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The subject of revolution and revolutionary power – the Communist Party, class-based and internationalist

- The Communist Party is the organized vanguard of the working class, its advance detachment. This constitutes the fundamental characteristic of the “Party of a New Type”, which was created in tsarist Russia in 1903, following several earlier forms of workers' organizations, including the International. The formation of the Communist Party was not an exclusively Russian phenomenon. It was born as the “product” of the socio-economic development of capitalism, out of the necessity for the working class to obtain its own party. This necessity had been predicted by the theoretical formulations of Marx and Engels. The founders of scientific socialism analyzed, in a scientific way and method, the historical limits of capitalism and the historical role of the working class, in relation to the necessity for the socialist revolution.

The identity of the Communist Party as the most conscious section of the working class does not preclude its ability to express at the same time the interests of all working people, both independently, as well as through its strategy of alliances. In the ranks of the communist parties can be found not only the best representatives of the working class, but also those of the other popular strata, of its social allies. All members of the communist parties, irrespective of their class position and origin, struggle for socialism, are inspired and defend the scientific theory of socialism. The organizational principles guiding the formation and the operation of the Party, the ways and the locations where it builds up its party organizations, the criteria governing its class composition are all determined by the class interests that it expresses.

- Bourgeois ideology and propaganda have concentrated their attacks on the character of the Communist Party. Its class instinct has proven to be extremely correct and precise. Equally noxious have been and continue to be the attacks of revisionism, both right and “left”. If we study again that entire period of turbulent discussions regarding what kind of Party is needed, based on what

principles, we can easily reach the conclusion that the Communist Parties were born through an uncompromising struggle with opportunism in the ranks of the then social-democracy. Without this struggle it would have been impossible to create a “Party of a New Type” at that precise moment, when the necessity for the socialist revolution had matured.

Today, bourgeois ideology and opportunism have once again concentrated their attacks on the character of the Party, either directly or indirectly, in a frontal assault or in a roundabout way, posing the question whether there exists a working class today and, if it does, whether it can act as a force for the overthrow of the system. Despite differences among the two, there exist important points of convergence, primarily on the falsification of the positions of the classics of M-L, regarding what constitutes the working class, what criteria should be used for determining the class structure in capitalist society.

The false arguments that Marx had identified the working class with manual labor and a lack of education are being constantly repeated. So are the “arguments” that the working class consists only of the industrial proletariat or that the identity of the working class is determined by the level of its income, by the degree of its pauperization and social exclusion. They have every interest to deride the objective criteria that determine the breadth and, primarily, the historical role of the working class, in relation to the ownership of the means of production, the use of labor power as a commodity, the production of surplus value and its realization. They pretend that they cannot comprehend why Marx distinguishes between productive and un-productive labor from the point of view of capital, so that they can exclude significant sections of the working class from its ranks. They promote, more intensively than in the past, the irrational theory that class position is determined by what each person believes about himself, by the level of political consciousness and of political behavior.

Innumerable times we have listened to and read that there exists no working class today, that there exists no working-class movement that can act as an overthrowing power, because working people are not struggling for bread alone, but for luxury necessities like a second car or a second home. It is obvious that they do not want and they cannot comprehend the objectively progressive

element that is the rapid growth in human needs, their historical character at each time juncture. The theory regarding a working class that is consuming and overconsuming is a theory that is advantageous to the bourgeois class and its system, as well as to opportunists of all brands and types. It is advantageous to the bourgeois class, because it can be used to restrict the struggle of the working class to the lowest possible limit of demanding only a minimum redistribution. It is advantageous to the opportunists, because they can limit the struggle of the working class to a mere amelioration in the terms on which labor power is being sold.

The Party collectively studies and follows developments in the class structure of society, using objective data and on the basis of the combined leninist criteria for inclusion in one class or the other. It follows the processes by which the other popular strata are approaching the working class.

- The character of the Party determines its organizational policy, the principles for party construction, the distribution of its forces and of its cadre. The 16th and 17th Congresses of the Communist Party of Greece have placed substantial emphasis on the issue of the concentration of forces on the basic front of struggle, that is, the working-class movement. There was constructive criticism in these Party bodies, because our steps forward have not been sufficient and have not covered the entire spectrum of today's needs. The objective difficulties, the new problems that exist cannot constitute an alibi.

This issue will be determined at the level of our orientation. We should be judged by how good we are at passing from words to deeds that correspond to the fundamental principle for the historical role of the working class. By how capable we prove to be in bringing our organizational measures in conformity with our position that there cannot exist a stable growth in the movement without an upturn in the working-class movement. Without the working-class movement taking initiatives for a social alliance with the other popular strata and their movements. An antiimperialist, anti-monopoly democratic front cannot be built simply on the basis of the problems of the masses, but should be founded on an alliance of social forces.

- From the moment that Marxist theory made its appearance on the historical scene and was propagated in the ranks of the working class with the formation of its first political parties, internationalism became a fundamental tenet of the working-class movement. It stems from the realization that the working class of all countries has a common vital interest in overthrowing bourgeois power. The slogan “Proletarians of the world, unite”, developed by Marx and Engels, remains ever timely and immortal. In our days, when capitalist internationalization has assumed superior forms in the fields of the economy and of the international and regional interstate alliances, this slogan obtains an even more vital importance.

Its whole-hearted adoption in practice by a Communist Party is an inseparable element of its identity, it constitutes a genuine proof and assurance that it fulfills its internationalist role. The internationalism of the working class, proletarian internationalism, goes well beyond the importance for all communist parties to work in unison for the international unity of the working class and its movement. It constitutes a vital precondition for the development of the internationalist action of all popular forces, for the alliance of all antiimperialist forces at the international level.

Imperialism has been constantly vilifying and fighting proletarian internationalism by all available means. It would have been awkward if it did not act, in this field as well, with an acute class instinct and maturity. The primary problem today is not what imperialism is doing, but what the state and the perspective of the communist movement are. The underestimation, the neglect and, even more importantly, the rejection of the internationalist action of the working class constitute today some of the most glaring symptoms of the lack of ideological unity in the communist movement and of its crisis. If this problem is not confronted, it will, in turn, prove to be a decisive element in perpetuating the crisis. So, what is to be done?

Under the present conditions, our Party has formulated its position regarding the necessity of developing coordination and common actions around antiimperialist and anti-monopoly goals, of promoting common efforts in our policy of alliances. It is obvious that this is not sufficient. The communist movement does not have to confront only several glaring results of the imperialist

policies, or what is commonly referred to as the immediate “big problems”, that is issues such as poverty, unemployment, war, state terrorism, etc. These issues are nothing more but open manifestations of imperialism's strategy today. The capitalist restructuring policies are not a mere continuation of past policies of the reactionary forces, a result of an adverse correlation of political forces, but constitute an internal necessity of the capitalist system.

The struggle around antiimperialist and anti-monopoly goals can, of course, help to change the correlation of forces, to develop an anticapitalist consciousness. It should of course be strengthened, in an effort to bring together, at an international level, a broad spectrum of popular forces, movements and political forces with similar perspectives and orientations. But it does not constitute an independent, separate stage in the movement's struggle, because the contradiction between the people, on the one hand, and monopolies and imperialism, on the other, cannot be separated from the fundamental contradiction between labor and capital. Under certain conditions, this struggle may contribute to the passage to socialism, **an issue that should concern the communist parties today and not in a far-off future**, irrespective of the issue in which country or countries conditions will mature first, bringing the timeliness of the socialist revolution to the forefront.

Of vital importance for the communist movement in this regard is the study of the causes for the victory of the counterrevolution in the socialist countries, a study that can contribute to drawing important lessons and could help make the communist movement more mature. This issue is closely related to the experiences that can be drawn from the ongoing efforts to construct socialism today and the necessity of defending the socialist system in these countries. These issues cannot be solved through regional and international meetings, that concern themselves with specific aspects of immediate interest, or, even more, through mass mobilizations, meetings, conferences, etc of broader forces, bringing “everyone together” as it is said. They need to be the object of a systematic, multi-dimensional study and discussion among the communist parties that have similar concerns in this direction. Our Party ascribes great importance to the effort of developing a distinct presence of the communist movement internationally.

- A number of Communist parties are expressing the opinion that, under the present conditions, there is sufficient experience and that a distinct presence and a systematic collaboration of the communist parties is not required. Instead, according to this view, a simple exchange of opinions and experiences, as well as common actions on only certain issues are sufficient. We believe that the issue of experience is important, but that it is secondary and insufficient compared to the primary and fundamental issue which is the elaboration of a common strategy against imperialism, in the path of struggle for socialism. This issue is being posed today even more forcefully than in the past, given the significant developments that have occurred since the first decades of the 20th century. All capitalist countries, irrespective of the level of development of their economies, irrespective of whether they retain remnants of pre-capitalist relations, irrespective of whether they take part in a regional interstate imperialist union or not, are all included, in one way or the other, in the international imperialist system. Imperialism, despite inter-imperialist contradictions, has a common strategy.

Always bearing in mind the goal of surpassing the crisis in the communist movement, we need to develop a substantiated criticism of those perceptions and practices that undermine the path towards the regroupment and the rebirth of the movement. A Party that criticises others should itself be open to criticism by other Parties. There should be no monopoly on criticism.

The Communist Party of Greece engages in open and public criticism after having reached the limits of comradely discussion, particularly when it is being provoked. In any case, we are extremely careful in our criticism to avoid providing ammunition to the enemy. We have adopted a clear-cut position and we will continue to do so towards those communist parties and their allies that took the initiative for the formation of the “European Left Party”. This formation has been constructed on the basis of the directives of the European Union regarding the programmatic directions and the organizational principles of the so-called “european parties”. However, the problem is not limited to that. Everyday it becomes more apparent that the formation of the “European Left Party” does not only express specific ideological orientations, the acceptance of the

capitalist unification process, but that it also serves a particular goal: to place divisive barriers, not only to the working class movement, but, more generally, to any alliance of the antiimperialist, anti-monopoly forces.

Even worse, it plays an interventionist role in the interior of communist parties, it utilizes pressure methods in order to achieve their entry into the ELP as members or observers. The leadership of the ELP goes as far, in order to accept a new party in its ranks, as to demand a declaration of condemnation of the so-called “stalinism”, a term under which they group any opinion with which they disagree. They constantly manoeuvre, in order to group new forces in their party, they alter their positions overnight, so as to attain the preconditions for being recognized by the European Parliament. It is not by coincidence that the formation of the ELP caused a substantial division in the interior of the parties that played the leading role. There does not exist a unanimous agreement of these parties' rank and file. This is, of course, an internal matter of each party, but, from our side, we cannot remain silent in front of such choices, particularly when these forces pretend to be sworn enemies of the existence of a leading center. We should say things by their true name. In the final analysis, they are not opposed to the existence of unified structures per se, but they are opposed to the common action of the communist parties.

- A very interesting subject for discussion is the attitude that the communists should adopt towards movements and structures that make their appearance at the international scene, such as the “Social Fora”. Starting with the massive militant mobilizations in Seattle, many internationalist mobilizations against the decisions of the imperialist unions, against war, poverty and unemployment took place in Europe, in Latin America, in South-East Asia. From the very beginning, it became apparent that these mobilizations expressed a wave of discontent and protest. The mass character and the orientation of these manifestations were determined by the participation of unionized workers, by the role of the trade-union movement. A variety of other organizations that expressed radical movements also participated in these manifestations. The breadth of the manifestations was not limited, however, to the forces mentioned above. From the very beginning,

and even more so as time passed, a large variety of not only different, but often diametrically opposed, even reactionary, nationalist and anticommunist tendencies made their appearance.

We saluted these manifestations, despite their vague orientation, we underlined the differences of the various currents represented in them. We saw that the struggle between the different currents would be a tough one and its result would determine whether a radical antiimperialist, anti-monopoly movement could arise or whether conciliatory forces would take the upper hand and would lead the rising movement to a downturn.

This is the reason why we disagreed with the various, often spontaneous, but many times deliberate, proposals to constrain this multi-variegated movement to a unified structure that would obtain the characteristics of a leading center. As it often happens in such cases, it is not only inexperienced popular forces that take part, forces that have not yet found the road to a politicization of their actions, forces which will painstakingly conquer their own political experience. From the very first moment when the movement attained a certain degree of recognition among the working people, forces linked to social-democracy, but also governmental, opportunist and anticommunist forces, deliberately started penetrating the movement, with the carefully planned goal of leading and molding a vague movement according to their own interests. Their animosity towards the working class movement and the communist parties became immediately apparent. They wanted the working people to struggle within limits that they would determine.

We took part in many manifestations, we participated in several solidarity events, we took part in separate meetings organized by the communist parties, we supported, as much as we could, the radical forces. But we refused from the very beginning our participation in the structures of the “Fora”, not because different forces participated in them, but because the attempts towards an assimilation of the movement had stamped the activities of the “Fora” from early on. There exists a large volume of concrete evidence proving this, evidence which we have published with analytical details in our Party's daily and theoretical organs. At the top of the “Fora” there is an intense battle being waged for control. It is also apparent that various governments of powerful capitalist countries are eager to utilize various movements as support in their competition with the USA or

other imperialist centers.

The “Fora”, particularly in Europe, have been following a downward turn. In those instances when a certain degree of dynamism is displayed, this is not due to any leadership from above, but to the growth in various countries of movements in opposition to the policies of their governments and the policy of the USA.

There is important experience that can be gained from those movements that have limited themselves within the bounds prescribed by this systematic policy of assimilation and control. Several communist parties believe that participation in these movements may signify an attempt at influencing them from the inside to move in a positive direction. Our experience, particularly in Europe, demonstrates exactly the opposite. We can only speak of course about the specific situation. Participation from the inside is not always advantageous for the movement. Many times such a participation may help. There is, in fact, positive experience in this direction from the past. In this particular case, however, participation is being utilized for the strengthening of those leading forces that aim to assimilate such activities. Moreover, from the moment that these political forces are being supported by the mechanisms of the multinationals and by several governments, it is obvious that they do not wish to develop a movement against imperialist choices. Judging from the composition of the “Greek Social Forum”, we believe that we have the right to say that such a movement cannot have any authority, cannot provide any guarantees, from the moment that various political forces and trade-union leaderships that have paved the road and facilitated, through the years, the capitalist restructuring policies participate in it. We believe that we are dealing with forces that are utilizing internationalist action, with vague and questionable slogans, in order to improve their profile in the interior of their countries.

Various movements exist and develop in many countries. New organizations and initiatives make their appearance, class struggles are being waged, manifestations of solidarity take place. The issue is to avoid wavering on choices that have no future and that place obstacles to the dynamics of the movement, but, instead, to support initiatives that work in an opposite direction, even when they are functioning with a spontaneous logic. The criterion for participation should not be whether we

agree on everything, but whether we help in bringing forces together in a militant, radical direction and in gaining experience through common action. It is a different issue to have a multitude of tendencies in a movement that is just making its initial steps and a totally different one to restrict ourselves in a “movement” that has already become assimilated. It is of course true that in the activities of the “Fora”, particularly in regions when the movement is on the ascent, various militant forces and individuals are participating. This is not the case in Europe. We believe that this issue should be the subject of comradely discussion and exchange of experiences. What is required is to help to develop a powerful, massive and correctly oriented international front, expressing the alliance of antiimperialist, anti-monopoly forces. This is the duty and the responsibility of the communists today.