

Resolution on the eurozone crisis from AWL NC 04/12/11

1. There is a serious risk of some countries crashing out of the eurozone, or the eurozone collapsing altogether.
2. Such collapse would seize up the global credit markets through which capitalism feeds and breathes in the same way that the Lehman Brothers collapse did in September 2008, only on a much greater scale. It would have global impact, especially in Europe, and including on economies not in the euro.
3. For the labour movement and the left to rejoice at the collapse, because it is bad for capitalism, would be foolish. The break-up of capitalist Europe into a bearpit of countries very closely intertwined economically, yet erecting walls between themselves and competing without restraint, offers additional obstacles and dangers for the working class, not advances.
4. Under threat of this collapse, in the next days or weeks the leaders of the eurozone may move to drastic new measures.
5. It is foolish for the labour movement and the left to make ourselves humble helpers for one or another Euro-capitalist rescue scheme. All the capitalist rescue schemes will involve harsh cuts and privatisations, even if and maybe especially if they also include more benign moves such as the issue of eurobonds, greater fiscal unity, and more economic powers for the European Parliament. And all may be hopeless anyway.
6. The specifically eurozone part of the global capitalist crisis stems in large part from the inbuilt inadequacy and clumsiness of a "unification of Europe" which is only a quarter-unification and is managed from above, bureaucratically, and within neo-liberal dogmas, by patchwork compromises between capitalist clusters which simultaneously, like all capitalists, compete viciously. The euro was mismanaged from the start, pushed through on the 1990s wave of capitalist triumphalism.
7. Eighty-eight years ago Leon Trotsky wrote: "To the toiling masses of Europe it is becoming ever clearer that the bourgeoisie is incapable of solving the basic problems of restoring Europe's economic life. The slogan: 'A Workers' and Peasants' Government' is designed to meet the growing attempts of the workers to find a way out by, their own efforts. It has now become necessary to point out this avenue of salvation more concretely, namely, to assert that only in the closest economic co-operation of the peoples of Europe lies the avenue of salvation for our

continent from economic decay..." That is true today, too.

8. We, the labour movement and the left, need our own plan for the reconstruction of Europe in the interests of the working class, based on social ownership and control of the great accumulations of productive wealth and in the first place of the banks, on workers' control of economic life against the domination of the global markets, and on social levelling-up across the continent.

9. We are far from that. The European TUC calls only for "Eurobonds to facilitate investments for sustainable jobs", "a financial transactions tax", and "fair taxation". The "Party of European Socialists", the Europe-wide link-up of social-democratic and Labour Parties, held a special conference on 25-26 November in Brussels, but produced no better ideas. Several of the social-democratic leaders — in Greece, in Spain, and in Portugal, until very recently — have been in government pushing through the cuts-and-privatisation "answer" to the crisis, against working-class resistance. The far left, too, has mostly said little about the eurozone crisis, other than to mention it as yet another example of the generic crisis-ridden character of capitalism.

10. It is the job of the AWL to be a pioneer in developing a voice in the European labour movement calling for workers' unity across Europe with a common programme to remake European unity. *We should prioritise resolutions on Europe and our programme at trade union conferences this year, in consultation with the Industrial Committee.*

11. A workers' government in Greece would pose demands on the eurozone, but, short of a very rapid and simultaneous development of class struggle across the continent, would probably have no choice but to default on Greece's historic debt and quit the eurozone. Its prospects would still depend on the development of solidarity and class struggle across the continent. The converse logic does not hold. Default and exit by a bourgeois Greek government would not unleash any necessary logic pushing Greece to the left. For the Greek workers, the slogan must be: no sacrifices, in euro or in drachma. For the workers of Europe: solidarity with the Greek workers; *make the rich pay for their crisis, not the European working class.*

(Amendments incorporated: in point 11, to add " make the rich pay for their crisis, not the European working class" (BR); in point 10, to add "We should prioritise resolutions on Europe and our programme at trade union conferences this year, in consultation with the Industrial Committee" (JBx).