

XX CONGRESS



WITH THE WORKERS AND THE PEOPLE
DEMOCRACY AND SOCIALISM

ALMADA 2.3.4 DECEMBER 2016



POLITICAL RESOLUTION

(Excerpts)

Unanimously approved by the XX Congress

Table of contents

Chapter I

International situation

- 1.1. The crisis of capitalism
- 1.2. The imperialist offensive
- 1.3. The struggle of the workers and peoples
- 1.4. Socialism, the alternative to capitalism

Chapter II

National situation

- 2.1. The right-wing policy and the situation of the country
- 2.2. The evolution of the European Union
- 2.3. The economic, social, cultural and political situation
- 2.4. PSD/CDS-PP government action
- 2.5. The elections of October 2015 and the new phase of national political life
- 2.6. The economical situation
- (...)
- 2.12. Patriotic and left-wing policy

Chapter III

The mass struggle and the alternative

- 3.1. The mass struggle
- 3.2. The struggle of the working class and the workers, the engine of mass struggle
- 3.3. The struggle of other classes, strata and social groups and populations
- 3.4. The broad-united organisation of the working class and workers. The Broad-united Trade Union Movement
- (...)
- 3.8. The political and party system
- 3.9. The struggle for the patriotic and left-wing alternative
- 3.10. To strengthen the PCP and the mass struggle, build the alternative

Chapter IV

The Party

- 4.1. The identity of the Party and its affirmation
- 4.2. Party Action
- 4.3. Priority guidelines
- 4.4. Leadership
- 4.5. Cadres
- 4.6. Organisation
- 4.7. Organisation, intervention, connection with the masses
- 4.8. Ideological struggle
- 4.9. Information, propaganda, media and publishing activity
- 4.10. Funds
- 4.11. International activity and internationalist action
- 4.12. Closing note

Chapter I

International situation

1.1 The crisis of capitalism

The assessment produced by the XIX Congress on the **evolution of the capitalist system and the deepening of its structural crisis** remains as relevant as ever, in a context that confirms the **exploitative, oppressive, aggressive and predatory nature of capitalism**.

The following developments reflect the dangerous heightening of capitalism's most negative traits: an unheard-of centralization and concentration of capital and wealth; a brutal onslaught to step up exploitation and jeopardize social rights; the rule of financial and speculative capital over the economy; the attack on liberties and democratic rights; widespread interferences and blackmail; the concentration of power in supra-national institutions; direct appropriation of riches and raw materials; militarism and aggressions against sovereign states; the dangers of a war of immeasurable proportions; the violations of the UN Charter and of international law.

The world faces a cyclical crisis that broke out in 2007/2008 and is the most serious and prolonged since the Great Depression of 1929. This crisis cannot be dissociated from its underlying reality, the structural crisis of capitalism.

It is a global crisis that affects the whole planet. Contrary to the claims of the propagandists of the dominant class, **the roots of the problem are to be found in the imperialist centre.**

The three poles of the Triad (USA, Japan, European Union) and, more generally, the most advanced capitalist countries, face stagnation or feeble economic growth. Macroeconomic indicators such as GDP, productive investment and employment, haven't as yet recovered their 2008 levels, despite attempts at reviving the economy through colossal cash injections, low or even negative interest rates and the falling price of hydrocarbons and namely of oil. Meanwhile, «toxic waste» continues to pile up in central banks, big financial institutions are threatened with bankruptcy and a growth of the factors that suggest a new peak in the crisis of huge proportions.

In the **United States**, the economic situation is currently characterised by a slowdown in economic growth, a drop in investment, an interruption in the drop of unemployment and a delay in the rise of interest. These continue one of the main factors of risk for the economic situation at world level.

Japan, which has been stagnating and deflating for two decades, is once again on a dangerous militaristic drift, notably by changing its constitution and participating in external military actions.

The crisis in and of the **European Union** has witnessed new and serious developments during this period that have openly called into question its own existence. The EU's inability to grow out of stagnation and to revive its economy; the growing internal contradictions of which the UK referendum is but one example; the influx of refugees and migrants and the dramatic circumstances associated with it; and people's growing discontent with the EU's anti-social policies and supra-national impositions are all factors

worth mentioning. Relations between the European Union and the USA and NATO have become ever closer although this does not exclude rivalries and contradictions between partners.

The unease felt by supporters of the EU is a symptom of the seriousness of the crisis. Meanwhile, the prevailing trend in EU circles continues to be «to forge ahead regardless», meaning neoliberalism, militarism and federalism.

After a period during which **China and other «emerging countries»** could boast high GDP growth rates, these countries – and especially those that depend on the export of oil and other raw materials – were hit hard by the persistence of the cyclical crisis. The significant drop in the price of raw materials and foodstuffs has deeply affected countries in the periphery. The slowdown of the world economy and the political manipulation of the «oil weapon», whose price is at a historic low, have had a serious social and political impact in producer countries as well as in others with which they have close economic ties.

China's economic weight and its participation in the international division of labour continue to be a prime factor in international developments. Its active role in international relations, in the context of the BRICS countries (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) as well as in other fora, is at odds with the goals and the institutions dominated by the USA and other imperialist powers.

Energy and environmental issues have gained ground in people's lives and in international relations. Because of their finite nature and importance, natural resources have become a key factor of economic, political and geostrategic disputes between major powers and are a pretext for attempts at world domination.

The social consequences of the processes of concentration and centralization of capital – where less than 1400 big multinational control more than 60% of the world economy - of intensified exploitation and the increasingly aggressive nature imperialism have become more acute. Capitalism deepens social injustice and inequalities, including in the most advanced capitalist countries. Hundreds of millions of workers face unemployment and job insecurity. The inability to fulfil human beings' most basic needs, poverty, hunger, malnutrition, lack of access to healthcare, child labour, slave labour, trafficking of human beings, trade in human organs, sexual exploitation all expose the inhuman and criminal nature of capitalism.

The policies aimed at exploitation denying peoples' basic rights, of economic domination condemning numerous countries to underdevelopment and the wars fostered by imperialism are at the roots of the present migratory flows.

The depth of the structural crisis of capitalism is reflected in the obvious inability of the ruling class to find solutions that will revive its own economic growth in a sustained way. The classical «anti-cyclical» tools proposed by bourgeois economic theories have exhausted their usefulness. Cash injections and extremely low interest rates have generated excessive liquidity that is increasingly diverted from productive investments and into the realms of financial speculation and criminal money flows; off-shore financial centres are an integral part of the operation of the capitalist system, where tax evasion is associated to money laundering of the profits from drug trafficking, arms deals, human trafficking and the funding of terrorism. The combination of increased liquidity and the world's economic and political instability boosts the dimension and volatility of financial flows, with devastating impacts on countries and entire regions. In the wake of the development of IT and its impact, «technological shocks», an example of which is the theorization on the «4th. Industrial revolution», new

industrial processes and new «value chains» are being sought to take capitalist economies out of their current stagnation.

However, the measures being adopted are determined by big businesses engaged in financial speculation and do not address the root causes of the crisis. As such, they only serve to prolong it and to make the next peak of the crisis more violent.

The difficulties brought about by the crisis in the realization of surplus value aggravate the contradictions and clashes between the big monopolist groups supported by the respective States, dangerously raising the risk of violent interventions and military conflicts. The notion that it is necessary to destroy productive forces considered to be «in excess» – a process that is already under way, resulting in high rates of unemployment and the spectacle of death and destruction caused by wars – has led imperialism's most reactionary and aggressive sectors to bet increasingly on wars as the «way out» of the crisis and to recover higher profit rates.

In the face of uncertain developments, the characterization of capitalism's current phase is decisive to advance the struggle for liberation of workers and peoples. It is essential that attention be paid to events and processes that could have a major impact in the inter-relations between forces on the world stage.

The USA remains the capitalist world's hegemonic power and the planet's most powerful state. It would be dangerous to underestimate its huge economic, scientific, technological, military and ideological potential. Most large transnational corporations are US-based. But the US are witnessing a decline of its relative weight and are trying to counter it by imposing its dominance in economic relations and by dangerously promoting an aggressive strategy aimed at subduing or destroying whoever resists them.

In the current context of a «**war of currencies**», the hegemonic role of the US dollar as reserve and universal trade currency is being increasingly questioned, namely with the currency agreements promoted by China, and there are growing demands to reform the International Monetary System.

The so-called **free trade agreements**, actively promoted by the USA and its key allies, are powerful tools for imperialist economic and political dominance. They create opportunities, if not stopped, for the predatory activities of transnational corporations and the overpowering of national states. Examples include the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP), between the USA and EU, the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), the Pacific Alliance and the bilateral agreements that the USA are using to overcome the historic defeat of the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA), and the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) between the EU and Canada.

The results of **the recent US presidential elections**, with Donald Trump's victory, did not represent something outside the system, highlighted the deep problems, contradictions and inequalities that run through this country, as well as differences within the ruling class, which had a greater expression in the context of the crisis, with developments difficult to predict in the neoliberal and aggressive agenda pursued by successive US administrations.

A complex process of re-arrangement of forces on the world stage is under way with significant economic, political and geostrategic repercussions – with several countries asserting themselves and seeking to engage with one another in various ways, while opting to take a path to development outside imperialism's hegemonic frame of reference. These developments are worth following closely. Their outcome depends on

the development of the struggles of the working class, workers and peoples for their rights and sovereignty and on the actions and coordination of the states opposing imperialism's domination.

While the structural crisis of capitalism has deepened **inter-imperialist contradictions** – apparent in the «economic wars» in various sectors –, international developments show **that big businesses and the major imperialist powers use fora** such as the IMF, World Bank, OECD, G7, the Trilateral Commission, the Davos World Economic Forum or the Bilderberg meetings to elaborate their ideology and to coordinate their strategies with a view to imposing their policies of exploitation and national oppression.

On the other hand, processes such as the **BRICS and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization**, involving economic and political cooperation, have contributed to this process of rearrangement of forces, undermining the hegemony of imperialism and its international structures.

In the meantime, there are **differentiated articulations between countries**, based on diverse objectives and scopes of participation and action, in particular at regional level, around historical links and the use of a common language, such as the Community of Portuguese Speaking Countries (CPLP).

In the liberal-bourgeois political systems that exist in practically all developed capitalist countries and namely in the European Union, the exploitative policies that have led to the suppression of social rights and have put constraints on freedoms and guarantees resulted in an electoral punishment of the political parties most closely identified with the right-wing political system and its policies. The **crisis of social-democratic parties** is magnified as a result of their structural collaboration with reactionary parties, their caving-in to neo-liberal policies and their role as a mainstay of imperialism.

The worsening of the structural crisis of capitalism in the developed capitalist countries, which has intensified since 2007, leads the ruling classes to seek to counteract ITS effects through low wages, redefinition of work in the productive system, and liquidation of economic, social and cultural rights. There are striking expressions such as: the explosion of inequalities; the reduction of pay in the distribution of national income; the accelerated concentration of wealth and income in big business; increasing the use of subcontracting through global production and distribution chains; the intensification of work, the attack on workers' rights and the liquidation of collective bargaining rights; the reduction of taxes on profits, concentrating them on labour and consumption of the masses; the pressure for the dismantling and privatization of the social functions of the State and the replacement of social security systems with assistance measures; the attack on international principles and norms embodied in texts like the UN Charter, the Philadelphia Declaration, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and various international labour conventions adopted at the ILO.

Recent developments such as the **emergence of the so-called digital economy** and a greater use of technologies such as robotics to replace living labour have led to the emergence of outdated theses about the “end of work” or 'work without a future'. The ILO initiative on **the future of work**, which will culminate in 2019 in the centenary of that organization and whose conclusions guide its action for the coming decades, can, by its ambiguity, fuel such theses. Being a debate as old as capitalism, it gains new expressions as the development of the productive forces accelerates. This development is as real as the resurgence of old forms of exploitation under the cloak of "modernization" of industrial relations. The use of technological platforms to recruit workers can lead to a leap in the massive precariousness of employment, eliminating labour and social rights, but does not

change, but confirms, the nature of exploitation inherent to capitalism; the introduction of more robots in the economy can feed the dream of a capitalism without work, besides the manufacture of the robots themselves, but it does not represent the "end of work" nor eliminates the need to consume an increased production; the greater use of subcontracting can accentuate the international division of labour, shift more work/ enterprises from the "centre" to the "periphery", and exacerbate labour and social struggle.

The crisis of capitalism and its developments confirm Marxism-Leninism's fundamental theses about the laws governing capitalism in its imperialist stage, bringing out: the law about the trend towards decreasing rates of profit and the financialization of the economy, transferring capital to speculative activities and away from productive investments; the law about the relative and absolute impoverishment, with the adoption of policies aimed at reducing wages and income and at expanding a reserve army of available workforce; the law of uneven development, involving significant and unexpected changes in the relative ranks of capitalist powers and heightening inter-imperialist contradictions, at times played down and concealed by their class cooperation against the common foe – the working class, workers and peoples; the trend towards stagnation, reflected in a drop in GDP growth rates in major capitalist countries in recent decades; the heightening of the parasitic, decadent and criminal nature of capitalism, reflected in some of the inherent features of the system such as its military-industrial complex and the trail of death and destruction caused by imperialist aggressions, as well as the flourishing of criminal trafficking activities and corruption that are part and parcel of the operation of the system.

The growing association with and dependence on big business of big businesses in each and every country as regards big transnational business and the merging of the power of big transnational monopolies with political power in major imperialist states and the supra-national institutions that they have set up suggest new developments in **states' monopolistic capitalism** and the concrete ways in which it expresses itself in individual countries.

Capitalism's inability to overcome its own contradictions is reflected in the current crisis and its developments. First and foremost, in the contradiction between capital and labour and the continuing struggle around surplus value, a struggle that goes to the core of the capitalist mode of production, together with other struggles that are intensifying. The contradiction between the social nature of production and its private appropriation has never been so acute, and the concentration of capital on a gigantic scale and its merger with the state's apparatus, as well as anarchic production, confirm the need of a system that rationalizes the use of means and resources so that they may be put to the service of society rather than threatening it with annihilation. The contradiction between the vast possibilities created by science and technology to address mankind's most serious problems and the worsening of such problems as a result of the appropriation of these achievements by big business. These contradictions coincide with a diminishing social base that supports capitalism, due to the monopolistic concentration and the intensified exploitation of anti-monopoly classes and social groups.

This evidence shows that objective conditions are being created on a global scale for overcoming capitalism in a revolutionary manner and for transitioning, by various means, phases and stages, to a higher economic and social formation – to socialism and communism.

1.2. The imperialist onslaught

In an international context that is characterized by the heightening of capitalism's structural crisis and by a complex and contradictory process of re-arrangement of forces on the world stage, **imperialism intensifies its violent and multi-faceted onslaught** that is increasingly opposed by workers and peoples who resist and fight to defend their rights and sovereignty. This is a scenario that increases the danger of imperialism's most reactionary and aggressive sectors opting for war and fascism.

Imperialism, and in particular US imperialism, uses various forms and means –, economic, financial, monetary, political, diplomatic, military and ideological – **in an attempt to counteract its relative economic decline and to impose its hegemony across the world.**

Its ultimate ambition is to enhance the free circulation of capital, to force markets to open up to big business and the arbitrary power of transnational corporations; to secure its control of markets, trade and energy routes; to take over natural resources; to intensify exploitation; to secure regions of economic and political dominance; to secure the control of technologies and technological developments, namely in areas such as energy, environment, healthcare, communications and information; to prevent processes of sovereign, progressive and revolutionary assertion; to impose and secure its geo-strategic dominance.

Imperialism's onslaught continues to be focused on regions that have a wealth of natural resources, raw materials and energy routes, as well as on regions that are key from a geo-strategic viewpoint, such as those where markets are being developed and with emerging economic and trade relations.

This is an onslaught that influences and makes use of many international organisations and diplomatic relations. In some instances, it takes the form of an economic war with the imposition of economic and financial sanctions and blockades against countries willing to assert and defend their sovereignty.

Imperialism's warmongering and interventionism – which affect practically all continents – raise serious concerns for they entail **the risk of an escalation and the generalization of military conflicts on the world stage on an unpredictable scale and with unpredictable consequences.**

The USA, NATO and the European Union, together with their allies, are responsible for all the major military conflicts currently taking place.

NATO continues to be and to strengthen its role as the most important and dangerous tool for imperialism's aggression. This takes place under the hegemony of USA, although the inter-imperialist contradictions are likely become more acute as the crisis worsens.

At its summits in Wales (2014) and Warsaw (2016), NATO once again openly asserted its aggressive nature and strengthened the role of the European Union as its European pillar, promoting its expansion in Europe and its partnerships around the world and putting pressure to increase the weight of military spending on national budgets. NATO's major powers, and in particular the USA, are responsible for a race for more powerful and sophisticated weapons, the modernization of nuclear arsenals and a vast network of foreign military bases across the world. In this context, the installation of the USA's anti-missile system in Europe and in Asia is particularly worrisome, as it represents a serious threat to the world's strategic nuclear balance.

The wars of aggression in the Middle East and in Central Asia; the destabilization in Latin America; the processes aimed at destabilizing and re-colonizing Africa; NATO's push into Eastern Europe targeting the Russian Federation; or the growing militarization of Asia and the Pacific targeting China are examples of imperialism's escalating confrontation.

The imperialist onslaught seeks to obstruct and even prevent the exercise of national sovereignty, particularly by targeting states that represent in some way a restraining factor to the imposition of the hegemonic power of imperialism, namely of US imperialism.

The United States seeks, in articulation with its allies, to impose a world order subordinated to its interests and imperialist rule, and constitutes the main threat to the peoples of the world. Such a design confronts countries that affirm and defend their sovereignty, independence and right to development, and that stand and act internationally in compliance with the Charter of the United Nations. Notwithstanding the great uncertainty that marks the evolution of the international situation, it would be a simplification and a mistake to equate the international positioning of these countries with the aggressive action of imperialism, thus reducing the current worsening of the international situation to a mere inter-imperialist dispute.

Thus, imperialism which has powerful means of espionage promotes a range of destabilizing operations and all kinds of coups, imposing specific regimes, engaging in military aggressions and territorial occupations, promoting the fragmentation and balkanization of states, establishing protectorates and defining supra-national power structures that take away sovereignty from formally independent states.

Such interferences usually take place by manipulating and distorting what were originally genuine expressions of popular discontent. These are accompanied by comprehensive and systematic media campaigns aimed at concealing the real objectives and consequences of such aggressive actions, thus making it harder to denounce and condemn them and to express anti-imperialist solidarity.

«Human rights», «the right to defend», «defending democracy», «war on terror», «the threat posed by weapons of mass destruction», «humanitarian intervention», «fighting corruption», «preventive war» or «failed State» **are arguments** that have been variously used to justify imperialism's illegal and criminal actions aimed at preventing peoples from deciding on their own destiny.

The interferences and aggressions by the USA and its allies against the sovereignty of peoples, whether to secure their control over resources or to remove governments that do not toe their line, have been preceded by massive and prolonged **operations aimed at preparing public opinion** for what is to come. Various pretexts are used to create an environment where they are accepted uncritically and even perceived as justifiable.

The fact that the basic needs of millions of human beings are not being met and the destruction of sovereign states are proof of the toll of imperialism's destabilization actions and aggressions. The dramatic circumstances of displaced persons and refugees, such as those coming from the Middle East, Central Asia and Africa seeking refuge from the death and devastation caused by imperialism's warmongering and looting, as well as the policies and measures that deny them their most basic rights, are a shocking expression of capitalism's true nature.

Imperialism's interferences and aggressions involve, inter alia, the adoption and imposition of a range of external measures of a political, diplomatic, legal, financial or

economic nature that often fly in the face of international law; the use of Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), foundations and other structures; the creation of the illegitimate of the International Criminal Court or the support to and promotion of internal reactionary forces, including of a fascist nature, and their violent and terrorist actions – of which the Ukraine is an example.

In its onslaught, **imperialism is increasingly making use of terrorism**, whether State terrorism with its aggressive direct interventions, or by means of creating, supporting and manipulating groups characterized by their criminal actions and use of terror. Addressing terrorism means fighting its causes - political, economic and social –, as well as the interferences and aggressions that feed them, and at the same time asserting the values of freedom, democracy, sovereignty and independence of states and peace.

To provide a cover to its strategy of aggression and domination, imperialist powers seek to control and manipulate the **UN**, in a process that runs against the **UN Charter** and aims at perverting and destroying **international law**, turning the UN and its bodies and agencies into a submissive structure that endorses their interests and strategies or even becomes an accomplice to its aggressions and wars. These proposals have to be fought.

Big business and the political forces that defend its interest seek to adopt and **impose anti-democratic measures** aimed at restraining, repressing and even criminalizing social struggles; constraining the activities of trade unions; setting limits to political activities; restricting fundamental rights and freedoms; promoting the institutionalization of anti-communism and anti-sovietism; persecuting and illegalising communist parties and other revolutionary, progressive and democratic forces; militarizing internal security and increasingly controlling, intruding and monitoring citizens' privacy by controlling information and communication technologies; encircling, boycotting and destabilizing countries that have asserted their sovereignty and opted for alternative, democratic, progressive and revolutionary policies; intensifying, extending and trivializing interferences, blackmail and the imposition of government and political solutions against the will of peoples; imposing international treaties and the power of supra-national institutions over the will of sovereign states and the legitimate interest of their peoples .

The policies aimed at intensifying exploitation and impoverishment; at promoting casual labour and unemployment; of oppression and in particular national oppression; and at stigmatizing migrants have created a breeding ground for the dissemination of xenophobic and racist ideologies by extreme right-wing forces and fascist groups.

As the class struggle intensifies, so does the **ideological onslaught** in various domains in an attempt to hide the true nature of capitalism and the alternative of social emancipation represented by the communist ideal and project.

Against such backdrop, obscurantism and narrow-mindedness, anti-democratic and reactionary, racist and xenophobic values are promoted; charity and paternalistic social handouts become institutionalized; religions and mysticism are manipulated and religious fundamentalism and sectarian and confessional disputes are fostered.

The worldwide network of international communication companies, whose ownership is increasingly concentrated in large «information» oligopolies, as well as education systems, play a key role in supporting imperialism's ideological onslaught.

1.3 The struggle of the workers and peoples

The deepening of the structural crisis of capitalism and the offensive of imperialism provoke serious collisions around the issues of class, development, the national question and the correlation of forces in the world.

The current framework is marked by **a sharp exacerbation of the class struggle** in which the vectors of class and nation are strongly linked.

Despite different trends, with retreats of progressive forces coexisting with progressive advances, in which **dangers coexist with potential**, the resulting worker's and people's struggle is characterized overall by an ongoing and tenacious resistance that acquires great importance and centrality to contain the onslaught of imperialism, to defend the rights achieved, for the social and national emancipation struggle.

Hundreds of millions of workers develop a wide, diversified and organized struggle in defence of fundamental rights such as the right to work; a decent wage; for better working conditions; against the increase in working hours; in defence of labour and trade union rights; for social rights and in defence of the social functions of the State, in particular for decent retirement pensions, among others.

The struggle of the working class and of workers for their rights and aspirations is the most important factor of resistance and advancement, contributing decisively to the convergence of other classes and anti-monopolist sectors and to achieve progressive and revolutionary changes.

A struggle whose dimension has even more meaning in the context of a deep ideological offensive, an increasing repressive action, political persecution and attempts of criminalization, which affects particularly the class-oriented trade union movement.

The struggle of other classes and anti-monopolist sectors develops. Their representative organizations, content and objectives of struggle acquire very different forms. This is the case of farmers, who have been the protagonists of important actions to fight in every continent for the defence of the right to possess and use the land, against the liberalization of agricultural trade and the exploitative nature of agribusiness; of intellectuals and technical staff, sectors that are increasingly «proletarianized», subject to a higher degree of precariousness, who increasingly participate in the general struggle in defence of political, social, and cultural rights; of the youth, on the right to work and against insecurity, for the defence of public education systems, in defence of peace and the access to culture; of women in the fight against all forms of exploitation and discrimination, for sexual and reproductive rights and against the traffic of human beings; of indigenous peoples, against exclusion and social discrimination and recognition of their rights.

The fight against the privatization of strategic sectors and in defence of public services exhibits a very wide participation in all continents. The struggle against the liberalization of world trade and the signing of free trade agreements, and for the preservation and sustainable use of natural and environmental resources, particularly for the right to access to water, encompasses an intense ideological confrontation.

There are important moments of **convergence in the struggle for peace**, against militarism, against the arms race, against interferences and imperialist wars and in solidarity with peoples in struggle, in defence of the principles of the UN Charter and International Law, which acquire an increasing importance and centrality. We have to

point out the struggle against NATO and for its dissolution, with particular expression in the actions during the NATO summits and its military exercises.

There have been a number of mobilizations against xenophobia and racism, solidarity with refugees and the rights of migrants.

There have been **fights against the ideology and action of the far-right and fascist forces**, including condemnation and repudiation of the coup in Ukraine. The dangerous emergence of these forces places the need for a broader convergence in defence of freedom and democracy and against fascism.

The so-called Social Forum movement (World Social Forum and its several levels) has lost weight in the context of the struggles carried out around the world. The thesis is still valid, that the fora and «inorganic» movements, expressing the narrowing of the base social support of capitalism, are traversed by an intense ideological struggle and that, by themselves, are not able to raise the bar of criticism and revolt towards higher levels of struggle.

The struggle of peoples against imperialism and its aggressive strategy of recolonization, in defence of the right to development, sovereignty and national independence, **acquire great importance**.

In **Latin America**, the democratic processes of a progressive nature, affirming sovereignty and anti-imperialism, potentiate and are simultaneously strengthened, by mechanisms for cooperation and integration – such as the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of our America – People's Trade Treaty (ALBA-TCP) which includes Bolivia, Cuba, Ecuador, Nicaragua and Venezuela, among other countries, have assumed a great importance for the region and the world. Such processes have enabled great advances in the social condition of toiling and popular masses, in the ideological struggle, in the process of rearrangement of forces worldwide and on South-South economic cooperation and in the context of BRICS. The victory of the Cuban Revolution against the attempts of international isolation by the United States is inseparable from this reality.

These processes are today faced with a vast operation that combines the Latin American big capital (submitted to transnational big capital); the right-wing and extreme right-wing revanchist forces and US and European imperialism. Lining up in time this offensive with the impacts of the crisis of capitalism in economies like those of Brazil or Venezuela, these forces have used the instruments that maintained – the economic and judicial power, the media – to attempt to, in conjunction with the imperialist centres, reverse these processes, like in Honduras and Paraguay, as they aim in Brazil following the institutional coup, or in Venezuela, through the political destabilization and economic sabotage. Countries like Bolivia or Ecuador are subject to similar processes. In Colombia there is a strong struggle to achieve peace with social justice, with the success of the peace process being an essential factor. The theory of «end of cycle» in Latin America is an ideological pressure that seeks to contain the struggle for emancipation fought in that region, and to propagate conformism and the idea of its defeat.

Regardless of the setbacks in the development of processes in Latin America, the advances achieved represent important and undeniable affirmations of sovereignty; advances in the direction of improving the living conditions of workers and peoples; and progressive options regarding the paths towards development and transformation, which constitute a contribution to the more general struggle of peoples towards their emancipation, for more justice, equality, social progress and peace.

The peoples of the Arab countries and the Middle East continue hard fights for their national, political and social rights.

Plunged into a spiral of imperialist violence, peoples and some States in the region resist the powerful actions of destabilization and war. Terrorism, fed by the main imperialist powers, by Turkey and by the members of the Gulf Cooperation Council, is used against the countries targeted by imperialist intervention. Iraq, destroyed by the imperialist invasion, is plunged into chaos and faces a permanent war and sectarian division. Syria and its people continue its struggle in defence of its sovereignty and territorial integrity, facing the barbaric aggression by imperialism. Major resistance movements continue, such as the case of the Yemeni people's resistance to aggression from Saudi Arabia, the people of Bahrain for democracy and human rights, of the Lebanese people in defence of their territorial integrity and independence and against the corruption of the confessional regime, among others. The Palestinian people pursue their heroic struggle against the Israeli occupation under difficult conditions, for the right to build an independent and viable State of Palestine, and against the scandalous impunity of Israel's State terrorism and crimes. The signing of the nuclear agreement regarding Iran and Russia's support to the resistance of the Syrian State against aggression are two factors which hinder the objectives of imperialism in the region.

In **Africa**, important worker's struggles develop in very diverse areas and with very meaningful expressions. The peoples and African States face major challenges in the fight against neo-colonialism, the manoeuvres of interference and war and against foreign military presence. Such as France or the US with AFRICOM - which aim to impose political and economic domination and control and loot of the immense resources of this continent. The aggression and destruction of Libya, military operations in Mali, interference in the Democratic Republic of Congo and the Central African Republic, are examples of the action of imperialism.

The fight of the Sahrawi people for self-determination, independence and sovereign right to live freely in their homeland continues.

The so-called "Arab springs" that crossed several countries of North Africa and also the Middle East turned into wars of aggression and the destruction of states and in a situation favourable to the domination of imperialism.

Several African countries resist destabilization strategies which, by taking advantage of contradictions, demanding challenges and complex problems - many of which are inherited from colonialism, of the continued economic dominance of imperialism and from its instigation of divisions, conflicts and wars - are designed to remove from power forces that have led the struggle for the national liberation of their peoples, and which do not abdicate from affirming the sovereignty and the right to development of their countries, as is the case, for example, in Mozambique or Angola. Considering that it is up to the African peoples to decide their present and future free from any external interference. There is a need for solidarity based on the principles of national sovereignty and independence, territorial integrity, peace, rights, social progress, friendship and cooperation.

In **Asia**, Afghanistan remains plunged in the destruction and chaos of war, following imperialist aggression and occupation. Large-scale struggles of the working class and other workers and the peasantry have been developed on this continent, with great struggle actions in India, Bangladesh and South Korea. There were important struggles against militarism, foreign military bases and Peace, as in Japan.

The main imperialist centres witnessed struggles or explosions of revolt around its most visible contradictions. This was the case of the US with important days of struggle in defence of the right to employment, against inequality and racial discrimination.

In **Europe**, workers and people have developed important struggles, of resistance to attacks on social rights, wages, the right to work, the right to employment and other labour rights, against the imposition of so-called «austerity packages», against external interference and pressure, in defence of democratic rights.

The increasing and broader challenge against the capitalist integration process of the European Union represents advances in the struggle for a Europe of cooperation and of sovereign States equal in rights, progress and peace.

In this sense, and within the framework of cooperation in the European continent – an aim to achieve on the basis of an effort that must be common and not imposed or unilateral –, at institutional level, the PCP was committed to the constitution of the **Confederal Group of the European United Left/Nordic Green Left (GUE/NGL)**, in order to safeguard its confederal nature, its own identity and its independence in relation to other areas or structures of cooperation. An intervention which, despite difficulties and limitations stemming from the heterogeneous composition of the GUE/NGL Confederal Group and attempts by the European Left Party to instrumentalize it. The PCP continues to develop with the aim of establishing an alternative voice in the European Parliament., as an option to the forces of the right and the social-democracy, respecting the political and ideological independence of each one of its components and the strict compliance of its confederal character.

The situation calls for **the strengthening of the struggle and the convergence of the working class with other anti-monopolist sectors**. There is a need for greater cooperation and coordination of the anti-imperialist forces, particularly in joint or convergent actions of struggle and in strengthening the solidarity with peoples in struggle, especially with those on the front line of resistance to the offensive of imperialism. A need that is not compatible with ambiguities or errors in the definition of the main enemy, and that must be based on an appropriate evaluation and determination of the common or convergent objectives of the struggle.

In the framework of dialectical relationship between their national and international plans, the challenges in the struggle against imperialism are the **national arena, as the central and decisive terrain of the class struggle and social transformation**. But the situation requires that, starting from the national space, we strengthen the bonds of solidarity and cooperation that should unite the Communists and other anti-imperialist forces.

The «escape» towards supranational solutions and movements, not sustained by concrete processes of struggle at the national level, as reality has proven, leads to the imposition of «models» and «recipes», to inconclusive drifts with a reformist or voluntarist nature, that lead to divisions and distortion of movements, forces and processes.

The anti-imperialist Front, which objectively widens with the intensification of the offensive of imperialism and the growing confrontation between countries and peoples with its aim of hegemonic domination, is traversed by contradictions and ambiguities that pose major challenges to the intervention of the Communist parties and their action to build social and political alliances and interconnections between the struggle for social emancipation and the national question.

In terms of the international articulation of the struggle, there is a special need to reinforce the international structures, such as the World Peace Council (WPC), the World Federation Democratic Youth (WFDY), Women's International Democratic Federation (WIDF), the World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU) and the International Federation of Resistance Fighters (FIR), ensuring their broad and anti-imperialist character.

The countries that claim as a guideline and objective the construction of socialist societies – China, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Cuba, Laos and Vietnam – in their vast diversity of situations regarding the degree of economic and social development and socio-political models, constitute an important factor of containment of imperialism's objectives of world domination. Today it is even clearer that these countries are subject to a set of economic and financial pressures, to destabilization and encroachment, ideological offensive and geo-strategic siege that, along with the effects of the crisis of capitalism to which they are not immune, condition their own development and economic policy options and international relations.

At the same time, and in a dialectic relationship between internal issues and external conditions, the countries that claim as a guideline and objective the construction of socialist societies face challenges and contradictions that in some cases give rise to legitimate concerns and doubts about their situation and evolution.

The PCP follows the evolution of these countries and the guidelines of the respective Communist parties, both as regards their internal tasks, and their positioning in the international situation. Rejecting the idea of single models of social transformation and affirming its own project to build a socialist society in Portugal, PCP finds that the evolution of these countries should continue to deserve permanent and careful observation and analysis, both in their experiences and accomplishments, and the questions and disagreements, some of principle, raised by certain guidelines in some of these countries, regardless of their particularities, path and history, in particular regarding guidelines that distance themselves from principles and features of building socialist societies, whether in terms of economic organization, whether in terms of political system.

The struggle and the resistance of the peoples of these countries against the offensive of imperialism demand not our association with campaigns aimed towards destabilization and aggression, but of the solidarity from all those who defend sovereignty and peace.

The struggle of the workers and peoples shows weaknesses and shortcomings that should not be ignored in the definition of paths towards social emancipation. However, the popular, class and mass response to the deepening of all the contradictions of capitalism was and is the main element towards containing the offensive of big capital and imperialism. It was and is, by its experiences, victories, teachings and historical heritage, an important factor preventing even more serious developments of the international situation, not allowing the ruling classes to act freely. It was and is the factor that ensures the necessary build-up of forces for the construction of alternatives on the basis of convergence between the struggle of the working class with the other anti-monopolist sectors and the solidarity with the peoples and nations in struggle.

The recognition of the depth of the crisis of capitalism and of the need and timeliness of overcoming capitalism should not lead us to underestimate its material and ideological power and its capacity to resist and adapt, revealed in its ability to contain and even neutralize and instrumentalize powerful movements of popular struggle, as well as reverse and defeat effective processes of progressive and revolutionary transformation.

A patriotic and internationalist party, PCP considers of utmost importance the strengthening, the unity and growth of the capacity for action of the international communist and revolutionary movement.

The international communist and revolutionary movement and the internationalist cooperation and solidarity will both be as strong as the strength of the connection of each Communist Party, of each revolutionary force, to the masses and their national reality, as its ability to define their program and tasks.

Based on its experience of 95 years of struggle and the historical experience of the Communists and revolutionaries around the world, acting in accordance with the principle of proletarian internationalism, PCP is committed to strengthening **mutual solidarity** and cooperation between Communist parties, contributing to the deepening of the debate and in every moment valuing the contents and initiatives that promote **unity in action**.

In this sense, the PCP gives particular attention to the development of its bilateral relations of friendship and cooperation, as well as to its contribution to forms and processes of multilateral cooperation and of common and convergent action, aiming towards unity in action and affirming the Communist ideal and project.

At European level, PCP has acted in order to bring the Communist parties together and these nearer to other progressive and left-wing forces, taking into account differences of context, reflection and proposal and with respect for their independence, putting in the foreground the issues most felt by workers and peoples and the struggle against the imperialist bloc of the European Union and for a Europe of cooperation between sovereign States and equal in rights, of progress and peace, for a Europe of the workers and peoples.

Reality has confirmed the position of PCP on the Party of European Left. In fact, this structure of supranational and reformist nature – that emanates from the EU decision to create «European political parties» – introduced new factors of division, estrangement and misunderstanding, and has hindered advances in the cooperation and solidarity between communists and progressive forces in Europe, which is reflected in other areas of cooperation, notably in the GUE/NGL in the European Parliament.

The PCP has devoted particular attention to the **International Meetings of Communist and Workers' Parties (IMCWP)**, having hosted its 15th meeting in Lisbon, in 2013. The IMCWP are a multilateral process, which regardless of inadequacies, difficulties and negative aspects that may arise – which PCP has committed to find solutions and overcome – have contributed to improve mutual knowledge and towards the adoption of a set of guidelines for common or convergent action among the participating parties.

PCP considers to be motives of concern both the development of liquidationist and social-democratic tendencies – of adaptation to the system, with the abandonment of ideological references, organic principles and strategic objectives characteristic of a Communist Party – as well as dogmatic and sectarian practices and conceptions – which point towards the introduction of single models of social transformation and initiatives to structure poles – , that not only do not contribute to the strengthening of the Communist movement and the unity in action of Communists, but also introduce new factors of division, estrangement and misunderstanding that hinder the necessary advances in internationalist solidarity among communists, and between these and other progressive and left-wing forces.

Since our XIX Congress, together with positive elements of recovery of the influence of some parties, there has been greater expression of difficulties caused by negative attitudes and the abandonment of established principles of relationship between Communist parties

– equal rights, independence, mutual respect, non-interference in internal affairs, frankness and mutual solidarity –, visible in hegemonic postures, and in important differences in the analysis of the international situation and on the strategy and tactics in the struggle for socialism, which has hampered the frank and fraternal discussion of differences aimed at an approximation of positions and the examination of common problems, with damage to the unity and capacity to intervene of the international communist and revolutionary movement.

Aware of the complexity and demands of the current international situation and that Communist parties and other revolutionary forces have different trajectories, experiences and social roots, fight under different conditions, are at different stages of the struggle for socialism and face different immediate tasks, PCP finds that **natural differences of opinion, and even any differences, should not prevent cooperation in the struggle against the common enemy**, and common or convergent action towards the emancipation of workers and peoples.

Communists have special responsibility and a unique heritage and experience in the construction of social and political alliances that can halt imperialist objectives at both national and international level.

The current international framework demonstrates the particular importance of the development of **cooperation of Communist parties with other democratic, progressive and anti-imperialist forces**, contributing – with the affirmation of their own objectives and without dilution of their identity – towards the exchange of experiences and unity in action aimed at the realization of immediate tasks and objectives in the struggle. In this sense, PCP is committed to internationalist solidarity with the political and social forces that, in their countries, are fighting in defence of the interests of workers and peoples and in the enlargement and increased expression of the anti-imperialist front, and follows forum of cooperation and solidarity, like the Forum of São Paulo, among other forum of cooperation of revolutionary and progressives forces from Latin America and the Caribbean.

The structural crisis of capitalism and the violent onslaught of imperialism raise the need to strengthen cooperation and convergence of patriotic, progressive and revolutionary forces, into a broad anti-imperialist front to stop the offensive of imperialism and make way for the construction of a new international order, of peace, sovereignty and social progress.

Reality demonstrates the need for a strong and vigorous revolutionary and communist international movement, the existence of strong communist and revolutionary parties that promote resistance and struggle of the workers and peoples in defence of their rights, for the advancement of social transformation and the revolutionary overcoming of capitalism.

1.4. Socialism, the alternative to capitalism

Capitalism is not the final system in the history of mankind. Its revolutionary overcoming, the construction of a society without exploiters or exploited, socialist and communists assumed as a requirement of the present and the future.

The extraordinary accentuation of the socialization of production (determined by the development of science and technology, by the internationalization of all spheres of social life and by the unprecedented centralization and concentration of capital), the increased contradiction between the social character of production and its private ownership, mature the objective material conditions for a socialist revolution, regardless of the form it will

take. The demand of the new society is thus determined by the very nature of capitalism and the need to overcome its insurmountable contradictions.

But the process of replacement of the capitalist socio-economic formation by socialism is not automatic. It requires the creation of objective and subjective conditions. This demands the creative intervention of the working class and the masses; a revolutionary vanguard capable of, in each country, leading the struggle for the conquest of power by the workers; the application of Marxism-Leninism, dialectical and materialist conception of the world, instrument of analysis tool and guide for action.

Marx and Engels on the basis of dialectical and historical materialism and the concrete study of the capitalist society, unveiled the laws of motion of the capitalist system and theoretically substantiated the historical mission of the working class and the requirement of a Socialist Revolution as a condition for the freedom of the productive forces, whose development are hampered and destroyed by capitalist production relations. Practice has ultimately confirmed the necessity and possibility of the new society. **With the October revolution, whose centennial we mark in 2017**, and other revolutions throughout the 20th century, socialism was no longer a dream, aspiration, utopia, and ideal of human and social liberation, it became a concrete reality.

The conquest of power by the Russian proletariat, under the direction of the Bolshevik Party headed by Lenin, represents a giant leap forward in the process of liberation of the workers and peoples that inaugurates a new era in the history of mankind, the time of transition from capitalism to socialism. Breaking unprecedented paths of social construction and defeating the encroachment and aggression of imperialism, the Soviet Union won over prejudices and ancestral backwardness and became in a short historical period a major industrial power, of great political, social and cultural achievements that put into evidence the superiority of the new social system and exerted great power of attraction among workers and oppressed peoples all over the world. With its achievements and policy of peace and of internationalist solidarity, with its decisive role in the defeat of Nazi-fascism, exerting a powerful counterweight to the exploitative and aggressive policy of imperialism, **the USSR, and later the socialist countries, constituted the main factor of social achievements and extraordinary revolutionary advancements of the 20th century.**

The disappearance of the Soviet Union and the defeats of socialism in Eastern Europe do not deny the need for the construction of a new society without exploiters or exploited, in which the extraordinary achievements and accomplishments of the human genius are no longer at the service of an increasingly reduced financial oligarchy but rather placed at the service of people. There is no denying the negative impact these losses had within the framework of the correlation of global forces upon the consciousness of the masses and in development of the struggle for revolutionary overcoming of capitalism. But this fact does not change the fundamental content of our time, nor does it call into question the direction of historical development. On the contrary, more than ever, before the exploitative, oppressive, aggressive and predatory nature of capitalism, socialism emerges with renewed timeliness as an objective need in the process of universal emancipation of workers and peoples. **The objective of socialism in the struggle of peoples affirms itself with increasing accuracy** as perspective and condition inseparable from complete human liberation and achievement.

The campaigns of the «death of communism» and «irreversible decline» of the Communist parties face confront, in their credibility, the deepening of the structural crisis of capitalism and the evidence of its inability to provide answers to the great problems of mankind. But

the campaigns continue, notably through massive operations of historic falsification that must be fought. The needed learning from experiences, both positive and negative, of the international communist movement rejects the negativity and hopelessness with which the ruling class seeks to demobilize the struggle of the masses. This does not cancel the recognition that the development of revolutionary overcoming of capitalism is complex, irregular and uneven, with victories and defeats, setbacks and advances.

Experience shows that the paths to socialist revolution, being diversified and following differentiated steps from country to country, obey general laws, which practice has confirmed, regarding the importance of theory, the role of the working class and its alliances, the creative commitment of the masses in the construction of their own destiny, the issues of the State and the ownership of the main means of production, the leading role of the party. General laws but not «model», regarding the temptation to copy the experience of the October Revolution that which not having universal value corresponded only to the concrete Russian reality, as Lenin underlined: «all Nations will reach socialism, this is inevitable, but they will not arrive all in exactly the same (...)».

The path to socialism and the basic features of socialist society in Portugal are inseparable from the peculiarities that mark the history, social reality and the international context of our country. Considering the rich experience of international communist movement, and seeking to learn from the historical experiences of construction of socialism, it is from the Portuguese reality and experience of the Portuguese Communists, that the PCP elaborated project of a socialist and communist society for Portugal, whose fundamental lines are systematized in its program «An advanced Democracy – the values of April in Portugal's future». As it states in its Program: "on the horizon of social evolution is communism - a millennial dream of progressive humanity, a society without classes, a society of abundance, social equality, of freedom and culture for all, collective and individual initiative and creativity, a society of free and conscious workers in which work will be not only a source of wealth but a creative activity and a source of joy, freedom and personal valorisation, and in which peace, health, culture, rest, recreation, a balanced environment, collective action and the value of the individual will be components of human happiness".

Chapter II

National situation

2.1. Right-wing policy and the country's situation

Portugal reflects the result of problems accumulated over decades of a right-wing policy and of capitalist integration in the EEC/European Union, carried out by PS, PSD and CDS-PP, and made worse by the implementation of the Stability and Growth Pacts and the «Memorandum of Understanding», a true Pact of Aggression which those parties signed with the IMF, the ECB and the European Commission. This right-wing policy was denounced and characterized by the PCP as a policy of capitalist, big-landowner and imperialist recovery, with a clear class content, at the service of big capital, which sought to revert the April [Revolution's] achievements. A policy that highlights the very nature, contradictions and structural crisis of capitalism and which proves to be incapable of responding to national problems. It is, in itself, a factor that weakens national independence.

Crisis, the perversion of the democratic regime, economic decline, increased exploitation, social regression, cultural impoverishment and environmental degradation, enhancement of the country's peripheral and dependent nature: these are the traits that emerge from a process controlled by big capital and the big powers, which seriously threatens national sovereignty and independence, which undermines the present and the future of the country and which has to be urgently halted and overcome.

The process of integration in the European Union, linked with the counterrevolutionary process, have led the country to a situation with typical features of State monopoly capitalism, in a context in which the Portuguese State is increasingly subordinate, dominated and colonized within the framework of the European Union and, in general, by imperialism and its structures.

Notwithstanding the importance and significance of the defeat of the PSD/CDS-PP government and of big capital's more immediate goals, which the struggle of the workers and populations and the decisive action of the PCP made possible in the October 4, 2015, elections, the reality of the country increasingly highlights the need and urgency of breaking with the right-wing policy. A break with monopoly capital's interests and domination and a break with the submission to the European Union and the Euro, opening the way to an alternative, patriotic and left-wing policy, which will restore the values of April and assert them in the future of Portugal.

2.2. The evolution of the European Union

The worsening national situation is the result of four decades of right-wing policies and thirty years of integration in the EEC/European Union, a process which in Portugal was led by PS, PSD and CDS-PP.

The right-wing policies and submission to the European Union and the Euro are constraining and jeopardizing the possibility of a sovereign development for the country and submitting its foreign and domestic policy to the strategy of the great European powers, the USA and NATO.

Portugal is today a **more peripheral, dependent and vulnerable country**. Instead of the promised «economic and social cohesion», what marks the evolution of the European Union is the huge and growing asymmetry in economic development, an accelerated concentration and centralisation of capital and the imposition of greater exploitation and social regression.

The period between the 19th and 20th [PCP] Congresses has revealed even more clearly the European Union's class nature: it is a structure that is configured by the interests and needs of big capital, in the imperialist stage of capitalism's development; which is geared and designed as a tool and an arena of domination by the big European monopolies and transnationals, oriented towards concentrating power in the hands of the main capitalist powers of Europe and the supranational institutions which they dominate.

In these four years, the pillars of neoliberalism and militarism were strengthened. Federalism became more pronounced, although in a context of increasing contradictions, as a process of concentration and centralisation of supranational political power, subservient to, and articulated with, big transnational capital, under the permanent leadership of the organisations that represent the big European bosses in the legislative process. The ever-greater concentration and centralisation of capital demands the concentration and centralisation of political power. Successive tax scandals involving the European Union's institutions (*luxleaks*, *offshoreleaks*, *Panama papers*, among others) and the revolving-door rotation of officials between the decision-making centers of multinationals and finance capital and the institutions of the European Union, confirm the promiscuity and merger of the latter with big capital.

The action of the directory of powers, led by Germany and France, imposes and deepens relations of political and economic domination of a colonial nature within the space of the European Union. Democracy and the sovereignty of countries are blatantly disregarded.

The instruments of economic and political domination of the European Union have been strengthened accordingly. The coming into effect of the Lisbon Treaty sparked a renewed process of concentration and centralisation of power.

The Euro is being confirmed as a political project of European big business. The Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) and the Euro serve the goals of intensifying exploitation and economic domination, arising from the nature and development of the process of capitalist integration. The Euro, was no «protective shield against the crisis», but is rather a major factor of the ongoing economic and financial crisis.

The problems and difficulties that confront the European Union and the Eurozone stem from the very nature of the integration process, its political and ideological pillars, that are enshrined in the Treaties, policies and actions. States that are plunged into processes of economic destruction; the uncontrolled growth, to unbearable levels, of countries' public debt; a permanent instability of the financial system; the contraction in demand and industrial production; deindustrialisation in many countries of the so called «periphery»; a very profound social crisis, which is clearly reflected in the high levels of poverty and unemployment; economic stagnation and a deflationary trend; intensification of speculative dynamics, with their inherent risks – all this is evidence that the problems and difficulties of the European Union and, in particular, of the Eurozone, are far from having been overcome and there is not even the prospect of overcoming them. Scenarios of a reconfigured Eurozone, and ultimately even its implosion, cannot be discarded. The so-called Euro crisis has shattered the illusion of the European Union as a space of convergence and cohesion, and revealed, with brutal violence, the dynamics of divergence and inequality that intrinsically characterize it.

Economic and Monetary Union has led to the deterioration of living standards and working conditions, as well as to the destruction of the weaker productive systems.

It was, and is, in the name of the Euro and of compliance with its criteria that the privatisation of companies and strategic sectors was speeded up and taken even further; that social and labour rights were attacked; that public services and the social functions of the State have been strongly hit. The Euro has exacerbated inequality between countries and within many of the countries of the European Union.

The European Union's response to the Eurozone's economic crisis did not solve any of its underlying contradictions, rather it worsened them. The dynamics of tension and confrontation - inherent to the imposition of a single currency on asymmetric situations - are permanent and tend to intensify contradictions (even among powers), exposing the theses on the stability and durability of an Economic and Monetary Union in the European Union.

On the periphery of the Eurozone, States have been deprived of sovereign instruments of economic and monetary policy and are unprotected in dealing with the deepening crisis, with a relapse into recession. Measures such as low interest rates or the liquidity provided by the ECB do not mean, in essence, more investment and consumption: they tend to exhaust their effect and feed new speculative dynamics. Public debts have shot up and today reach colossal sums, creating huge obstacles to the financing of States and to public investment. The coexistence of greater liquidity and worldwide and European instability strongly nourishes the scale and volatility of financial flows, a factor which will strongly impact interest rates. Budget stimuli are made more difficult by the iron-clad constraints and regulations of the Economic and Monetary Union.

The Euro has trapped countries like Portugal. Without its own currency, without a central issuing bank and lender of last resort to assist the State and the banks when necessary, there is a total dependence on «financial markets» and the rating agencies' «assessments» or – what is just as serious - on the ECB, the European Union and the IMF.

The Euro and EMU are not a mere economic and technical problem. They are above all a political issue that clashes with the peoples' fundamental rights, a project that is incompatible with economic and social development, the sovereign assertion of a people and a country. There can be no «democratic reform» or «intelligent reading» that changes the class nature of the Euro and the EMU.

The «response to the crisis» which defends the interests of big capital and the directory of powers, has created the conditions to justify a securitarian and authoritarian drift «at home», and militarism and interventionism «abroad».

The false and cynically designated «financial assistance programmes» launched during this period were, and are, instruments to enforce violent measures of exploitation and plunder, both upon labour, and on public resources, and to bind, through the debt mechanism, several States into a position of dependence and submission to the European Union's strategy. But they are also tools used to defend the interests of the big European banks and true «trial balloons» for a new and more draconian political-institutional framework of domination within the space of the European Union.

The crisis in the Eurozone has been used to reconfigure EU policies so as to further EMU and to transfer power from member States to the institutions of the European Union in areas such as economic, budget, social, labour and financial system policies.

The imposition of the Fiscal Compact, the packages of Economic Governance, the European Semester – with the «policing» of budgetary and economic policies and its procedures for excessive deficits and macroeconomic imbalances - and the rules of macroeconomic conditionality in the allocation of European funds, as well as the imposition of the Banking Union, represent – together with the «direction» contained in the EU 2020 Strategy - a web of unacceptable constraints that increasingly submits the States with the weakest and most dependent economies, benefits the interests of the main capitalist powers, who determine the course of the European Union, and strengthens big capital's goals of domination.

There is an ongoing process to dilute the separation of competences between the European Union and member-States, in which the latter are increasingly deprived of the few remaining instruments with which they could confront difficulties. The European Union's institutions today exercise tight control over policies and measures which, in some areas, go beyond what is envisaged in the Treaties. In imposing so-called «structural reforms», the European Union is trying to directly intervene in matters such as wages, labour legislation and collective bargaining, social policies, the State's social functions and public services.

The past few years have confirmed that any policy that defends social justice, national sovereignty and that benefits the interests and rights of the workers and the people, even if only partially or timidly, is inevitably confronted with the constraints of the Economic and Monetary Union and the Euro.

The degree of interference and conditioning imposed by the European Union – which was clearly expressed in the process of blackmail that recently targeted Portugal with the threat of fines or the suspension of structural funds – confirms that Portugal's submission to the Euro is unsustainable.

Recent developments in Greece confirm that it is an illusion to seek answers and solutions within the context of foreign impositions and constraints, namely by the European Union, and shows the need for a firm and courageous determination to defend a country's legitimate rights and sovereignty, when confronting interference, blackmail and pressures. This process clearly demonstrated the attitude of the European Union and other centres of decision at the service of transnational capital, of unscrupulously resorting to blackmail and retaliation in order to crush and suffocate any will of a sovereign affirmation. This process proves the extent to which breaking with the Euro and with other instruments and impositions, renegotiating the debt and ensuring public control of the banking sector, are central elements and pre-requisites for an effective policy of sovereign development in Portugal.

The **Banking Union** is a massive operation of centralisation and concentration of the banking sector in the European Union, and is one of the most serious steps, from a structural point of view, after the creation of the Euro. It aims to prevent any form of public control by the national States over their financial system. Through the centralisation of supervision and bank resolution by the ECB, the aim is to safeguard above all, and under any circumstances, the interests of finance capital, placing it under the «protection» of the ECB, «safe» from any national policies wishing to put the financial system at the service of public strategies of sovereign development. The Banking Union institutionalises and centralises instruments that will make the operations to channel public funds to the banks even more opaque and expedited.

The Banking Union and the enhancement of the mechanisms under the Stability and Growth Pact converge in the project to deepen and complete the Economic and Monetary

Union. Having been justified with the pretext of «overcoming the EMU's initial flaws», of «strengthening the social dimension», of solving the issue of «democratic legitimacy» and of «creating instruments to shield against future crises», the so-called «Five Presidents' report» (which was drawn up and subscribed by the Presidents of the European Council, European Commission, Eurogroup, ECB and European Parliament) systematizes the core ideas for speeding up integration with an even more federalist prospect, in four key-areas, that correspond to as many unions: economic, financial, budgetary and political.

The rhetoric surrounding a false «change» and the dramatisation of a possible «death of the European project» – a discourse in which social democracy plays a central role - aims at a new federalist leap forward.

The furthering and **enlargement of the single market to new areas**, focusing on strategic sectors, particularly on the so-called «natural monopolies» and social functions, seeks to ensure new privatisations and encourage monopolistic concentration. Its rules sacralise the free circulation of goods, services and capital, so-called «free competition», and the removal, or even the strict prohibition, of direct intervention by the States in the sectors concerned. These are the cases of the Single Digital Market, the Energy Union, the Single European Sky, the deepening of the Single Transport Market, the four railway packages, the deepening of the single market in services, networks and infrastructure, and also the Single Capital Market, articulated with the Banking Union.

Successive reviews of the **Common Agricultural Policy**, increasingly dictated by large agribusiness interests, were geared towards liberalisation, destroying almost all public instruments of supply regulation and of protection of national production, accelerating concentration and attacking productive models based on small and medium-size agriculture. The crisis in agriculture and cattle farming may be exacerbated if, in the field of the European Union's trade policy, free trade agreements are implemented, the most serious of which are TTIP, CETA or the EU-Mercosul free trade Agreement.

The **Common Fisheries Policy**, with its successive reforms, is increasingly detached from reality, disregards the specific situation of countries like Portugal and dismantles almost all instruments of market regulation in this increasingly liberalised sector. The situation confirms the need to revert the provision granting exclusive competence to the European Union in the management of living marine resources.

The **adoption of the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) 2014-2020**, which is below 1% of Gross National Income of the Member States, and the European Fund for Strategic Investment, known as Juncker Plan, belie any priority to cohesion or solidarity in the European Union, aiming instead to ensure a greater drain of resources for monopoly groups and major powers that supposedly assume funding status. The priority that is given in the 2014-2020 MFF to exporting companies, at the expense of those that produce for the domestic market, worsens our country's dependence from abroad, facilitating the domination of the Portuguese internal market by countries such as Germany or Spain, at the expense of Portugal.

The deepening of the **single market** and the asymmetric effects of common policies was accompanied by a reduction of the EU budget, undermining any possible redistributive dimension. The result is inevitable: more divergence, greater asymmetry, more inequality.

Developments in the area of justice and the so-called «internal affairs» strengthened the mechanisms that curtail rights, freedoms and guarantees, and extended the «communitarisation» of justice.

In the framework of «Constitutional Affairs», anti-democratic guidelines have been developed, that attempt against the sovereignty of States, namely through the «better legislation» inter-institutional agreement which seeks to reduce and make legislative production more uniform, conditioning its goals and concentrating more power in the European Commission.

The European Union has deepened its nature as **an imperialist political and military bloc**, in articulation with the USA, with a so-called «foreign» policy that, in the economic, diplomatic, geo-strategic and military fields, is dictated by the interests and aims of economic domination by European monopolies and transnationals and the great powers, like France and Germany.

Trade policy, aligned with the economic and monetary war of the main imperialist powers, has deepened the line of liberalising world trade and capital movements. Especially serious are the negotiations and decisions of the European Union for the proliferation of free trade agreements like TTIP, CETA and TISA (Trade in Services Agreement).

Association agreements are used as means of expansion - particularly in the so-called «neighbourhood» of the European Union - aimed at economic and political domination, as was clear in the case of Ukraine.

The European External Action Service confirmed its role as a mega-structure seeking to centralise, at the supranational level, the instruments of foreign policy and diplomatic action of States. The post of High Representative of the European Union resulted in a European federalisation of foreign policy in articulation with other imperialist powers like the USA.

The militarisation of the European Union was enhanced, its «foreign» interventionism and its role as a European pillar of NATO grew. The Common Foreign and Security Policy, and in particular its Common Security and Defence Policy, were among the pillars that developed most quickly after the adoption of the Lisbon Treaty. The European Union is now present in virtually all scenarios of destabilisation and military intervention. The European military research and industry is being promoted, there are attempts to increase the military expenditures of member States and to implement the «European Army» project and the «European Defence Union», as well as the creation of a «European Border and Coast Guard» with broad powers to intervene, disregarding the sovereignty of States.

The European Union's «response» to the flow of refugees and migrants - which results from the militarist, neo-colonial and interventionist policies - is a shocking indictment of the exploitative, reactionary and inhumane nature of the process of European capitalist integration.

The development of the European Union enhances the main areas of contradiction: the class contradiction between big capital - which drives the process and accumulates capital - and labour - which loses income, rights and living standards; the contradiction between the process of political concentration of power driven by big capital and the right and aspiration of peoples to democratic participation and to define their own development paths and exercise democratic control of national political power institutions; the contradiction between the propaganda of the European Union's «values» and the reality of policies within the space of the European Union and between it and the rest of the world; the contradiction between the current relations among the major powers leading the process of capitalist integration to strengthen their power and the inevitable

rivalry in their dispute for dominant positions within and outside the European arena; and the contradiction between the big powers and the States in the so-called «periphery».

The furthering of the three pillars of the European Union - neoliberalism, federalism and militarism – has unleashed a succession of crises, which are in reality different expressions of the same crisis, that mutually intensify and feed each other. The crisis of the European Union, of its policies, structures, guidelines and pillars is in itself an expression of the structural crisis of capitalism. A deep and persistent crisis, which is still developing and with new and unique elements compared to past crises of the European capitalist integration.

The economic and social crisis has accelerated the political contradictions. The European Union faces a deep political crisis. The debate today regards the possibility of a reconfiguration, or even disintegration, no longer «just» of the Eurozone/Economic and Monetary Union, but of the European Union itself.

The referendum in the United Kingdom and its result with the victory of the «Exit», whilst reflecting the discontent of those peoples with the European Union, is but the most recent expression of this crisis and deals a blow to the theories regarding the irreversibility of capitalist integration in Europe.

The crisis in, and of, the European Union shows that fundamental changes cannot be operated in a context of «reforming» the European Union. Its pillars are an irremovable political and ideological matrix. There is no room for a «refounding» that calls into question the class nature and course of the European Union.

The attempts at new leaps forward in the process of capitalist integration are accompanied by vast manoeuvres of propaganda and attempts to whitewash the EU's various policies. This is the case of the so-called «European Social Pillar», which seeks to put some social make-up on the EMU and the EU, but which intends to level out social and labour rights by the lowest standards; of the theses of «unity» and «asserting Europe» invoking the threat of the far right and the unpredictability of the international situation; of the insistence on the concepts of «European citizenship» and «Common European home» or of «European values», as well as of a vast set of initiatives of ideological propaganda which target young people in particular.

Contrary to official propaganda, **more European Union does not mean more Europe**. On the contrary, a more profound process of capitalist integration is a major factor of social regression, increased poverty and mass unemployment that, in recent decades, has brought back to the European continent war, terrorism, racism, xenophobia, nationalisms, fascism and the political persecution of communists. **«Saving Europe» means defeating the European Union and the interests that it protects.**

The PCP defends **the creation of new forms of cooperation in Europe** which, based on the premise that the processes of integration are not neutral from the class point of view, articulate democratic and progressive ruptures at the national and international levels, with a view to building a new framework of political, institutional, and economic cooperation, of solidarity for social and economic development, of peace and friendship among peoples and of sovereign States with equal rights.

The other Europe, of the workers and peoples, requires defeating the process of capitalist integration and will emerge from simultaneous converging factors: the development of the struggle of the workers and peoples and a growing political awareness regarding the class nature of the European Union; the sovereign assertion of the European States' right to economic and social development and the rejection of the impositions of the

European Union; the progressive change in the balance of political and institutional forces in the Member States of the European Union; the coordination and cooperation of progressive and left-wing forces, especially of Communists, based on a clear position of breaking with the process of European capitalist integration.

Portugal's integration within the EEC/European Union and EMU was, and is, a permanent process of confrontation with the achievements of the April Revolution and the Constitution of the Portuguese Republic. Right-wing policy and European capitalist integration are two sides of the same coin. Breaking with the right-wing policy and the impositions and constraints of the European Union – first of all and in the short term, the Euro and Economic and Monetary Union – and the struggle to defend national independence and sovereignty are central elements for building a political, patriotic and left-wing, alternative in Portugal.

The PCP will continue to work, in particular in the European Parliament, to uphold and assert national interests, to oppose decisions that hinder them, to demand and use for the benefit of the country all the resources, means and opportunities and minimise, with concrete initiatives, the constraints and negative consequences of integration.

The PCP has great confidence in the struggle of the workers and peoples and reaffirms the inalienable right of the Portuguese people to decide their own destiny and choose the path to ensure their right to a sovereign development. A right that no integration, however advanced its state of development, can expropriate.

2.3. The economic, social, cultural and political situation

The country's reality confirms the PCP's analyses, warnings, denouncements and struggles in all areas: political, economic, social, cultural and environmental.

These are **the identifying features of the Portuguese reality**: large foreign debts and deficits; the imbalance of public finances and the unsustainability of public debt; the reduction in public and private investment, beneath the levels of sustainability of infrastructure and equipment (decline of fixed capital stock); worsening productive, technological, capital and demographic deficits; a weaker economic fabric, the decapitalisation of companies, the destruction and outflow of capital; the loss of national control of strategic sectors, areas and companies; unemployment, wage depreciation, job precariousness and impoverishment; restrictions on access to essential public services (healthcare, education, justice); territorial imbalances and regional disruption and disorder; environmental degradation and the increasing commodification of nature and of water; the ideological dominance exercised by big business which includes the concentration of media ownership; the restoration of reactionary values and thinking, historical revisionism, particularly as regards contemporary history, fascism and the April 25 [1974 Revolution], important cultural losses, particularly for the Portuguese language, and expressions of cultural elitism; the degradation and subversion of the democratic regime established in the Constitution of the Portuguese Republic and the weakening of social components of the State apparatus; corruption and an assault on public assets, public-private promiscuity, increasing subordination of political power to economic power and of democracy and national sovereignty to the decisions and impositions of the European Union and the major powers.

This reality is inseparable from right-wing policies which have had, and have, as main vectors: privatisations; economic, labour and social liberalisation and deregulation; the destruction of Agrarian Reform; the dismantling of important companies in the productive

sector; foreign dependence; to which we must add, in recent years, the worsening impact of the Stability and Growth Pacts and of the Pact of Aggression.

The right-wing policy is a class policy of domestic big capital, associated with, and dependent on, foreign capital. A policy carried out by the big bourgeoisie, which includes a visible financial oligarchy that depends on it.

As the right-wing policy progresses, the clearer becomes the subordination of national interests to the strict and narrow class interests of the monopoly bourgeoisie. With divergences and contradictions in their midst, what unites them is the aim to make labour force costs the main variable of economic adjustment and the central vector of their policy. To this one must add the economic operations and policies of usurpation of all components of the State that can be new areas for obtaining surplus value and for capital accumulation, or an obstacle to their implementation, such as universal public services, or labour legislation.

The structural crisis of capitalism and European capitalist integration, the serious national crisis and competition for markets and public grants and funds, have sharpened contradictions, confrontations and conflicts of interest with layers and sectors of middle and petty bourgeoisie and with other intermediate strata.

Throughout these 40 years, **capital's offensive advanced capitalist relations of production and monopolies, essentially dominated by the financial sector and foreign capital**, in association with sectors of big national capital.

There were changes in the social and economic structure, with a negative impact on the democratic regime.

The end result is a powerful movement of concentration and centralisation of capital, along with a relative decrease of domestic capital's presence. The development of these capitalist relations has three salient features:

- The **financialization of the economy**: the expansion of the dominant positions of the financial sectors in all areas of national economic life, thereby expanding finance and fictitious capital, and which is the counterpoint to the destruction of productive sectors, the destruction of value and outflow of capital.

- The **expansion and intensification of the presence of private capital at the expense of public capital** - seizing companies, sectors, services and several areas from the State, through privatisations and concessions with the progression of private capital in healthcare, education, notary services, defence, public security or justice.

- The **rapid increase of foreign capital** in mergers and acquisitions, entering into the share capital of national public and private companies, predominantly in finance, real estate, the energy, industrial, technological and transport sectors.

On a political level, the expression of these structural changes, with the dominance of monopolies in Portugal, is reflected in the increasing subordination of political power to economic power, to «Community» power of the directory of the major powers and to European-based transnational capital

2.4. PSD/CDS-PP government action

The four and a half years of PSD/CDS-PP government and the implementation of the Pact of Aggression were marked by a violent onslaught against workers' and people's rights, by a

policy of concentrating wealth and increasing exploitation, social inequality and impoverishment, by ever larger structural deficits of the country, by a severe economic and social crisis, and the gradual degradation of the democratic regime and the reconfiguration of the State at the service of monopoly capital.

Those years were also marked by the response of the workers and people, with the development of the struggle against the right-wing policy and the Pact of Aggression, and in defence of their rights, interests and aspirations.

This period saw an ever greater decline, regression and dependence of the country.

Economically, **the country registered one of the largest and longest recessions**, resulting in the drop of economic growth during nine consecutive quarters and a drop in the Gross Domestic Product of over 6.8% between the end of 2010 and 2013, throwing it back to the level of 2001. The period was marked by the growth of net foreign debt, which increased in absolute terms and which reached almost 122% of GDP in the first quarter of 2014; by an abrupt drop of total investment of over 31% between 2010 and 2013; by worsening structural deficits and the closure and bankruptcy of over one hundred thousand small and medium-size enterprises.

Wages, pensions and income of workers, pensioners and other strata of the population were hit hard. Portugal faced high levels of unemployment, with the official number of unemployed rising from 660,000 (in the second quarter of 2011) to approximately 930,000 (first quarter of 2013), nearly doubling the number of long-term unemployed. In broad terms, the number of unemployed exceeded 1 million and 400 thousand. From 2010 to 2015, over 440 thousand jobs were destroyed, 70,000 of which in public administration. Half a million Portuguese, mostly young people and many of them skilled, were forced to emigrate.

The **exploitation of workers intensified**, with an overall wage devaluation of 16.5%, which in Public Administration and the State Entrepreneurial Sector exceeded 30% as a result not only of wage freezes and the increase in average weekly working hours, but also of cuts imposed on wages and other payments. The attack on collective bargaining and the rights it contained continued, and precariousness became widespread.

Fiscal injustice grew with a sharp increase in taxes on labour income, together with the relief of taxes on big business. The introduction of the surcharge and changes in tax brackets and deductions on Income Tax (IRS) resulted in a heavier tax burden on workers and old-age pensioners of over 3,800 million [3.8 billion] euros.

Monopoly capital's domination of national life grew, with further privatisations, or the handover – also by the end of golden shares - of strategic public companies to domestic or foreign big capital – PT, TAP, CTT, EGF, EDP, REN, GALP, ANA, Caixa Seguros, ENVC and various companies of public transport and logistics, some of which were reversed following the new phase of political life - with the ensuing plunder of public resources.

Constitutionally enshrined social rights were compromised. As a result of a cut of over 2,000 million [2 billion] euros, hundreds of thousands of users found themselves excluded from access to healthcare; the rights of professionals of the sector were attacked; user fees were increased; the right to transport of non-urgent patients was eliminated; the line of privatizing healthcare was expended, namely by handing over hospital units to the Misericórdias.

In education, the attack on public education saw new steps, with the closing down of hundreds of schools in the first cycle of [primary] schooling; a cut in financing of over 2,500 million [2.5 billion] euros; an increase in the number of students per class; curricular reorganisation; the reduction in the number of non-educational workers and the dismissal of over 25,000 teachers; attacks against the teaching career; the reduction in social assistance for schools; the discrimination and segregation of thousands of students with special educational needs; the primacy of national examinations, devaluing continuous evaluation; an increase in the costs of education.

In Social Security, there were more severe cuts in the value of pensions, the conditions of access to retirement worsened, in particular by increasing the retirement age and through the so-called sustainability factor. There were also further cuts in other social benefits - such as protection against unemployment and sickness, family allowance, Solidarity Supplement for the Elderly and Social Insertion Income - which affected hundreds of thousands of families.

The deterioration of social conditions and impoverishment led to the loss, by tens of thousands of families, of their homes to banks, and thousands of tenants faced eviction due to the application of the new law on rents.

The **degradation of the democratic regime** was enhanced by a systematic policy of confrontation with the Constitution of the Portuguese Republic, of disrespect for fundamental rights and of confrontation between institutions of sovereignty. Democratic local government was targeted by a programme of subversion of its fundamental characteristics, with an unprecedented attack on its administrative and financial autonomy, which culminated in the extinction of over twelve hundred parishes. The process of closure of hundreds of public services was intensified. The merger of multi-municipal systems was used to pave the way for the privatization of water and sewage systems, and waste disposal was handed over to private companies. Steps were taken to municipalise education, healthcare and culture. The class nature of Justice deepened, and more obstacles were set up to accessing it, among other reasons due the new judicial map which closed down dozens of courts.

The **intensity and scale of the offensive**, associated with the PSD/CDS-PP government's action and the implementation of the Pact of Aggression, affected all areas of political, economic, social and cultural life, and **represented a civilizational regression which left marks and consequences** for living standards, economic development and national independence, **that have not disappeared after their defeat**. The trail of economic decline, with the destruction of the productive forces and capacity, the non-renewal of infrastructure and the abandonment of public investment continue to mark and condition the country's life and prospects for development in the forthcoming years, making more relevant the need for a patriotic and left-wing policy which can fully respond to the problems which Portugal faces.

2.5. The October 2015 elections and the new phase of national political life

The elections of October 4, 2015, spelled the unequivocal condemnation of the PSD/CDS-PP coalition. A condemnation expressed at the ballot box and which reflected the political and social isolation that had already been previously determined by the struggle of the Portuguese workers and people.

The legislative elections bear important lessons, besides having prevented PSD and CDS-PP from having the conditions to which they aspired, in order to continue their course of exploitation, decline and national dependence: they confirmed the importance of the struggle and its impact, its role in the political and social erosion of the government, even under circumstances where some hastened to declare that it was pointless to resist and that the course of impoverishment of the workers' and people's lives was inevitable; they categorically belied the mystification which sought to transform the election of MPs that would determine the composition of the Assembly of the Republic [Parliament] into non-existent «elections for a Prime Minister».

The condemnation imposed on the PSD/CDS-PP coalition was a defeat not only of their government but also of their policy. It was this demand for change that the PCP answered by taking the initiative of helping to break with the destructive action of the PSD/CDS-PP government, ensuring its downfall and removal from office and defeating the attempts by big capital, with the full support of the then President of the Republic Cavaco Silva, to keep them in power. But also with the goal of, by giving political expression to the struggle of the workers and people, not wasting the opportunity to achieve advances, even if limited ones, thereby corresponding to its commitment to the workers and the people to fight at all levels for the defence of their rights and interests.

The political solution that was reached does not correspond to the necessary goal of breaking with the right-wing policy and implementing a patriotic and left-wing policy. Its political expression reflects the degree of commitment that corresponds to the level of convergence that was reached between the PCP and PS, and is limited by the obvious and stated programmatic differences, as is written in the "Joint Position of PS and PCP on a political solution."

The political framework does not mean the formation of a left-wing government, but rather the formation and coming into office of a minority PS government, with its own programme; not the existence of a left-wing majority in the Assembly of the Republic, but rather the existence of a balance of forces where PSD and CDS-PP are in a minority, and where, at the same time, the parliamentary groups of the PCP and PEV condition decisions and are crucial and indispensable for the restoration and achievement of rights and incomes; not a situation where the PCP is the supporting force of the government through any agreement of parliamentary incidence, but rather a situation where, having contributed towards ensuring that the government could take office and carry out its action, the PCP retains full political freedom and independence, permanently guiding its assessment and decisions by what serves the interests of the workers, the people and the country. It is a political solution that was adopted with full independence and with our own identity, reaffirming our Programme and project, with the aim of working to achieve a break with the right-wing policy and a patriotic and left-wing policy.

The durability of this political solution directly depends on the adoption of a policy that ensures an about-turn in the course of decline and regression that was imposed by the previous government and on its correspondance with the interests and aspirations of the workers and the people.

The new phase of national political life reflects the contradictory framework of the potential and the limitations that are inherent to it. On the one hand, there have been several, albeit limited, advances resulting from the struggle of the workers and the intervention of the PCP, which were expressed in the State Budgets for 2016 and 2017, and in other adopted legislation that restored rights, wages and income, and which, even if momentarily, meant that a different course from that of the PSD/CDS-PP government and

of the European Union - which had been presented as the only and inevitable one - was also possible. On the other hand, the confirmation of the limitations on more decisive and indispensable advances, resulting from choices made by the PS government of submission to the policies, impositions and constraints of the European Union and to the interests of monopoly capital.

In any case, there are examples of steps that must be consolidated and furthered: the restoration of wages and the 35-hour week in Public Administration; the elimination of the Income Tax surcharge; the restoring of stolen public holidays; the reversal of the process of privatisation of public transportation companies; the increase in the national minimum wage; an increase in child benefit and solidarity supplement for the elderly; the repeal of measures that sought to coerce and restrain women from having voluntary interruptions of pregnancy; a decrease in healthcare user fees; the introduction of free school textbooks; the protection [from evictions] of a family's home of residence; the end of exams in the 4th and 6th grades; extra support for unemployed workers; a reduction of VAT for restaurants and coffee shops.

The complexity and demands of the current phase of national political life cannot be ignored. It is well known that the PS has different programmatic options, as is its past and its stated attitude of not breaking with the external constraints – whether regarding the impositions of the European Union, submission to the Euro or regarding the debt – or of not breaking with the interests of monopoly capital and with structural aspects of right-wing policies that continue to be present in the government's actions. It is with full awareness of these contradictions and demands that the PCP will continue to act, determined by its commitments to the workers and people and by the assessment which, in each given moment, it makes of the content of policies, and preserving our full independence.

The removal of PSD and CDS-PP [from office] corresponded to the urgent need to stop their destructive work. But it also reflected the will and the demand that those parties' electoral defeat should translate into a defeat of their policy. This is the fundamental issue that is at stake in the present national situation: not just to prevent that the PSD or the CDS return to power, but to prevent that their policy be carried out, whether by those same parties or by the PS. Breaking with the right-wing policy and creating the conditions, through the workers' struggle and the strengthening of the PCP, to materialize a patriotic and left-wing policy: this is the goal for all democrats and patriots that aspire to a developed, just and sovereign Portugal.

Without ignoring the significance of the advances and steps taken in an opposite direction to those of the previous government policy, the situation which the country finds itself in, the degree of regression and national dependence, requires a policy that addresses and responds to the need for growth and development and which raises the workers' living standards.

The current possibility to, although in a limited way, address some of the most pressing problems and above all the necessary continuity and consolidation that must be ensured, will be confronted, as is already clear, not only by the conditionings and constraints that objectively derive from the process of European capitalist integration, but also by the pressure and blackmail of big capital.

Notwithstanding the political significance of the national situation proving that there can be a different path other than more exploitation, liquidation of rights and impoverishment, the current phase of national political life reveals the increasingly irreconcilable

contradiction between the impositions and targets of the European Union and the Euro, and a policy that can provide solid answers to the need for economic and social development. The revanchist reaction from the centres of transnational capital is there to prove that, however mitigated the assertion of sovereignty or the questioning of their interests, they will stop at nothing to achieve their goals. It is necessary to oppose any illusions about the possibility of consolidating a sovereign development under the rules of the European Union.

The current phase of national political life, and the political solution that accompanies it, despite the possibilities that it opens up and which must not be squandered, further highlights the indispensable goal of breaking with the right-wing policy and the need for a government that may decisively adopt, based on solid foundations, **the patriotic and left-wing policy** that the PCP restates as absolutely essential to break the power of monopoly capital and the limitations and constraints stemming from the capitalist integration of the European Union and the Euro and their instruments of domination. This is the goal that the workers and the people, the democrats and patriots, all those who wish to ensure the right to a Portugal with a future, will take into their own hands with their action and their struggle. It is this struggle that, in the present conditions, is decisive to win rights and to achieve a break with the right-wing policy.

In this period of a new phase of national political life, besides the the PS Government, a **new President of the Republic**, Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa, also took office. It is required that in exercising his mandate, he respects the Constitution of the Portuguese Republic and the other sovereign institutions.

Following their defeat in the October 4, 2015, elections, **PSD and CDS-PP** have taken a markedly revanchist, class-based, attitude, articulated with the pressures and impositions of the European Union and the most reactionary sectors associated with monopoly capital.

The **action of the minority PS Government** – although conditioned in the current situation by the balance of forces in the Assembly of the Republic [Parliament] and by the PCP's activity – continues, in key aspects, to identify itself with, and to develop options and guidelines that are intrinsic to, a right-wing policy, namely as regards the submission to foreign impositions, in particular those of the European Union, and to the class interests of big capital. The most clear-cut examples of this are the way in which the BANIF [bank] crisis was dealt with, the process of appointing the board of the CGD [public bank], their attitude regarding the taxi sector and the multinationals' craving for it, and options of economic, fiscal and foreign policies.

2.6. The economic situation

The country's economic situation deteriorated sharply in recent years. In the name of fighting the deficit and public debt – impositions that result from joining the Euro and submission to the European Union - Portugal was subjected to a violent «adjustment» process with devastating consequences for its economic fabric.

Subject to the double garrotte of the deficit and public debt and faced with the lack of instruments of monetary, exchange rate and budgetary policies, that were taken away when joining the Economic and Monetary Union, Portugal has seen a long period of economic stagnation since joining the Euro in 1999, being one of the countries that least grew in the world.

This reality is inseparable from the right-wing policy, the European Union's capitalist integration process, the nature of capitalism and its structural crisis. It is made worse by a

number of constraints arising from this context, which, if not removed, jeopardise any prospect for sovereign development that can respond to the aspirations and needs of the people and the country. Among them: a currency - the Euro – that is desynchronized and increasingly in conflict with national interests; an unsustainable debt; banks that are dominated by big capital.

From the very first moment, the PCP opposed Portugal joining the Euro and warned of its dangers and impacts, and with the coming into circulation of the currency in our country, fought against federalist illusions, denounced the consequences of losing monetary sovereignty and contributed to highlight and broaden the awareness on the real scale of the problem which Portugal has had to face.

Coveted by the big European economic and financial groups, the Euro was, and is, an instrument to facilitate the transfer to the great powers of the wealth produced, with a view to ensuring the appropriation and concentration of surplus value in the hands of capital. Its introduction in Portugal was a violent qualitative leap, which seriously enhanced the neoliberal and federalist option of the European Union edifice.

The Euro represented divestment and productive degradation, loss of competitiveness and foreign indebtedness, stagnation and recession. It facilitated deindustrialization and the privatisation of strategic companies, the weakening of the technological intensity of exports and further encouraged a weak production profile, that is dependent and peripheral. A greater public debt, a runaway budget and deficit further exposed the country to speculation with the sovereign debt. Instead of European convergence, we had social and economic divergence.

The Euro and the EMU constraints are contrary to national interests. The issue at stake is the urgency, feasibility and viability of a release from submission to the Euro as an indispensable condition for the sovereign development of the country.

Portugal needs to free itself from the Euro and from the constraints of monetary integration. It needs a currency befitting the reality and the economic potential of the country, its wages, productivity and productive profile, which may contribute to raise them, instead of lowering them. It needs an autonomous and sovereign monetary, financial, foreign exchange and budget management, adjusted to the country's situation and which takes advantage of all the room for manoeuvre to boost production, employment and growth. It needs to have a true national bank that supports its development project, freeing it from dependence on the financial markets for lending of last resort and enabling the State to obtain financing freed from the political conditions imposed by the loans from the European Union and the IMF. Portugal needs to leave the Stability and Growth Pact and all its derivatives, the Fiscal Compact, Economic Governance, the European Semester.

Freedom from submission to the Euro is necessary and is possible. The country has to prepare its release from submission to the Euro, whether this option arises from a sovereign decision by the Portuguese people, or from an external imposition or a process of dissolution of the Economic and Monetary Union. This preparation is essential to ensure the full use of the benefits of an exit from the Euro and to minimize its costs, in a process that is and will be eminently political.

The Portuguese public debt, standing at 132% of GDP, the largest percentage ever, is an inseparable expression of the right-wing policy and, in particular, of joining the Euro. It is a debt that is annually depriving the Portuguese State of over 8 thousand million [8 billion]

euros just in interest - approximately the spending on healthcare - and without this being translated into a lower debt. The Portuguese public debt, largely illegitimate, is unsustainable, and reproduces from year to year (between 2010 and 2014, it increased by 50 thousand million [50 billion] euros). Without a renegotiation, it is not possible to substantially reduce it.

Public debt is a «bottomless pit» and its service irrational. The debt has become a mechanism of extortion of public and national resources. Renegotiation is necessary to free resources from debt payment for investment, promoting economic growth and employment, to defend public services and the State's social functions, to fight poverty and inequality. The country's problem is not the deficit but an unsustainable debt. The public debt is the major component of the national foreign debt. Solving the public debt problem means solving, by and large, the foreign debt problem.

The PCP has long advocated the renegotiation of the public debt, without forgetting the need to fight the causes of public and of private debt, which is also considerable. Had this option been taken, the Portuguese people would have been spared the brutal sacrifices imposed upon them. The PCP advocates a renegotiation with creditors to revise the payment terms and nominally reduce the amounts that are owed. A renegotiation of the terms, interest rates and amounts of the debt. This is a political process to serve the people and the country that is inseparable from the release of submission to the Euro and recovery of monetary sovereignty and public control of the banking sector.

In the **financial sector**, following the privatisation process, the only public bank left is CGD (which is often managed as if it were a private bank). The privatisation of banks and the rest of the financial sector was one of the biggest transfers of public money into private hands and was one of the mainstays of the reconstitution of monopoly groups, with enormous losses for the people and for the country. It is of strategic importance to strengthen the role of CGD and recapitalize it, placing it at the service of the economy's development and of the interests of the Portuguese people.

After more than two decades where the financial sector and the main private shareholders of the largest financial groups accumulated thousands of millions euros in profits and dividends, the sector has accumulated since 2011, thousands of millions euros in negative results and «imparities».

In the period between 2008 and 2014, according to the Bank of Portugal, these imparities totalled approximately 40 thousand million [40 billion] euros, causing heavy losses which delapidated the banks' own capital and required successive recapitalisation, with high levels of risk credit still remaining. This created conditions for smaller banks to be absorbed by larger ones, and for an even greater control of their capital by foreign financial groups.

Private financial groups are today mostly in the hands of foreign capital and have been transformed into centres of tax evasion and money laundering, financial speculation and dilapidation of the social usefulness of savings of Portuguese families.

The sovereignty of the country over its financial system is seriously called into question by the concentration of national banks and other financial intermediaries, like the insurance sector, in the hands of foreign capital and with the implementation of the Banking Union.

In fact, as a result of this management mainly oriented towards speculation (including with Portuguese debt) and the exceptional return on shareholder capital, private banking and

the Portuguese banking system, without the intervention of the State, without financial assistance, tax benefits and public guarantees, would have already collapsed.

Between 2007 and 2015 alone, State aid to the financial sector totalled at least 11.5% of the 2015 GDP. A State intervention which left the Portuguese people to foot the bill, as was the case with the BPP, BPN, BES and BANIF [banks].

The situation of the financial sector is not due to mismanagement or behavioural deviations by bankers - although they also exist - but above all, is due to the functioning of the capitalist system and the domination by monopoly capital of the financial sector and the economy, which successive governments have stimulated through the policies and rules which have been imposed.

The need to contain the major persistent systemic risks for the economy, to prevent more private losses from being transferred to the Portuguese people, to ensure the solvency, liquidity and regular functioning of the financial institutions, to ensure effective regulation, supervision and monitoring of banking, requires public control of the financial system, with a gradual extension of public property and management. Banks, like other strategic sectors, are either public, or they will not be national.

Freeing the country from its submission to the Euro, the renegotiation of the debt, the recovery of public control of the banks, are prerequisites for a sovereign Portugal. The removal of these three major constraints, which are profoundly interconnected, is an unpostponable goal, in order to meet the needs of the people and the country.

(...)

2.12. Patriotic and left-wing policy

The past few years have represented a profound national setback for Portugal.

An effective response to the country's problems continues to be blocked by the pressure of the public debt burden, by the constraints and blackmail of the mechanisms of the Euro and the European Union, by successive banking scandals, which devour thousands of millions of euros of public resources, and by the domination of the national economy by monopoly groups. In the current situation, the struggle to break with the right-wing policy - although inseparable from the consolidation of all the positive measures and advances and the fight against the negative aspects that are still present in the new phase of national political life - requires a clear statement of the central goals of **a patriotic and left-wing political alternative** that the PCP proposes.

This policy, due to its patriotic dimension, has national sovereignty and independence as a central goal, asserting the Portuguese people's inalienable right to decision-making power regarding the necessary options and guidelines, and the prevalence of this sovereign will over all constraints and foreign impositions.

A left-wing policy which, unhesitatingly, breaks with the right-wing policy and the interests of big capital and sets down as its aim to raise the rights and incomes of the workers and people, to raise the living standards of other antimonopoly classes and strata, promoting justice and social progress.

Achieving a patriotic and left-wing alternative policy requires, as determining factors, the broadening of the organisation, unity and struggle of the workers; the increasing intervention of all antimonopoly strata, within a large anti-monopolist social front; a

stronger PCP and an increasingly broad support for the Party, its proposals and political initiatives.

The patriotic and left-wing policy is not only necessary but possible, because by giving a coherent and comprehensive answer to national problems and ensuring the conditions for the development of the country, it corresponds to the interests of the overwhelming majority of the Portuguese people.

The patriotic and left-wing policy that the PCP proposes to the country is based on the principles and values of the Constitution of the Portuguese Republic, is part of the PCP's programme «An Advanced Democracy - The values of April in the Future of Portugal», an integral part of building a socialist society in Portugal.

This policy, based on the essential axes and goals – of a political, economic, social, cultural, environmental dimension and of national independence - adopted at the 19th [PCP] Congress, has as decisive elements, in the current political framework and in the country's current economic and social situation, eight priorities:

- **To free the country from submission to the Euro and the impositions and constraints of the European Union** which, together with other expressions of a sovereign foreign policy of peace and cooperation, asserts a free and sovereign Portugal;
- **To renegotiate the public debt**, in its terms, interest and amounts, so as to ensure a debt service that is compatible with the needs of public investment, development and job creation;
- **To value labour and workers**, with full employment, wage increases, reduced working hours, defending jobs with rights, fighting against unemployment and precariousness, and ensuring higher retirement and pension benefits;
- **To defend and promote national production and productive sectors**, with the planning of economic activity, the development of a policy to defend the manufacturing and mining industry, agriculture and fisheries, which places national resources at the service of the people and the country, and which reduces structural deficits;
- **To ensure public control of banking, returning basic strategic sectors of the economy to the public sector**, bolstering a strong and dynamic State Entrepreneurial Sector, supporting micro, small and medium-sized companies and the cooperative sector;
- **To ensure a public administration and services that serve the people and the country**, valuing the National Health Service as a universal and free public service; free and quality Public Education; a Public and Universal Social Security System; a public cultural service;
- **To defend a policy of fiscal justice that eases the tax burden on the incomes of the workers and people, fights against tax havens** and ends the scandalous favours to big business;
- **To defend the democratic regime and to respect the Constitution of the Portuguese Republic**, enhancing rights, freedoms and guarantees, fighting against corruption and ensuring an independent judiciary, that is accessible to all.

Chapter III

The struggle of the masses and the alternative

3.1. The struggle of the masses

The violent onslaught against workers, the people and the country during the term in office of the previous PSD/CDS-PP government was felt particularly strongly in the latter's attacks on rights and against the democratic regime and the country's sovereignty.

Without the persistent and consistent struggle of the Portuguese workers and people to defend their interests and rights and to oppose the onslaught by big business and the political powers that are at their service, the consequences of the onslaught would have been even more disastrous.

Mass struggle has thus confirmed its role as a decisive factor to build a political alternative and bring about social change.

3.2. The struggle of the working class and of workers in general: the engine of mass struggle

The working class and workers in general, as in previous periods, were the main targets of the brutal onslaught against social and labour rights launched by the PSD/CDS-PP government at the service of big business and bosses and aimed to intensify exploitation.

This onslaught, which was supported by an intense ideological campaign, resulted in the stealing of four national holidays and of days of leave, an assault on overtime, freezing of wages and careers, cuts in wages, brutal increase of taxes on labour incomes, de-regulation of and increased working hours, while tax benefits for large companies were extended.

The attacks on collective bargaining and the unitary trade union movement were at the heart of the actions undertaken by big business and the PSD/CDS-PP government to alter the correlation of forces between labour and capital. Their aim was to restrict the response of the working class and of workers in general.

A brutal attack against labour rights was perpetrated which fostered unemployment, increased casual labour. In many places, it changed, in fact, the features of labour relations.

The trade unions under CGTP-IN played a central and decisive role in the powerful, determined and courageous response of the working class and workers in general to this onslaught in various sectors of the economy, both public and private. It was a struggle that was fought in companies and workplaces and that took many forms (workers' meetings, petitions, strikes, stoppages, demonstrations, assemblies, marches, distribution of flyers). There were important moments when the various struggles converged, such as for the celebrations of the 25 April 1974 Revolution and in particular the massive initiatives on the 1st of May, but also other initiatives organised by CGTP-IN such as, in 2013, the Interjovem demonstrations, the celebration of the National Day of Youth, International Women's Day, a National Day of Action and Struggle on 14 February, the demonstration on 6 June; a general strike on 27 June; the «March for the April Revolution» on the bridges over the Tagus and Douro rivers on 19 October; the initiatives in front of the National Parliament of

1 and 26 November; and, in 2014, the demonstrations on 14 June in Porto and 21 June in Lisbon; the national day of outrage, action and struggle on 13 November and the national days of struggle between 21 and 25 November; in 2015, the demonstrations all over the country that were called by CGTP-IN on 7 March and the intense sectorial struggles, namely in public administration. These activities, together with hundreds of other converging actions and struggles carried out in various sectors of the economy, were moments of great significance and of utmost importance.

Converging initiatives gave a new impetus to the sectorial initiatives and demands in companies and workplaces, as was the case in the launch of the campaign against casual labour and the weeks of struggle organised by CGTP-IN in May and September 2016.

It was a struggle that took place under intense pressure, blackmail and threats, but for which the workers defined concrete goals and carried out thousand of initiatives and mobilized themselves in companies and workplaces. This was a courageous struggle, with workers whose employment status was precarious putting up resistance, organizing and taking in their hands the fight for their rights, as was the case of workers in the energy sector; telecommunications; shipbuilding; airports; and logistics.

The struggle led to the reinstatement of the 35-hour working week in public administration. It was the outcome of thirty four months of consecutive struggle, in particular of workers in local administration who, with their organization and mobilization put up the first opposition in local administration to the enforcement of the 40-hour working week. It was a victory that, like the reinstatement of the stolen holidays, proved that struggles, even if prolonged, will eventually be successful.

This example can be extended to the struggles in the transport sector against all that was taken away from workers in State-owned transportation companies; against the privatization of the Lisbon underground (Metropolitano); of bus and tram companies in Lisbon (Carris) and Porto (STCP); of the ferry companies on the river Tagus (Transtejo, Soflusa); of the cargo company (CP Carga), maintenance company (EMEF) and the Cascais line in the rail sector; and of the national airline (TAP); against the new labour regulations for dockworkers and its consequences; against the de-regulation of the airline handling sector; against the cuts in overtime pay in various companies; against the cuts in pension supplements; for a raise in wages and to defend collective bargaining. It can also be extended to the struggle against the privatization of the general services company EGF (Empresa Geral do Fomento), and in particular of the waste management companies AMARSUL and VALORSUL. This struggle by workers was constant and became the engine for other social struggles, mobilizing other sectors of society to oppose the right-wing policies.

The defeat of the PSD/CDS-PP government is inseparable from the struggle of the working class and workers in general. In social terms, it was expressed by the fight that was put up every day by workers and that eroded the social support for the government; in electoral terms, it was expressed by the various elections, particularly the general election of 4 October 2015; in political terms, it was expressed, for example, when thousands of workers demonstrated before the National Parliament on 10 November, thus contributing decisively to the removal of PSD and CDS-PP from the government. It was the struggle by workers that defeated the PSD/CDS-PP government. The struggle by workers is the most decisive element to defend and obtain rights and to defeat right-wing policies.

While the new phase in the country's political life has brought about significant developments, it has not by itself altered the practices and objectives of employers who aim

at preserving the power that they have gained and at preventing the recovery of the rights by workers.

It is and it will be in companies and workplaces that the struggle for collective bargaining, against casual labour, for reduced working hours, to rise in wages and combat repression will be decided. It is by strengthening the struggle, mobilization and organization of the working class and workers in general in companies and workplaces, and by reinforcing their representative structures, that a decisive contribution can be made to heighten the social and political conscience of workers and to bring about new advances in political terms.

3.3. The struggle of other classes, social sectors and groups and communities

Faced with an unprecedented onslaught, farmers, fishermen, retired employees and pensioners, micro, small and medium-sized entrepreneurs, working youth and students, intellectuals and technical staff, men and women working in cultural activities, people with disabilities and communities in general took on the role and decided to act to defend their rights, the Constitution of the Portuguese Republic and the values of the 25 April 1974 Revolution. Their struggles involved thousands of Portuguese citizens and had very specific goals. They brought together very diverse social groups who converged in the context of a broader struggle in social terms to oppose right-wing policies.

The **struggles of farmers** were against the fiscal policies affecting them; the amendments to the law on common land (*Lei dos Baldios*) which represents an attack against community-owned land; the excessive planting of eucalyptus trees in forests; the handing-over of *Casa do Douro* (a collective body overseeing wine-growing in the Douro valley) to the interests of big traders and exporters; the removal of milk quotas; the absence of guarantees that their production will be purchased at a fair price; the support and incentive to large holdings and to transnational agri-businesses by means of the reform of the CAP. Reform that consolidated a CAP at the service of large agrarians, who continue to be, channelled the fundamental of support, and of ruin for small and medium-sized agriculture.

Against this backdrop, the movement of small- and medium-sized farmers led the struggle and the demands, organising numerous initiatives that had the participation of thousands of farmers and thus contributing decisively for unity in the struggle for specific demands. Examples of such initiatives include the large demonstrations that were organised in April 2014 in Lisbon, in March 2015 in Braga, in March 2016 in Matosinhos together with others, to defend the milk sector and its survival. Other examples include the actions undertaken in AGROVOUGA and to defend the Douro region, the common land (*baldios*) and crops such as rice, potatoes, wood, fruits and cereals.

The **fishermen** organised important initiatives and struggles to defend goals that are essential for the survival of the industry and to put a stop to the worsening of their working conditions and lowering of their income.

The following struggles are worth mentioning: for a minimum guaranteed income; to repeal the amendments made to the rules regarding contributions to the social security system (*Código Contributivo da Segurança Social*) with demonstrations at sea that led to changes in the legislation; for the enforcement of the provisions in labour legislation (*Lei Geral do Trabalho*) for fishermen and the revision of the legal provisions of individual work contracts; for a compulsory guaranteed minimum wage; for a system of wage

compensation covering resource preservation stoppages; to defend the traditional fishing gear *arte xávega*; the continuation and sustainability of sardine fishing; the increase in the power of engines and adequate fuel pricing; a specific program for small-scale fisheries, which includes the renewal of the fleet; for safety at sea; for silt removal and dredging of harbours; for improved conditions in harbours and fish auction markets; to keep the public nature of *Docapesca* (a company managing fishing harbours and markets); for public structures to address the needs of fishermen and the industry.

Micro, Small and Medium-sized Entrepreneurs were involved in many struggles against the increase in the VAT for restaurants; against amendments to the legislation governing the access to trade, catering and services activities and the legislation on rents; for the abolition of advance payments to the tax authorities (*pagamento especial por conta*) and the latter's unfair practices; against the plundering policies of large retailers against their suppliers; against the abuse of dominant position, economic dependency and restrictive commercial practices in monopolized markets.

In a context where an increasing number of **Technical Staff and Intellectuals** are becoming employees and proletarianized, particularly young people, have been pushed into disqualified and low-paid temporary jobs, there were many instances when these converged and fought side by side with the working class and workers in general, thus contributing significantly to broaden the social front of the struggle. Examples of such convergence include the struggle of kindergarten and basic and secondary school teachers to defend their right to work, against dismissals and increase in casual labour and to defend Public Schools, the struggle of doctors, nurses and other healthcare technicians for an improvement in their professional valorisation, better wages and decent working conditions; the struggle of workers in the cultural sector for an acknowledgment of their work in culture and for policies that promote collective bargaining and work with rights; the struggle of journalists against collective dismissals in several media s; the struggle of psychologists for their right to work; the struggle of researchers in receipt of grants to have a status acknowledging them as workers with an actual work contract; the struggle of lawyers and judicial officials against changes to the judicial map and the closure of Courts.

Youth is a social group with its own aspirations and ways of fighting and intervening. While it is not a homogeneous group, it shares the values of solidarity, sharing and participation which make it an indispensable force in the struggle for social progress and for a break with right-wing policies. Youth currently faces a range of specific issues.

Thousands of young workers took part in the struggle to demand their rights and wages, in particular in the demonstrations convened by Interjovem/CGTP-IN. This was a struggle that had at its roots defending rights and fighting the casualization of labour relations. In addition to unemployment and casual labour, youth is faced with a wide-ranging set of transversal issues including access to housing, culture, sports or the right to mobility.

In basic and secondary schools, as well as those of professional training, students organised hundreds of initiatives, some of them at times and days of convergence, to demand better material and human conditions, the right to have school passes and access to transportation, against national exams, and in support of state-owned, free and quality schools. There was also a struggle against the forced separation of students into different educational paths; against the promotion of selectivity and the undervaluing of the continuous assessment of students' performance; against the pressures of those that oppose an organised students' movement, namely by banning general assemblies of students (*Reuniões Gerais de Alunos*), propaganda and actions in schools. The victories

that were achieved were significant and will contribute to enhance youngsters' consciousness of the value of struggles.

Students in higher education face a context where there is a growing elitism. They fought against tuition fees and the rise in the costs of education; denounced the attacks against students' social support mechanism (*Acção Social Escolar*); against the establishment of foundations governed by private law and against mergers; against the privatization of schools and services; against the attacks on democracy in schools which derive from options made in education policies and that have two important instruments in the legal framework governing institutions of higher education (*Regime Jurídico das Instituições do Ensino Superior*) and in the Bologna Process.

The mobilization of youth for the struggle and processes to defend their rights is particularly important when there are many and very strong limitations on participation. The creative capacity to respond to these difficulties is a demonstration of the potential of youth action.

The **struggle of women** took the form of their significant and combative participation in the struggle of the working class and of workers in general and it involved the anti-monopoly classes that were seriously affected by the policies aimed at enhancing exploitation and impoverishment. It was a struggle that united men and women in their common demands and defence of their living conditions and rights, for a fairer and more sovereign country. In their struggle women contributed in demanding the elimination of the inequalities and discriminations that specifically affect them, and in actions against exploitation and implementation of rights.

Retired employees, pensioners and the elderly were the victims of an unprecedented attack against the amount of their pensions and were faced with an increase in the age of retirement.

During this period, MURPI convened the largest days of action of the last few decades. Tens of thousands of retired employees, pensioners and elderly citizens across the country took part in marches to express their outrage and to protest. Marches were organised on 12 April 2014 and meetings were held in several districts on 11 April 2015. In 2016 we should highlight the actions for real increases in pensions, namely those carried out at the end of May and during October, and also the annual *Picnicão*, a mass, cultural and claiming initiative.

The initiatives of Inter-Reformados, on the other hand, contributed to the struggles undertaken by CGTP-IN and showed very clearly that the class attack against wages, labour rights and living and working conditions is inseparable from the attack against the income and rights of all the workers who have retired.

The struggle undertaken by **citizens with disabilities** has contributed to the adoption of legislation in various domains aimed at ensuring a broad range of rights in areas such as, inter alia, education, healthcare and accessibility. The national legislation in this field remains one of the most advanced in the European Union. However, it is not being applied.

The struggles undertaken by communities as well as by **committees of users** included important initiatives such as those in support of the National Health Service; against the closure of schools, courts and other public services; to defend quality public transportation; to abolish tolls in what were previously free motorways (ex-SCUT); against the closure of post offices, CGD public bank offices and the privatisation of the postal

service (CTT) and the rise in the price of the services provided; against the closure of pharmacies, police stations and the stations of other security forces, among other struggles.

Other struggles worth mentioning are those to defend public water supply systems and the environment; against the rise in rents in social housing estates; the struggle of the inhabitants of Ria Formosa against demolitions; the struggle against the extinction of parishes and to demand their reinstatement, against desertification and regional asymmetries.

Staff of the **security forces and services** carried out the largest joint protests ever in 2013 and 2014, making specific demands and denouncing a strong attack on their rights and on the Portuguese Constitution. Those joint actions took place in parallel with initiatives of each body regarding specific aspects of their work, namely by police force (PSP), National Guard (GNR), prison guards (*Corpo da Guarda Prisional*) and Coast Guard (*Polícia Marítima*). The struggle of forest guards (*Guardas Florestais*), who have a civilian status but are part of GNR, and also of the food security and economic inspectors (ASAE).

The **military** also carried out major initiatives that brought together their three socio-professional associations. The focus of their struggle was in defence of their rights, freedoms and guarantees, against the attempts at undermining and destroying provisions regarding healthcare and social support that are enshrined in their military status as well as the negative changes to the latter.

The struggle of **emigrants** faced with the attacks by the PSD/CDS-PP government against the teaching of the Portuguese language and the living and working conditions of consular workers and higher taxation on pensions, led to actions and initiatives in many countries in support of their rights and public services.

The struggle of **immigrants** was focused on their right to legalization, against discrimination and illegal work, to attend schools, especially to learn the Portuguese language.

The **struggle for peace** and against militarism and war, for solidarity with the peoples fighting for their rights and sovereignty and to defend peace and cooperation continued.

Among the very diverse initiatives that were undertaken, the following should be pointed out: the Campaign «Yes to Peace – No to NATO's Military Exercises» (*Sim à Paz – Não aos Exercícios Militares* da NATO); the Concerts for Peace; the actions in solidarity with the victims of imperialist aggression –as in Syrian and the Ukrainian people –, with Bolivarian Venezuela, the struggles of the Palestinian people, of the Sahrawi people and the Cuban revolution; the celebrations of the 70th anniversary of the Victory over Nazism-Fascism and the 40th anniversary of the Constitution of the Portuguese Republic; or the actions to end nuclear weapons.

The struggles resulted in many accomplishments. The broadening of those struggles and their growing scale were of the utmost importance to address specific issues, to reject the notion that «there are no alternatives», as well as to broaden the social front of the struggle and the social alliances against right-wing policies and to build a patriotic and left-wing alternative.

3.4. The unitary organization of the working class and of workers in general. The Unitary Trade Union Movement

In a context of destruction of the productive apparatus, of high unemployment, of generalization and diversification of the precariousness of labour ties and of attack on rights, the **Unitary Trade Union Movement** and the solid class orientation of CGTP-IN, based on its founding principles and objectives, and the constant strengthening of its influence, ability to aggregate and mobilize, are a pre-requisite and ensure that the transforming struggle of workers and the masses will proceed and become more intense. The consistent actions and struggles that are undertaken in the workplaces by the Unitary Trade Union Movement around CGTP-IN make it a powerful trade union organization, one that is prestigious and combative, necessary and indispensable to defend the rights and interests of workers and to fight for the social progress of Portugal as a sovereign state with a better future ahead. The XIII CGTP-IN Congress, held this year, a great success for Portuguese workers, was an important reaffirmation of its nature, principles and project.

In a context where the devastating impact of right-wing policies has become apparent and with national politics entering a new phase, the Unitary Trade Union Movement and the struggle of workers face heightened challenges with regard to their ability to intervene – and to address concrete and immediate issues, break effectively with right-wing policies and promote a left-wing and patriotic alternative.

The Unitary Trade Union Movement is a vibrant and active class and mass organization that counters the so-called «social dialogue» and «social consultation», with the right to freely negotiate and to collective bargaining and agreements; that favours taking the initiative and making demands and opposes servile and defeatist attitudes; that supports the participation, unionization, organization and unity of workers on the basis of concrete objectives and common interests and fights attempts at dividing them and at undermining their organised struggles.

Against a backdrop of intense ideological struggle, of internal and external pressures and blackmail – aimed at prolonging and intensifying the policies of exploitation, impoverishment and submission –, the attacks against class-based trade unionism and the unitary project persist, with the aim of undermining, de-characterizing and integrating it into the system.

Divisionism in the trade union movement is reflected in the role played by UGT as a tool of capital, against the unity and organization of workers and consequently against the rights and class interests of workers, the disaggregating interventions by other structures and the emergence of «trade union» organizations that are a kind of extension of «social movements» and are supposedly innovative and «modern».

However, in the context of workers' class organizations, the Unitary Trade Union Movement, with its coherent and decisive actions, its autonomy and own identity, remains a decisive social force, one that is able to mobilize and stimulate the struggle of the masses against big business, for a break with right-wing policies, for progress and the emancipation of workers.

The involvement and influence at all levels of communist militants in the Unitary Trade Union Movement, who are elected by their work mates and have gained their trust, is inseparable from the class nature and a guarantee of the unitary character and combativeness of the organization, of its autonomy, independence and democratic

characteristics, in full respect for the decisions taken by the competent bodies and in convergence with other trade union leaders and activists, with or without party affiliations.

The following are guidelines for the interventions of communists aimed at strengthening the unitary trade union movement:

The development of actions and struggles in workplaces to defend, demand the reinstatement and conquer new rights; to demand a widespread wage increase; to ensure job security and fight casual labour; to fight the deregulation of working hours and to demand their reduction; to demand the reinstatement of the right to collective bargaining, against the expiry of the agreements and the restoration of the principle of most favourable treatment of workers, equality and the fight against discriminations in workplaces; to demand working conditions that will safeguard the health and safety of workers.

The intervention to stimulate and ensure a style of work that privileges the reinforcement of the organization and action by place of work, having as effective priority the action claiming the dissemination and implementation of the rights and the struggle to solve the concrete problems, always with the involvement and participation of workers at all stages of the processes.

The dissemination of information, defence of the rights enshrined in collective agreements as a core element to oppose strategies aimed at abolishing those rights on the grounds that collective agreements have expired.

Action to strengthen the unity of workers, in particular by combating attempts to divide workers with permanent and precarious ties, or for other reasons like age, sex or xenophobic and racist characteristics.

The strengthening of the organization, promotion of unionization and the reinforcement of grassroots trade union organizations, by electing shop stewards and developing an integrated trade union action based on the response to the problems, needs and demands of the workers.

Workers' representatives for occupational safety and health have an important role to play, and it is necessary to stimulate their election, give due attention to their intervention and training and to promote close cooperation with the trade union organization in the workplace, in order to promote and ensure the improvement of working conditions.

Militancy and its expansion, making use of the militant availability of cadres, in particular of those who are not involved full-time and trade union training for practical actions.

Restructuring of trade unions while respecting the scope of individual trade unions and keeping an overall view of the trade union movement; decentralizing trade union activities; establishing trade union houses (*casas sindicais*) with shared services.

Administrative and financial restructuring for a better use of existing resources and to fulfil the commitments of individual trade unions vis-à-vis the trade union movement. The monthly control of revenue from dues, budget and overall financial situation.

Support and promotion of CGTP-IN's international activities based on its guidelines and principles of unity in action, defending the class interests of workers, fostering internationalist solidarity and promoting bilateral and multilateral relations.

The CGTP-IN is not affiliated with world trade union centrals, but it has relations with the World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU) and the International Trade Union

Confederation (ITUC). The WFTU confirmed at its last Congress its class and anti-imperialist characteristics. The CSI maintains its character of managing the capitalist system.

Supporting the cooperation between trade unions and workers' committees and opposing attempts to set them against one another and divide them on the basis of their work status, namely between those with a permanent and those with a temporary work contract.

The European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) is, by its very nature, a promoter of class reconciliation, is integrated into the institutional system of the European Union and adopts a federalist orientation. In this context, the CGTP-IN, as a member of the ETUC, acts on the basis of its independence and its own orientations and in convergence with other structures, in order to defend the class interests of the workers, the development of the mass struggle and the defence of sovereignty. The intervention to strengthen unity in the action of the trade union movement and the struggle of workers in Europe is of particular importance.

The movement of **Workers' Committees (CT)** continues to have a significant dimension and to play an important role. It is targeted by employers who have tried to restrict their right to intervene and to constrain and repress their members, whether by enticing them to become company commissions or by promoting them as counter position to trade unions, with a view to divide workers. The coordinating bodies of Workers' Committees at sectorial and regional level, as well as the regional and sectorial meetings and the National Meeting of Workers' Committees held annually are an important expression of this movement. The action of the communists, taking the initiative with the workers for the valorisation of the intervention in the CT, sub-CT and coordinating committees, for their convergence and articulation with the Unitary Trade Union Movement and for the constitution of new CTs where the interests, organization and unity of the workers is needed, is of the utmost importance.

The high level of unemployment and its persistent nature make it more necessary than ever to pay attention and to organize the interventions and struggles of the unemployed. In this context, the **Movement of Unemployed Workers** (*Movimento dos Trabalhadores Desempregados*, MTD) has an important role to play.

(...)

3.8. The political and party framework

With the defeat of PSD and CDS-PP, who had their worst electoral score ever in general elections on 4 October 2015, and with the decisive intervention of PCP, these parties were removed from government. A minority government of PS, with its own programme, was formed and took office in the context of the new correlation of forces in the National Parliament and the joint positions signed by PS with PCP, PEV and BE.

Socialist Party's (PS) electoral score in the last general election reflects the condemnation by the voters of its responsibility in the Pact of Aggression and its connivance with the actions by the PSD/CDS-PP government.

Faced with the outcome of the general election, the change in the correlation of forces resulting therein and the new political circumstances – where PSD and CDS-PP had lost the possibility of forming a government by themselves – PS, hesitantly and with contradictions, ended up by contributing to open up a new phase in the country's political life. PS's new stand hasn't transformed it into a party with left-wing policies, it hasn't

changed the nature of its policies and political options, which are characteristically of a right-wing nature and are expressed in well-known strategies of subservience with regard to the EU's process of capitalist integration and the interests of monopoly capital.

Today, as in the past, the analysis and characterization of PS's political positioning, committed to right-wing policies over the past four decades, is not based on its public statements but on the practical measures it takes in the face of a necessary break with right-wing policies.

The Left Bloc (BE) continues to be promoted and to benefit from the support of the media. It has a political agenda and takes political stands based on high-flying language but that do not change its social-democratic leaning nature. Its actions are in many cases determined by its prejudices against PCP. There are many matters, though, where areas of convergence exist, namely in institutional terms. These, however, do not wipe out the obvious differences that exist, both in terms of the European Union and the federalist concepts underlying it, as well as in terms of the policies and priorities for action in the national context.

The **Ecologist Party «The Greens» (PEV)** has had diversified interventions with an environmental focus and is increasingly active in political and institutional terms, thus contributing to a broadening of the basis for convergence between democrats and patriots with a view to addressing the issues that the country faces. PEV has contributed significantly to strengthen the political impetus of CDU (*Coligação Democrática Unitária*) and the consolidation of its initiatives is yet another contribution to the assertion, dissemination and reinforcement of this Coalition.

In the wake of its electoral defeat in 2015, removal from government and break-up of the coalition with CDS-PP, **Social Democratic Party (PSD)** has maintained a political line defined by its attachment to the political agenda and interest of transnational capital and of the directorate of major powers that have imposed on the country, and look forward to reinstating, a course of decline, regression and dependency. In a context where contradictions are apparent, PSD continues to be the tool of first choice to deepen right-wing policies and the political force that is more closely identified with the most reactionary circles of monopoly capital and the directorate of powers of the European Union.

CDS-People's Party has changed its leadership and is engaged anew in an operation to whitewash its responsibilities in the disastrous policies that it co-authored with PSD. Its political interventions are guided by the populist manipulation of certain social themes and groups, with a view to hiding its deeply reactionary nature and its political agenda aimed at settling the score with the 25 April 1974 Revolution.

Party of People – Animals – Nature (PAN) is mostly focused on issues relating to animal rights that more often than not lead to actions that distract from other matters and heighten populist feelings. It is currently striving to consolidate its electoral base.

In this period, various processes took place aimed at establishing organised forms of political intervention – *Congresso das Alternativas*, *Tempo de Avançar*, *Agir*. Their fate varied but their common denominator was the significant media coverage that they benefitted from in an unsuccessful attempt at contributing to the containment of PCP's political and electoral influence.

There are also other parties, movements and candidacies that under the designation «independent» try to hide their party and economic connections. They base their political

discourse on anti-party campaigns or on high-flying but in fact inconsistent proclamations about a fight against corruption, the artificial division of society between the «political class» and a supposedly «non-political class», at times also referred to as «civil society».

These parties, movements and candidacies are of differing nature, but use the argument that there is a need to defend «citizenship» and «transparency» and demand changes to the Constitution of the Portuguese Republic; they ignore the national context of class struggle; they promote a radical discourse that is the more radical as it is inconsistent; and in doing so they aim to insert into organised and consistent struggles elements that will cause dispersion with regard to their priorities and objectives.

PCP does not ignore that there are actions and initiatives that are based on genuine feelings and that aim to address people's legitimate needs and expectations. However, it has to point out that, more often than not, those objectives are diverted to something different from what were the original intentions of its promoters.

3.9. The struggle for a patriotic and left-wing alternative

The struggle for a political alternative is at present the central and most topical issue. It is essential to open new perspectives in the country and point towards ways to address the challenges of development, progress and national sovereignty. An issue that, sooner or later, the workers and the people will impose by their action and their fight.

The new phase in the country's political life gives greater visibility and supports PCP's long-standing arguments that an unavoidable break is required with the course that the country has taken for the past four decades. The obvious limitations of the current political context to provide decisive answers to the country's problems, which derive from both external and internal constraints, make it all the more evident to workers and the people that a break with the impositions of the EU and Euro and the interests of monopoly capital is necessary and indispensable.

The seriousness of the country's economic and social circumstances makes ever more urgent such a break with the overall direction, rationale and class-choices of right-wing policies which jeopardize national sovereignty.

A break that will require steadfastness and constant action by the political forces willing to support it and that has as pre-requisite the broadening of the social front of the struggle, the decisive involvement of the working class and of workers in general and the mass participation of all anti-monopoly classes and social groups, of all those affected by the right-wing policies and are genuinely interested in reverting the course taken by national politics.

The development of mass struggles around concrete objectives, with labour-related, social, economic and political demands, with actions on a larger or smaller scale, is, as always, the basis and the condition for deepening social and political consciousness and for broadening the demands for a different course to break the path of worsening exploitation, inequalities and impoverishment.

The struggle for a break with right-wing policies and for a patriotic and left-wing alternative requires, moreover, a deeper dialogue with non-affiliated democrats and patriots to materialize this change. A clearly focused dialogue with all those who are truly committed in bringing about an alternative political project that has as its reference framework the Constitution of the Portuguese Republic. This, of course, implies respect for

the existing differences, overcoming of preconceived ideas, hegemonic ambitions and to refuse marginalization.

As experience has shown, building a patriotic and left-wing alternative is a complex and possibly long-winded process, with advances and setbacks, but also with sudden developments that may be positive or negative. It is a process that will face fierce opposition, both internally and externally, from those who feel that their interest and power will be threatened.

The establishment of a political alternative is inseparable from the development of mass struggles and the broadening of the social front of the struggle, with a view to changing the correlation of forces in political terms and the indispensable strengthening of the political, social, ideological and electoral influence of PCP.

The establishment of an alternative that experience has shown to be urgent and pressing, will not be achieved only with PCP but it will be impossible without, or against, PCP.

The Party of the working class and of all workers is indispensable in such a process. As it will be indispensable in a government willing to put such alternative into practice and which will have to include democratic forces, sectors and personalities and be supported by mass organizations and movements of the anti-monopoly sectors of society. The feasibility of such an objective and the political support for it rests in the hands of the Portuguese people, who can achieve it with their attitude, struggles and votes.

3.10. Strengthening PCP and the mass struggles, building an alternative

In the period since the XIX Congress, which was characterized by very complex and demanding circumstances both nationally and internationally, where significant dangers and threats were present, but also the possibility of opposing, fighting and defeating an unprecedented onslaught by the PSD/CDS-PP government, PCP confirmed its role as an indispensable political force for workers and the Portuguese people, a force that has an irreplaceable role to play in the social transformations that the country requires. In such a process, PCP always assumed its responsibilities in mobilizing for mass struggles to materialize a patriotic and left-wing policy and a patriotic and left-wing government to implement it.

This is an objective that requires, besides a strengthening of PCP's structure and actions, close links to the masses, a broadening of the social front of the struggle, as well as a convergence with democrats and patriots willing to fight for a country that has a future, to defend freedom, development, social progress and national sovereignty. This is a struggle that is inseparable from consolidating all the positive measures that have in the meantime been adopted in the context of the present political solution, and from a fight against all the negative measures and right-wing policies and trends that prevail. It is furthermore a struggle that requires, as decisive and inseparable elements of a political alternative, the unity of the working class, of workers in general and of all those who are truly committed to a patriotic and left-wing alternative, as well as an ever stronger support for PCP, its political proposals and initiatives.

PCP's intervention and actions are focused on its programmatic objectives and based on ideals, values and goals that are reflected in its everyday practice in support of workers' and people's interests and a convergence between democrats and patriots. PCP's attitude stimulates citizens' interventions, it promotes and values the measures and advancements

achieved, even if only of a partial nature, whenever they represent an improvement for the Portuguese people and the country.

PCP has a unique historical record in Portuguese society made of struggles and the commitment to the convergence and unity of all democrats and patriots. Under the current political circumstances, PCP will continue to seek areas and ways of convergence that can bring together the wills and energy of all those men, women and youth who are committed to patriotic and left-wing policies. PCP thus confirms its role as a decisive force to break away from right-wing policies, a force that is indispensable and irreplaceable for the Portuguese people to bring about the social transformations that the country requires

Chapter IV

The Party

4.1. The Party's identity and its assertion

The PCP embodies the **essential characteristics of the Communist identity**. In its activity, its guidelines and its viewpoints, it is the Party of the working class and of all workers, which defends the interest of anti-monopoly classes and strata. It is independent of the influence, the interests, the ideology and the policies of the forces of capital. It is characterized by, and concerned with, ensuring close links with the working class, the workers and the people at large. It has as its supreme goals the edification of Socialism and Communism, a society freed from capitalist exploitation and oppression. Its theoretical base is Marxism-Leninism, a materialist and dialectical conception of the world, an instrument of analysis, a guide for action, a critical ideology of transformation. Its operational principles result from a creative development of democratic centralism, based on a profound inner-Party democracy, on a single general Party line and a single central leadership. It is a patriotic and internationalist Party.

The PCP's everyday activity on concrete and immediate issues integrates the goals of each phase and stage, as well as the Party's supreme goals. The struggle to break with the right-wing policies, for a patriotic and left-wing policy, is inseparable from, and is part and parcel of, the struggle to materialize the Party Programme «*An Advanced Democracy – the Values of [the 1974] April [Revolution] in the Future of Portugal*». The struggle for immediate goals and the struggle for an advanced democracy are part and parcel of the struggle for Socialism and Communism.

The world situation is made bleak by the destructive effects of capitalism's nature and its worsening structural crisis. This highlights the need to overcome capitalism in revolutionary fashion, the need for a new society, which can correspond to the legitimate aspirations of the workers and the peoples.

The historical achievements and ideals of the October Revolution, the centennial of which will be marked in 2017, as the first historical experience of building a socialist society freed from class exploitation and antagonisms, and its importance and relevance are all the greater in the times that we live through. Its essence and characteristics, its project and example, the experience and teachings which it provided, are a source of inspiration for all those who fight for a more just and fraternal society of solidarity.

The PCP, with its identity which embodies its liberating and emancipatory project, is the target of attacks by big capital, the structures and resources that it owns and controls. They seek to weaken and liquidate the Party. Fulfilling its role in the struggle for its goals requires the need to assert its own characteristics, and makes its activity very demanding.

There is a vast arsenal of attacks against the Party, which impose constraints and limit its activity. Such attacks are intensified and adapted to specific circumstances. Among others, we note: the general offensive on an ideological level; anti-communism; the re-writing of History; the promotion of individualism, fatalism, resignation, and submission to the class interests of capital and to the strategies of imperialism; the silencing, discrimination, manipulation and falsification of the Party's stances in the major mass media; the concrete

actions that restrict the right to information and propaganda; the limitations or even banning of political activity inside companies and workplaces, with repressive measures; the contents of school curricula and education in general; anti-democratic laws, among which the Law on Political Parties and the law on the Financing of Political Parties and Electoral Campaigns, which in practice have been made even worse by the abusive interpretations of the Entity for Political Financing and Accounts, and its record of interference, intrusion, insult and manipulation.

Within this very demanding context of greatly uneven forces, the Portuguese Communist Party, in order to ensure the effectiveness of its activity and to achieve its goals, must base itself on its organization, its militancy, its own resources, the operational principles resulting from the creative development of democratic centralism, a profound inner-Party democracy and a single general Party line and a single central Party leadership.

These principles are one of the essential traits of the Party's identity, the foundation of its cohesion, strength, activity and struggle. They reflect the reality of the Party collective and are indissociable from its remarkable operational capacity. These principles suffer, although in a limited way, from distortions and violations which must be opposed and overcome. Party members are integrated into its organizations and bodies, with the right and the duty to voice their opinions, to contribute towards the debate, assessment and collective decision which is compulsory for all in their activity. The replacement of this practice, with the substitution of collective guidelines and decisions by individual opinions, by debates and the forming of opinions outside the Party organizations, disrespecting them and conditioning those decisions – whatever form they may take on, whether through personal contacts or resorting to electronic communication – the promotion of convergences which replace the party's structure and the functioning of its organizations, all these represent attitudes which disaggregate, weaken and impoverish the Party's democratic life, cohesion and strength. It is of the utmost importance to assert, in practice, the Party's organizational principles, to improve work methods, valuing both collective work and individual contributions, overcoming imperfections, opposing petty criticism and disaggregating practices.

The PCP, the Party of anti-fascist resistance, the Party of the April Revolution and the defence of its achievements, asserts itself in the Portuguese society and in the world, as a force for action and transformation, of hope and confidence, with its identity and project, with an activity based on determination and decisiveness, always faithful to its internationalist duties, always at the service of the workers, the people and the Portuguese motherland.

4.2. The Party's activity

In the period between the 19th and the 20th Party Congresses, the Party had to confront the biggest offensive of the past few decades against the workers and the people, spearheaded by the PSD/CDS-PP government. Encouraging and supporting the struggle, the Party was at the forefront of this magnificent struggle waged by the workers and the people.

Opposing this offensive, the workers, pensioners, young people and other anti-monopoly social classes and strata carried out diverse forms of struggle, prominent among them the general strike of 2013 and the major national and regional demonstrations convened by CGTP-IN.

In this period, the Party ran in several elections: for local government in 2013 and interim elections at various times, for the European Parliament in 2014, general elections nationwide and for the Madeira regional bodies in 2015, Presidential elections and general election for the Azores regional bodies in 2016. Major mass political campaigns were carried out, with special relevance for the June 2015 National March «The people's strength».

The Party marked the centenary of comrade Álvaro Cunhal's birth. Among hundreds of initiatives, and besides the public inaugural session, there was the Campo Pequeno rally, whose scale, participation, strength and the unity that was displayed, represented a major moment in the commemorations. Other key moments were the celebration of the [January 1960] escape from the Peniche Fortress jail; the Conference «*Álvaro Cunhal, the Communist project, Portugal and the world today*»; the edition of a Photo-biography; the cultural session in the Aula Magna [Cerimonial Hall of Lisbon University], with the participation of over 100 artists; and the central exhibition on display in Lisbon, in the *Avante!* Festival and in Oporto, which was seen by tens of thousands of people, as well as hundreds of initiatives promoted by democrats and entities from various areas.

4.2.4. The PCP commemorated the anniversaries of the Party and of *Avante!*, organized the *Avante!* Festival, successfully carried out the major national fund-raising campaign to buy the Quinta do Cabo [expansion of the *Avante!* Festival space] and continued to strengthen the Party, noticeably with the campaigns of recruitment and of contacts with members. Among other initiatives, the National Meeting «*No to national decline. Solutions for the country*» was held.

The Party held hundreds of initiatives and events of a diverse nature, namely to mark the 40th anniversary of the April 25 [1974 Revolution] and the 40 years of the Constitution of the Portuguese Republic.

Despite the great difficulties which it had to face, the PCP lived up to its responsibilities towards the working class and the Portuguese workers and people, and to its internationalist duties.

4.3. Priority guidelines

Taking into account the situation and needs, the 20th Congress **sets out priority guidelines to strengthen the Party**. As concerns leadership work, more resources and capabilities must be found and better use made thereof, asserting and strengthening collective work, individual responsibility, a spirit of initiative, coordination and discipline. As concerns cadres, more comrades must be entrusted with permanent responsibilities. As concerns the organization, a major action of recruitment and involvement of new members with priority being assigned to workplaces, the creation and greater activity of more workplace and shopfloor branches, the structuring of local organization taking into account their size, political initiative and work geared towards the younger generations, as well as the elderly and pensioners. As concerns [the Party] propaganda and press, more organization is needed in propaganda work, the use of electronic resources must be systematized and extended, the circulation and readership of *Avante!* must be increased.

As concerns funds, financial independence must be ensured, with an increase of [Party] dues as an essential element. These priorities in strengthening the Party are for the present, and seek to respond to the immediate requirements which exist, always liaising our activity with the strengthening of our organization. At the same time, strengthening the Party must also keep in mind the needs of the future.

4.4. Leadership

Leadership work in recent years was particularly demanding. In a complex international and European situation, and in a domestic situation that was marked by one of the most violent offensives since the fascist regime, leadership work guaranteed, with great determination, the response to the requirements that arose, the stimulus to the development of the mass struggle, an intense political activity, our presence in significant electoral battles, a qualified institutional initiative, a demanding ideological action. It promoted a stronger Party, confronting and bringing the offensive to a halt, providing responses to new situations, making good use of possibilities for advancements, pursuing the struggle for the alternative and asserting our Programme, ideal and project. The complexity and requirements of this situation tested the capacity for assessment, response and initiative, and highlighted aspects which provide indications for the necessary strengthening of leadership work.

The demands confronting us are huge. Collective work and individual responsibility, planning and the anticipation of future events, as well as initiative and on-the-spot reaction to events, the assertion of the major strategic issues as well as activity on concrete and immediate issues, the drawing up of our political line, ensuring mass mobilization and leadership, discipline, the coordination and unification of our guidelines and activity, criticism and self-criticism as well as opposing petty criticism, all are aspects that must be considered and developed.

The **Central Committee** has fully ensured the Party's top-level leadership work. It held 24 meetings, regularly led the Party's work and responded to situations of special importance and complexity. It remains necessary to more frequently address specific areas of activity.

The list for the future Central Committee must reflect the Party's identity and ensure conditions for the necessary response and initiative when confronting the great political, ideological, leadership, organizational and practical demands that emerge from the current, and from future, situations.

The Central Committee, building on past experience of leadership work, must preserve its characteristics, namely as regards its responsibilities and size, although a slightly smaller CC may be envisaged. The Central Committee must continue to have a large majority of working-class and service workers, with a strong working class component. The Central Committee must include Party cadres – both full-time Party workers and others – with responsibilities in leadership work, who have emerged from their workplaces and shopfloors, involved in mass organizations and movements and who are prominent in various areas of the country's life. A natural renewal must ensure a composition that combines the participation of tested cadres with new responsibilities for young comrades, as well as strengthening the participation of women.

The process that prepares the list, in accordance with the Party's operational principles and practice, must ensure an extensive auscultation. This demanding process must correspond to the importance and role of the Central Committee which, as part of the collective leadership work, is the body that leads the Party's activity in between Party Congresses.

The **Central Committee's executive bodies** – the Secretariat and the Political Committee – play their role within the framework of the responsibilities with which they have been entrusted. The demands which the Party faces and will continue to face, make it

necessary to continue these bodies' activity with capacity, boldness, active intervention and mobilization, in accordance with the needs that arise.

The **Central Control Committee**, which is responsible for monitoring the Party's activities, respect for the Party Constitution and the Party's accounts, is the appeals body for any Party organisation or member. It has lived up to its mandate.

The central leadership work, guaranteed by the Central Committee and by the executive bodies, implies that, besides its own activity based on the information and contribution which it receives from the Party and the mass organizations, there exist support structures for its work, covering diverse areas, with an activity and capability that can respond to the requirements of study, and of preparing and conducting political, institutional and mass work. It is indispensable that such structures be strengthened, that cadres with links to and knowledge of the relevant subject-matters be mobilized, that better use be made of the existing resources and that there be a more effective coordination.

The **leaderships of the regional organizations** have a role of great importance in leadership work, articulating the work between the central leadership and the municipal committees and other intermediate leadership structures and the grassroots organizations – the Party cells. They must be strengthened, taking into account that as a result of their organizations' differing size, they have different expressions.

The [Party's] **municipal committees and other intermediate leadership** bodies have played a particularly important role. Their number must be increased and their work and links to the masses must be improved. All of their members must have responsibilities for tasks. They must focus on contributing to create and ensure the activity of the grassroots organizations, especially in workplaces and shopfloors, and to continue the work of contacting all members of those organizations, at the same time as they ensure collective work and an adequate size, avoiding extremely large compositions which often result from multiple affiliations and end up degrading the activity of the grassroots organizations. Special attention must be given to the *freguesia* [smallest administrative unit in the country] committees.

As regards the **coordination of nation-wide or pluri-regional sectors**, and despite differentiated developments in different sectors and the continuation of difficulties and problems that must be overcome, significant steps forward, which must be stressed, have been taken in articulating the Party's organized activity in sectors and companies of major importance.

Experience in this field highlights its importance, both because it allows for more in-depth knowledge of the situation which exists in these sectors and companies, and because it creates better conditions to coordinate and organize our work. The necessary response to the demands and the new challenges that we face implies that, without substituting the decisive role of the regional organizations whose spirit of initiative in their fields of work must be encouraged, priorities and adequate leadership decisions be made at national level, in accordance with a profoundly changing concrete reality.

4.5. Cadres

Party cadres are the comrades who take on responsibilities and commit themselves to fulfilling them.

A cadre policy is essential, because leadership work at different levels depends on it, as does the assertion of the PCP and its identity and the creative development of the guidelines and tasks that confront us at each given moment.

Cadre policies require that all comrades and organisms with responsibilities permanently seek to become better acquainted with members, giving them responsibilities, integrating them into collective work, monitoring the fulfillment of tasks, attending to personal problems which may arise, adequately and swiftly solving cadre issues, aiding in the education, formation and development of the cadres in accordance with the Party's needs.

The Party's action is only possible because thousands of cadres in various grassroots organizations and areas of activity take on, with dedication, the tasks which are assigned to them. Shouldering responsibilities is a crucial foundation for their political and ideological education.

The main guidelines for strengthening the Party include the need to entrust new cadres with responsibilities. Important steps forward have been taken. However, the work that has been carried out falls short of both the needs and the potential.

Among the cadres, **full-time Party workers** play a special role. They are politically and ideologically steadfast cadres, who work full time with great dedication. They have a dynamizing and leadership role, integrated within collective work. They are indispensable for the organization, for leadership, and in all spheres of the Party's activity. At present, the number of full-time Party workers exceeds three hundred (including retired comrades who are actively working), which is essentially the same figure as at the 19th Congress. Despite financial difficulties, steps have been taken to renew and rejuvenate the ranks of the Party's full-time workers. Insufficiencies in the Party's organizational work in the workplaces and shopfloors are reflected in the recruitment of workers to the ranks of the full-time Party workers.

Despite the steps forward that have been achieved, there are still insufficiencies in monitoring, paying attention to, and assisting our cadres.

It is necessary to liaise practical experience with permanent information and **theoretical preparation**. The encouragement to read and study Party documents, *Avante!* and *O Militante* is an indispensable line of work that has not yet borne full fruit. The commemorations of Álvaro Cunhal's centenary, with the broad scope of initiatives and in-depth consideration of his work, had a positive impact on the training of our cadres.

Between the 19th and 20th Congresses, the Party School hosted 31 political and ideological education courses and actions, in which 620 comrades took part. Among them, was the course on the 40 years of the April Revolution. In the Regional Organizations, 132 political and ideological education courses and actions, involving 2057 comrades, were held.

For the present and the future, the comprehensive **development of our cadre policy** is one of the decisive elements to assert and fulfill the Party Programme. Among the priority lines, we note:

To expand and deepen the commitment with militant work, taking into account the characteristics and specificities of each cadre;

To entrust many more comrades with concrete tasks, so as to ensure the necessary and compelling strengthening of the organization, and to expand and involve the entire Party collective in the materialization of the guidelines;

To renew and rejuvenate the ranks of full-time Party workers, in particular with workers, women and young people;

Better monitoring, so as to collectively and individually assess the way tasks are carried out, with a view to accompanying, aiding and educating our cadres and enhancing their confidence in defining goals for further advances;

To expand and deepen the theoretical education of cadres for the current ideological battle, making full use of all available resources, namely by strengthening the scheduling, publicization and participation in courses and actions of political and ideological education in the Party School and in the Regional Organizations. These are essentially based on the fundamental Party documents – our Programme, Party Constitution, Congress Resolutions, the works of the classics of Marxism-Leninism, the work of Álvaro Cunhal, the History of the Party and of the Portuguese Revolution.

4.6. Organization

Organization is the decisive tool of the Party. The Party collective, organized on the basis of its operational principles, active and linked to the masses, is the foundation for our independence, strength and operational capability.

The Party has 54,280 members, which means a reduction that cannot be separated from the clarification resulting from the contacts with Party members [whose names were in the files, but with whom there was no contact]. In terms of social composition, there continues to be a large majority of industrial and service workers (71%), with 39% blue-collar workers, a slight decrease, and 32% white-collar workers, a slight increase. As for age composition, 15% are under 40 years old, 41% are between 41 and 64 years of age, and 44% are over 64 years old. The proportion of Party members over 64 years of age is growing. The percentage of women grew, and is now over 31% of Party members.

It should be highlighted that during these years, the Central Committee Resolution «*More organization, greater activity, more influence – a stronger PCP*» of December 2013 was put into practice. Among other advances, there were two important processes that affected the Party's organization: the National Recruitment Campaign «*The values of April in the future of Portugal*», that took place from the beginning of 2014 to April 2015, and the national action of contacts with Party members to enhance their activity, update their data and renew their Party membership card, which was launched in 2014.

In the past four years, 5300 members were recruited, 2127 of which during the campaign. It should be stressed that over 69.2% of these new members were under the age of 50 when they joined the Party.

During the campaign of contacts, Party members whose names were in the files, but whose situation was uncertain after the previous 2003 campaign, continued to be recovered after confirming their Party affiliation. But there are still tens of thousands of members registered before 2003 whose situation is unclear, part of whom can, as has been confirmed, return to the Party ranks.

The proportion of Party members who are integrated in Party organisms has remained steady, and 43% of Party members regularly pay their dues.

As concerns the Party structure, there are 2542 organisms, including unstructured entities which hold plenary meetings and committees for specific fronts of activity. Of these, 354 are workplace or sectoral organisms and 616 are organisms by place of residence. This represents a slight decrease.

The Party's organization has resisted during the very difficult situation of the past few years and lived up to its irreplaceable role. Based on its strength and capacity for

intervention, it is necessary to consider **guidelines** to further strengthen it, taking into account both the current situation and the role that it will be called upon to play in the future.

Increasing and valuing militancy, which is a fundamental element for the Party's strength requires persistence, individual responsibility and participation in activities. More comrades must be encouraged to take on permanent responsibilities, and better use must be made of these possibilities, however limited they may be.

The work to **strengthen the Party members' activity and links, and a significant increase in their involvement** in Party organisms requires permanent care and focused initiatives, namely regarding Party membership cards. The use of different means of communication, which are useful in establishing links with Party members, cannot replace personal contacts and the full integration and participation of Party members.

A **major action of recruitment of new members**, and their full integration into the Party's life, must be ensured, with all new members being given a Party organism and specific tasks.

Measures must be taken to **strengthen the Party's organization and activity among the working class and other workers, in the workplaces and shopfloors**. This is an essential priority for Party work. It must take into account the concrete conditions of activity and be based on the premise that existing problems, such as unemployment, precarious jobs and repression, are difficulties but not impossibilities. They require organization, activity and struggle, and not disinterest or neglect. Indispensable measures are: a stronger capacity for leadership; the entrusting of responsibilities to cadres; the creation and activity of more Party cells; specifically targeted recruitment campaigns and a higher number of contacts with workers with the purpose of joining the Party, giving particular attention to those who stood out in their struggles and ensuring their integration; promoting the unionization of Party members; the involvement of communist trade union leaders and activists in the recruitment of new Party members and the strengthening of cells; the adoption of methods of operation and activity that are in accordance with the Party's goals. In the next few years, and besides the necessary immediate measures, a major national action with these goals must be organized, ensuring a debate and relevant decisions in all Party bodies and organizations.

The **activity of organizations based on place of residence** has a decisive role in the Party's links with the masses, in developing all the lines to ensure its organizational strengthening, through a confident and determined political initiative and struggle for demands.

In order to carry forth this role, it is necessary for residence-based organizations to have leadership organs that will often be the *Freguesia* Committees; to be structured in accordance with their real possibilities for activity. This must, among other aspects, take into account the number of militants and their degree of participation, the availability of cadres to dynamize the organizations and not just ensure an administrative management.

Residence-based organizations must pay special attention to activity among the younger generations, paying close attention to their interests, problems and aspirations, to the reality of unemployment in these age brackets, as well as to their usual places of concentration, including workplaces and shop floors. They must also structure work among pensioners, namely by creating Party cells. They must stimulate the specific, broad-based, activity of the various popular associations and other structures.

Structured work focusing on specific strata or sections of society and on specific interests is a line of work that has proved to be adequate and should be strengthened. In this aspect, we stress:

Strengthening JCP and work among the young people, thus contributing to enhance the Party's influence amount the youth;

Work and organisation in the sphere of culture, among intellectuals and technical workers, stimulating their political activity, as well as their cultural activity and their creative and artistic work;

Work among retired persons, specifically through the creation of local or sectorial cells, strengthening organisations that encompass comrades that undertake unitary tasks in this area, benefiting from the experience and availability of retired cadres for general party work;

Work among farmers and fishermen; among micro, small and medium-size entrepreneurs; work focusing on women; work among persons with disabilities; work among immigrants; work focused on the unemployed.

Local Party offices are support bases for party initiatives and work. They should be more cared for, ensuring their upkeep, conservation, operation and dynamism, creating better conditions to work and intervene, including holding political, cultural initiatives and involving the population.

4.7. Organisation, intervention, links with the masses

Our party's extensive experience, acquired in the struggle for the workers and the people, gives us a vast range of teachings that should be taken into account in the struggle under the conditions we fight today. One of them is **the Party's links with the masses**, which is clearly visible in congresses and in day-to-day Party work, and that we view as a strategic factor for party growth and for the creation of roots among the working class and all working people. The links with the masses are essential to the Party. Only with them can the Party effectively know the real world in which it works, and understand the broad and specific features as well as the problems and aspirations of the workers and the people. Only thus will we be in a position to act and change things.

In recent years, there has been a major growth in awareness about how important this work is for the Party's present and future and about the fact that if an organisation is detached from life and from the environment where it grows and operates, it tends to become an isolated group and wither without leaving anything behind. But while there have been steps forward, there are still hindrances in getting local bodies to regularly analyse people's and communities' problems and find ways to identify specific demands and turn them into struggles.

It is therefore **a priority for all party structures** to identify and get rid of the hindrances that are preventing the Party from going forward in a broader and more consistent manner to build links with the masses.

It is through links with the working class, with working people as a whole, and with local communities, that the Party's organisations will find the cadres to extend and strengthen leadership work and carry out the tasks that we need to address.

Each member's work in her/his day-to-day activities, contacting those they work with, is one of the most important elements of the Party's outreach and influence, and of its ability to inform and mobilise.

The Party's unitary political work is an important factor in its links with the masses. We should regularly contact and involve in actions all democratic and patriotic men and women, to let them know PCP's stands and hear their opinions – starting with those who work together with us as part of CDU.

An important role in the Party's links with the masses is played by those communists who work in mass organisations and movements. It is necessary that they – within the scope of their unitary work – go ahead with boldness, fighting spirit and determination in dynamizing and extending the struggle, toward the implementation of each of these unitary movements' and organisations' goals.

Experience has confirmed that work geared toward strengthening institutional activity in improving links with the masses is very important in increasing the Party's prestige.

4.8. Ideological struggle

Ideological struggle is both a reflection and a tool in the class struggle. It is an unavoidable component of social and political struggle, and a key aspect of the struggles between capital and labour, between the forces of reaction and the forces of social progress, between capitalism and socialism.

The dominant ideology, its reproduction and diffusion among the masses, is a major obstacle to the formation of class awareness and to greater political consciousness, that is, to the development of revolutionary struggle for change.

Under the current situation, of growing structural crisis of capitalism, the ideological offensive's aim is to perpetuate the dominant interests of big business and of the forces and interests that represent it. To do so, it portrays capitalism as a system to which there is no alternative, while hiding its exploitative, oppressive, aggressive and predatory nature; it spreads fascist and fascist-leaning reactionary and obscurantist ideas, attacking freedom and democracy, promoting wars, justifying and supporting imperialism's crimes; it justifies and seeks to legitimate the European Union's views and interferences and to condition national sovereignty; it whitewashes fascism and exacerbates anti-communism; it denigrates workers' and peoples' struggles; it fosters resignation, conformism and individualism; it fosters splits among workers and class collaboration; it insists on saying that more exploitation, less rights, and social and civilizational regression are all inevitable.

In the new phase in national politics, capital and reactionary circles have unleashed a powerful revanchist and anti-communist political and ideological offensive against the Party.

It is in this context that the Party's initiative and response to the ideological struggle must continue to develop and become stronger, through day-to-day action, setting goals, promoting debates and other initiatives and making harmonious use of all available means.

Issues to be raised in the ideological struggle include: explaining capitalism's nature, contradictions and historical limits; explaining PCP's proposal of advanced democracy and socialism, its vision on the world and on where human society is heading; the struggle against reactionary and fascist ideology, against racism and xenophobia, against militarism and war; struggle against old and new expressions of social-democracy; fight anti-communism in its various cloaks, especially including historical revisionism; highlighting workers' struggles and mass struggles and their achievements, including organisation as a key element.

4.9. Information, propaganda, media and publishing activity

Given the Party's identity, vision and goals, the key features of our information and propaganda work are truthfulness, fairness and clarity. This is especially important in the current situation. The identity, project and goals of the Party, the truth, fairness and clarity of the positions it assumes are the focal point on which the **information and propaganda** action is based. Faced with the propagandistic offensive of big business and the powerful instruments it has, it is necessary to use all the means available to the Party to carry out a great, strong and persistent action of enlightenment.

Party information and propaganda must always start with a thorough evaluation of objective reality, so as to come up with a truthful, clear, powerful, timely and effective message, always mindful of the Party's links with the masses and its struggles, activities, and party-building efforts.

In a context of ideological mystification and information discrimination, more attention is now being paid by the Party to information and propaganda, to its content, form and modes of expression – visual, written, audio-visual or electronic, although the progress made since the XIX Congress is insufficient.

Information and propaganda are a task for the whole Party and its members. It is essential to continue improving it, in coordination with party-building.

The relevant bodies, namely the Regional Organisations, must ensure planning and implementation, assign responsibilities and train cadres for this task. And, taking into account the Party's financial shortcomings, seek to obtain the necessary resources to implement them.

In the current situation, facing many difficulties, we must work to improve information and propaganda, expand our strength and capabilities, make more and better use of our resources – both centrally and across all levels of the Party structure, give responsibility and training to cadres and improve the skills and militancy of many comrades.

It is crucial that for every situation and proposal, the Party's message be decided and publicised in a timely way, to confront and expose the lies of big business and of the mass media and other tools at its service.

Nationwide information and propaganda actions and campaigns are very important to standardize the Party's action at the national level following its general guidelines. The local intervention plan, with its own dynamics, is articulated and inserted in this line of intervention. It is important to multiply flyers and other means of information, propaganda and agitation of grassroots organisations, closer to workers and populations, adapting the message to the specific reality. It is important to highlight, among other things, the positive experiences of the campaign «More Rights, More Future. No to Precariousness », with a large number of documents on concrete situations of companies and sectors, with positive effects in the fight and the strengthening of the Party. Planning must be improved and followed, we must go further, contacting and talking directly to workers, learning about issues, creating conditions to convey information and to expand the Party and its influence.

It is necessary to convey information, and to continue working to overcome discrimination, illegal actions, and attempts to curb the party's action, freedom of expression, and ability to convey information and propaganda.

Party work with the mass media should be examined and coordinated at all levels – local, regional and national. It has to involve carefully thought out, well-directed and persistent daily initiatives, forwarding PCP's stands and initiatives, and finding the cadres who are best suited for these tasks. This work must overcome the defeatist tendencies – that arise from the systematic silencing, discrimination, distortions, and even caricatures that are spread about the Party and its work. At the same time we must denounce and protest whenever the situation warrants it, and at the same time inform and debate about the interests and reasons behind the class motivations of mass media owners, and about how these interests lie behind the contents they convey.

The importance of **electronic communication** and of internet-based communication is today obvious. While not overstating their undeniable potential and at the same time not ignoring the global overall control that big transnational capital exercises over them, they are a vehicle of participation in the Party's multifaceted work of propaganda, communication and information. Combined with the general political objectives of party action, built in the light of the specific requirements of separate communication, both in form and time of response, intervention in this field must be included as a working direction requiring discussion and organized structuring.

The PCP was the first political party in Portugal to be present on the Internet, and its site – www.pcp.pt – continues to play a significant (albeit limited if compared with the party's overall political work) role in publicising the party's stands and activities. Besides the central website, the PCP has also maintained, among others, specific web pages dedicated to elections, to the birth centennial of Álvaro Cunhal, as well as to the Party press and to the *Avante!* Festival.

Measures have been taken to benefit from the potential that these media offer, but there is still a need to assess how well the existing resources are being used, taking into account the experience of Internet usage in general, and of social networks in particular. The creation of new media channels and the maintenance of existing ones require greater involvement from the party's organisations and the Party collective as a whole, to make it possible to reach out more through those media. Making better use of the spreading potential requires that efforts be made to train cadres on the demanding task of internet information and propaganda. It requires a strategy to enable addressing specific groups, to coordinate local, regional and central work, and to project a coherent image and content. It implies coordinating the presence of the PCP as such and of individual communists on the Internet's social networks, with the task of spreading the contents of the action and guidelines of the Party.

The party press – *Avante!* and *O Militante* – is an irreplaceable tool in the Party's work.

In the political environment within which communists and the Party operate, reading and spreading *Avante!* and *O Militante* are particularly important tasks: they convey the party's stands, analyses and guidelines – both national and international – in the battle of ideas, in raising class and political awareness, to train and help members acquire knowledge and be better prepared to inform others, to inform about workers' and peoples' struggles.

The party press is very important in connecting the Party with the masses. It connects party members, supporters, and other democrats, and it serves to extend the party's influence and prestige. So promoting and expanding its readership is an essential party-building task for all party organisations.

At a time when big business governs most mass media to serve its own interests, the Party's central paper *Avante!* plays a key role in providing information as well as political and ideological insights. Measures must be taken to assign more responsibilities to cadres, to ensure that more members and committees are spreading it, have more points of sale. Create stands and other sales on the streets – so as to win over more regular readers and buyers – as well as to expand its internet presence.

Special sales of *Avante!* dealing with current topics and with the struggle of ideas, should be maintained.

Improving connections and cooperation with Party organisations – submitting news, suggestions or information – is a contribution to help diversify contents and address current affairs.

O Militante is an information publication dealing with political and ideological formation, as well as with organisational issues. It too deserves more attention to make it be better publicised and more widely read.

At a time when the publication of books is suffering in Portugal, **party-influenced publishing** activities should be supported. They should be better publicised with more initiatives, with the involvement of organisations and members, and with the use of new technological capabilities. They should be part of a line of more intensive political, cultural and ideological work.

As regards publications, we should continue to publish the classic works of Marxism-Leninism and the *Selected Works* of Álvaro Cunhal, as well as others that address current topics.

Avante! Editorial is an essential component of publication work, and should continue to bolster its own activities in coordination with the Party's work.

The ***Avante! Festival*** – a festival of youth, workers and the people – whose 40th. edition was held in 2016 with great success, is an important gathering where the April [1974 revolution's] values and the Party's views and goals are asserted. It is an excellent example of collective work and of PCP' ability to get things done.

The 40th *Avante!* Festival benefited from its expansion to the *Quinta do Cabo*, and was an important event that opened up new prospects to further improve and enhance the festival in future years.

As a venue for art, culture, joy and fraternization, participation and struggle, the *Avante!* Festival has kept throughout its 40 editions features that make it unique. These should be expanded and improved, with input from the Party collective and from the many thousands of friends and visitors.

Using the new potential created by the larger area that the Festival now enjoys, it is important to continue enhancing it, adding new attractions, creating better conditions for its builders and visitors, prioritising publicising of the Festival and sales of EPs [entry coupons] – expressions of solidarity and commitment to participate – and ensuring success for the Festival.

4.10. Funds

PCP's political and ideological independence is inseparable from its financial independence.

Party financing based on its own strengths and resources – based on the Party's initiatives and functioning, on the decisive financial contribution of members and supporters, of working people, of democrats – is a vital issue to ensure that the PCP can be active in serving workers, the people, and the Country.

To achieve financial balance, raise our financial capabilities, and maintain PCP's class nature and political and ideological independence, it is essential to increase our revenue, as part of a disciplined and well-organised effort to raise funds, overcoming obstacles and making good use of all existing opportunities.

Given the difficulties that have been imposed upon Portugal's workers and people, it is essential that our organisations and members get involved in implementing this unparalleled and unique feature of our Party – overcoming obstacles, especially those that were introduced by the Laws on Financing Parties and Election Campaigns that established a set of anti-democratic rules that were clearly aimed at affecting the Party and the *Avante!* Festival.

These unacceptable rules of interference have been further aggravated by a succession of regulations, concepts and abusive interpretations, and by a growing number of discretionary measures taken by the Office for Political Financing and Accounts (ECFP), that have led to a number of unacceptable fines, in an unacceptable interference targeting the party's activities and organisation. **The PCP has been the prime target of attacks and public campaigns abetted by the ECFP.**

The PCP will continue to fight the Law on Financing, demanding its repeal and replacement – from the high ground of those who stand for clear and transparent rules on financing of parties. We will not accept a law whose goal is to prevent the existence of parties that protect their financial autonomy as regards the State and public entities, by setting barriers to self-financing based on political activities and on militancy.

The **Party's assets**, and the way it has been protected for decades – through fund-raising campaigns by members and friends, through the participation of many members in building and maintaining facilities, as well as through donations – is itself a distinctive feature of the PCP in Portuguese society.

These assets – in particular the local party offices, the grounds that host the *Avante!* Festival, and other support structures – are essential to the Party's work serving workers, the people and the Country, as well as part and parcel of its political and ideological independence.

We staunchly refute the ongoing attack against the PCP over its assets – involving slander and false claims about their origin and nature. It is part of a more wide-ranging goal: to condition and curb PCP's work and should be firmly condemned.

The XIX Party Congress established as goals: increasing its revenue, cutting back or not increasing expenses, reducing the Regional Organisations' dependence on Central funds, so as to ensure financial balance without having to resort to additional income.

In analysing the period since the XIX Congress, which includes 2011-2015 accounts, the financial results yield an average yearly deficit of 1.082 million euros, which means that the situation has worsened and it has been impossible to overcome the unsustainable financial situation identified at the last Congress.

The additional and institutional revenue did increase and so did their relative share. Despite their contribution in improving global results, it does not free us from the goal of not having to depend on this income.

In fact, it was only by resorting to this kind of income, some of it conjunctural (property management, subventions, among others) that it was possible to face the deficit and **achieve an overall balance of 1.261 million euros over 4 years. Even so, 2012 and 2014 were negative years.**

The regional organisations' position is still generally in deficit, and there was no decrease of dependence on Central funds – this prevented increase in the number of organisations that contribute to Central funds, and reducing the number of those who receive subsidies from Central funds.

It should be stressed that in the years under consideration, a remarkable effort was made toward increasing overall income and cutting costs.

As regards income: the value of dues has increased in the last two years, as a result of efforts to contact Party members; contributions by militants during the National Fundraising Campaign was of considerable value in 2014 and 2015; contributions from members elected to public office has remained stable throughout these four years; there has been a somewhat significant decline in funds from fundraising activities. Own income makes up 90% of total income.

In terms of expenses, there was an overall drop that did not reduce the Party's work and initiatives.

The **National Fundraising Campaign - *More Space, More Festival, a Future with April*** that ran from October 2014 to April 2016, and whose goal was to finance the purchase of the Quinta do Cabo to extend and improve the *Avante!* Festival grounds, was a significant political and financial success. The raising of over 1.2 million euros was not just proof of support and recognition of the *Avante!* Festival and what it stands for. It clearly showed the potential that exists to improve revenue, particularly contributions, and to increase financial resources – politically very meaningful in terms of political and ideological independence.

Priorities in terms of fundraising are:

Improving the financial capabilities and financial balance of the Party and its organisations, by guaranteeing more own incomes, lessening the dependence of organisations on support from Central funds, and the relative weight of incomes from a conjunctural nature and institutional sources.

Reducing and holding down expenses – in particular those that are not directly involved in political activities or organisational capabilities – such as operational expenses, as well as changing styles of work that lead to waste or improper use of resources.

Ensuring the sustainability of commitments made, by previously guaranteeing the necessary financial requirements and own resources for all activities – including electoral battles and election campaigns – without depending on subsidies or jeopardising the Party's future activities.

Creating, operating and activating structures to monitor financial matters – fundraising, financial checks and accounting – and assigning more cadres to take charge of the various funding-related tasks.

Drawing up budgets with expense forecasts and income goals, with budget control and regularly monitoring the financial situation, by strengthening and creating the necessary instruments;

As part of the Party's general work, **valorisation of party cadres and members who work** on dues collection, fundraising and financial monitoring;

Broaden debate and understanding among Party organisations and members on financial matters and their importance for the Party's political and ideological independence;

Making good use of all potential actions that – in the midst of existing constraints and difficulties – can overcome blockages, raise Party income, and in particular the income that comes from its own functioning, initiatives and actions and from stronger organisation. Specifically:

Payment of dues is not just a basic duty; it is also an important link between a member and the Party. In this aspect, it is important: for all members to take it upon themselves to regularly pay dues and be informed about how and to whom the payment is to be made; expand the list of comrades charged with dues collection, aiming at having about one for every twenty party members; continue to make good use of paying dues by direct debit or ATM; work toward raising the dues contribution using a benchmark of 1% of salary or monthly income;

Contributions from Party members, supporters and other friends can be a one-time special contribution, or they can be more regular – as was the case in the National Fundraising Campaign to purchase the Quinta do Cabo, for this it is necessary to organise lists of comrades and friends to be contacted, with boldness, overcoming routine behaviours and assessing who is best suited to establish such a contact.

Fundraising campaigns for specific actions or general Party needs can themselves become mass actions of fundraising. Campaigns such as the “A day’s wage for the Party” should be continued, ensuring that they are followed up by central and regional leadership bodies, to ensure that the Party organisations are involved and that more funds are collected.

Contributions from members who are elected to public office, or appointed by the Party as its representatives, should be followed closely, following the party rules according to which no one should either benefit or suffer due to this, ensuring the definition of the contributions, calendar and methods of regular payment;

Income from participation in polling stations represent an important commitment and unique feature of Party members, and follows the rule of not benefiting or considering it different from other Party tasks;

Sales and distribution of *Avante!* and *O Militante* are also sources of income, and care must be taken to ensure that orders are fulfilled, and that regular or special sales are increased;

Continue the policy of getting the best possible returns on Party assets. Analyse the situation of all local offices taking into account needs and capabilities.

4.11. International activity and internationalist action

The PCP has privileged the establishment of bilateral contacts with communist parties and other progressive forces. It has participated in congresses, conferences, seminars, study visits, festivals and solidarity events in several countries – highlighting the delegations led by the General Secretary to Spain, China, Cyprus, Cuba, Laos and Vietnam.

It has contributed to the process of the International Meetings of Communist and Workers' Parties – having hosted the 15th IMCWP in Lisbon in 2013 – endeavouring to find ways to best favour unity in action within the international communist and revolutionary movement.

It was engaged in the Joint Appeal for the European Parliament elections, in 2014, and in asserting the GUE/NGL Confederal Group's principles at the European Parliament.

It attended the São Paulo Forum, the Latin American Progressive Meeting, participated in events organised by the peace and solidarity movements and other forums, thus contributing to strengthen the anti-imperialist front.

It welcomed parties from various countries and continents to Portugal, including especially the regular presence of dozens of delegations at the “Avante!” Festivals, and in 2014 at the International Seminar on «The Portuguese Revolution and the Situation in Europe and the World 40 years later».

It took public stands on various international issues – having taken the initiative in the adoption of common stands by communist parties – and has sought to regularly publish information about its position, including English-language pages on PCP's web site.

PCP's work should be guided by active involvement in the ideological struggle, contributing for a stronger international communist and revolutionary movement, and strengthening the anti-imperialist front that stands for peace, sovereignty, and solidarity with peoples fighting against exploitation and oppression – and promoting socialism as the necessary and achievable alternative to capitalism.

PCP's XX Congress is being held at an extremely demanding time in national and international political life. It is especially important to define the orientations and lines of action that will guide the future work of Portugal's communists.

After having imposed – through the workers' struggles and PCP's action – a defeat on the PSD/CDS-PP government, the issue that stands before us is to create a path and policies that will break with right-wing policies and ensure a future with development, justice and social progress.

The present time shows us how necessary it is to, courageously and forcefully, embark upon another path that can fulfil workers' and people's aspirations. And above all, it shows us that Portugal's needs and its sovereign development must not be shackled to impositions from abroad or to monopoly capital's interests.

Real life shows us that the only alternative path is to break with the last four decades of right-wing policies and to implement a patriotic and left-wing alternative policy.

The patriotic and left-wing policy that the PCP proposes is not just an alternative response to the course of events that has been imposed by decades of right-wing policies. It is above all an urgent necessity: ensuring a future for Portugal with more rights, more production, more employment and better wages, sovereign and independent.

This alternative policy that the country needs will have to be attained through the participation and struggle of workers and the people, by mobilising the will of all democrats and patriots, by strengthening the PCP.

It is this process of struggle and creation that Portugal's communists will be called upon to build and establish in the near future. Based on its unwavering loyalty to workers and the people, asserting its communist identity, honouring its path and past as a patriotic and internationalist party, the PCP will spare no efforts to ensure that Portugal becomes a democratic, developed and sovereign nation, and will continue to strongly assert its programme and view of the future, in the struggle for an advanced democracy with the April values present in Portugal's future, with socialism and communism on the horizon.