Greens and the Left Party, which essentially comprises the European Communist Parties, the “anti-capitalists” need to be there.

This “anti” current goes beyond the organisations who have signed the final statement. Relations should be built or strengthened with parties like the Left Bloc in Portugal, Syriza in Greece or the left currents of Die Linke.

In the midst of these meeting the delegations of the LCR and the NPA in France were in Poland in December 2008 to meet activists in the Polish Party of Labour (PPP) and the free trade union “August 80” (which is at the origin of the construction of this new party) and participated on January 17, 2009, at Ruda Slaska, in the national meeting of this party, organised with a view to preparing the European elections campaign, which decided that the PPP be involved in the construction of an anti-capitalist left on the European scale.

The organisations present in December in Paris also decided to act together to contribute to the success of the unitary demonstration against NATO in Strasbourg and set a meeting in Strasbourg for early April to continue the construction of this European anti-capitalist pole.