

The Crisis of Capitalist Globalisation and the Socialist Solution

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An action programme for world revolution

Introduction

The optimism of the Millennium celebrations is now a distant memory. Two disastrous wars and occupations and a Great Recession shattered the confidence that academics and journalists had expressed about Globalisation and the New World Order. As the second decade of the twenty first century draws to a close, there is little cause for optimism either. Alongside trade wars, walls and razor wire fences are being thrown up along borders in Europe and North America and multilateral treaties and institutions are being thrown into the trashcan of history.

A climate change denier in the White House effectively torpedoed the Paris Agreement, itself only a half-hearted and inadequate attempt by the capitalist world to avert environmental catastrophe. It is now clearer than ever that only socialism can achieve that.

Thus, in the decades ahead, we not only face a new cold war that could turn hot, regional wars and a further major economic depression but also the prospect of vast areas of food production facing droughts that could trigger famines and pandemics. Extreme weather events are already increasing in frequency and, in the medium term, coastal cities of 15-20 million inhabitants face inundation.

For Trump and a section of the US ruling class, the problem to be solved is the ending of the unchallenged domination that the United States enjoyed from 1989 -2008, no matter what the cost to world peace, the economic wellbeing of billions, or the destruction of the natural basis of human life itself. In fact, the so-called "new world order" of globalisation, based on the United Nations, the IMF, World Bank and WTO was one in which those institutions danced to a North American tune.

This opening phase of the globalisation period, in which the US appeared unchallengeable, nonetheless, inevitably generated its own contradictions. In particular, it saw the emergence of Russia and China as new imperialist powers. The restoration of capitalism took very different routes in the former degenerate workers' states.

In Russia the "big bang" demolition of central planning allowed a form of primitive accumulation of capital by a layer of former managers, officials and criminals that almost led to the complete collapse of the economy. That was only averted by the imposition of order by the key institution of the old state machine, the security service, under Vladimir Putin. Slowly, but surely, that has enabled Russia to crush internal opposition and re-assert itself internationally. Like tsarist Russia before it, today's capitalist Russia owes its

status as a Great Power and, therefore, an imperialist power, not to its economic strength but primarily to its military might.

In China, the leadership of the Communist Party, having crushed all internal opposition in the aftermath of the Tiananmen Massacre and observed the disintegration of the Soviet Union, opted to secure its own rule by a systematic dismantling of planning, the transformation of large scale state industry into state capitalist corporations and the privatisation of smaller enterprises, coupled with the restoration of private agriculture and small scale industry in the vast rural interior and foreign-invested Special Economic Zones in coastal provinces. This formula allowed the longest and most sustained period of capitalist development in history as perhaps 200 million peasants were transformed into a new industrial proletariat. Its massive exploitation generated the capital necessary to transform the economic base of China itself at the same time as establishing the country as a major factor in the global economy, now second only to the USA itself. Its ability not only to survive the crisis of 2008/9 but to emerge from it stronger, confirmed its status as a Great Power, an imperialist power, and one that must now buttress its economic position with the ability to project that power globally.

The recovery of Russia under Putin and the rise of China under the Chinese Communist Party, have ended the USA's absolute dominance and it is the ensuing friction and rivalry that pose the threat of war, even a world war between Great Powers. Once more, as twice before in the last century, humanity faces a period in which the choice becomes as Rosa Luxemburg posed it: 'either transition to socialism or regression into barbarism?.'

Once again, too, Lenin's Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism, proves strikingly accurate in its description of this as an epoch of 'particularly intense struggle for the division and re-division of the world?'. The emergence in the new millennium of two new imperialist powers, Russia and China, has destabilised the 'new world order' proclaimed by the Bushes and Clintons. History, it seems, did not end; and neoliberalism, at least as an ideology, is now pilloried by the right as well as the left. It is widely blamed for the ills involved in this breakdown. An aggressive nationalist assertiveness by right wing demagogues is developing not only in East and South Asia and Latin America but also in the European Union and the United States. Everything now depends on a revival of the militant workers' movement to check and reverse their attacks.

Donald Trump's 'America First' and the UK Brexiteer's 'taking back control' are the chosen narrative of a growing list of 'strong' leaders; Viktor Orbán, Matteo Salvini, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Mohammed bin Salman, Narendra Modi, Xi Jinping, Rodrigo Duterte, Jair Bolsonaro etc. Racist populist parties are advancing in Europe; France's Rassemblement National, the Alternative for Germany, AfD, the Sweden Democrats, and the Italian Lega. Many of the left-of-centre parties which seemed triumphant in the era of Clinton, Schroeder and Blair, and of Lula and Chavez in Latin America, have been unable to hold on to or win power. In the Middle East, the democratic hopes of 2011 and the Arab Spring, in which millions took to the streets and toppled dictators, have given way to wholesale barbarism in Libya, Syria and Yemen while Iraq and Afghanistan have been unable to recover from the invasions and occupations of 2002-3.

The Western media, which once focused attention on Egypt's Tahrir Square, now ignores General Abdel Fatah el-Sisi's actions, far more brutal than those of Mubarak. He began his rule with the massacre of 817 demonstrators in Cairo's Rabaa al-Adawiya Square and has maintained it at the cost of 60,000 political prisoners and disappeared people, but all of that is blanked out. The murderous Saudi Crown Prince also remains a valued ally of the USA, Britain and the western companies whose FDI has turned into a veritable flood propping up the dictator.

The hopes of the 'new' left of that era; anticapitalists, populists and twenty-first century socialists, have

faded or collapsed along with the memories of the summit sieges, world and regional social forums, and the Occupy movement, inspired by the Arab Spring. The depth and prolonged character of the Great Recession of 2008-10 and its aftermath put the ideas of horizontalism, 'direct action' and neo-utopianism to the test and after two or three years found them wanting, too. A return to left reformism and neo-Keynesianism was tried in Greece and is still being tried in the USA and Western Europe, but with narrower, national-based horizons and limited goals that do not dare to call capitalism itself into question.

The axis of this turn in the world situation was the post 2008 recession. The League for the Fifth International recognised, at its 2010 congress, that this would open an extended period marking the reemergence of capitalism's historic crisis. Indeed, we predicted it in the years before the crisis itself broke out, explaining it as based on a manifest over-accumulation of capital and a severe decline in the rate of profit in the old capitalist centres.

We predicted that the recession would be followed by weak recoveries and prolonged stagnation in the imperialist heartlands of the USA and the European Union. The prolonged and deepening social and political crisis of the European Union, which calls into question not only Franco-German hegemony but the Union's very survival, confirms this. So, too, do the regional recessions such as those that struck Latin America and South Africa, in part as a result of China's slowing growth rates.

As well as these economic consequences, the League realised that this period of crisis would put the political parties and trade union organisations of the working class to the test. A decade on, we can now see that this was a test they failed. By and large, their leaders proved unwilling to identify the capitalist roots of this profound social crisis and were therefore unable to mount effective resistance when its consequences were unloaded onto the backs of the working class and the oppressed.

The crisis period cried out for radical, indeed revolutionary, methods of struggle; the political mass strike, workers' control, action councils, expropriation and socialisation of production. Radical youth and rank and file workers responded as best they could with heroic but isolated struggles. The labour bureaucracy stood aside and let them fail from exhaustion and lack of solidarity. At heart, the impotence of the old mass organisations and even the new, improvised, movements, expressed the lack of an alternative political programme based on a socialist transformation of society, or any effective strategy for resolving the crisis at the expense of the ruling and exploiting class.

Nevertheless, these defeats and the rise of the right are far from being the 'end of history?'. Like the era of neoliberal globalisation, the current balance of forces will break down as a result of its own contradictions. Because of the dog-eat-dog competition they generate, trade wars, cold wars, arms races, like actual wars, put enormous pressures on the working and middle classes. Capitalist rivals force their workers to pay for increased competitive edge by sacrificing past economic and social gains, real wage levels and job security.

Stubbornly low rates of profit are driving employers to accelerate replacement of living labour with 'machines?', digitalisation, robotisation, artificial intelligence. Instead of realising their potential for reducing the hours of labour and freeing human beings from exhausting and dangerous forms of work, these technological advances threaten the livelihoods of millions of 'brainworkers' and highly skilled technicians just as earlier advances threatened those of production line workers.

Globalisation and recession have reconfigured the working class in terms of its locations, the types of industry in which it works and the technologies and cultures with which it is endowed, but they have also led to its absolute growth and all this ensures that a new era of class struggle is approaching. No doubt it will see not only radically new forms of struggle but also the rediscovery of those that proved necessary in

the past. What these struggles will reveal above all, however, is the necessity of a strategy for working class power, and a strategy needs strategists, organised in parties.

Moreover, increased internationalisation of the means of production, finance and trade means that the new period of inter-imperialist and inter-capitalist rivalry will create revolutionary situations that can spread on a continental, indeed a global, basis. Never has the working class needed its inherent internationalism more. It is necessary not merely to counter the spread of national chauvinism but to unite our forces across borders and oceans. Such a development requires once again an international leadership that transcends national narrow-mindedness and can learn, and then teach, the lessons of past defeats as well as of victories.

In short, events in the coming decade will once more reveal the truth of Trotsky's observation on the eve of the Second World War, that "the historical crisis of mankind is reduced to the crisis of the revolutionary leadership". To resolve this crisis, every revolutionary grouping is obliged to present its political passport, its programme, for inspection by the militant fighters of the coming struggles. This must include the tactics necessary for recreating revolutionary parties in every country and uniting them into a new International, the Fifth, built on the achievements of those that preceded it.

A prolonged period of crises

The faltering GDP growth rates of the Obama years were given something of a boost in 2017 by Trump's tax giveaway which prompted a Wall St boom and increased consumer spending. However, much of the growth since the Financial Crash of 2008 has been based on a combination of QE and low interest rates. The Fed has been reluctant to raise rates because even 0.25 percent rises have led to a faltering in growth. At the present time, the rate is 2.8 percent, having been very slowly raised from 0.25 percent in 2008, but this is still only half the average rate since 1971 and will leave the Fed with few options to deal with a new crisis.

Economists, both capitalist and Marxist, are predicting another major downturn in the world economy by 2020. This comes after a decade marked by a major recession followed by a long phase of stagnation, punctuated by regional crises and capped off by a feverish recovery based on credit. This was combined with sharply rising inequality and a stagnation, if not a fall, in real wages. A sharp turn in the US-China trade war, a hard Brexit-triggered crisis in the EU or continued recessionary events in "emerging markets" Brazil, Argentina, South Africa, Turkey etc. could trigger another major crash. No wonder then that the recovery has not created political conditions benefiting the ruling governments.

Debt is once more likely to be the central factor in coming difficulties. Exceptionally plentiful and cheap credit was the result of the way the central banks mitigated the Great Recession, that is, by Quantitative Easing. Large-scale asset purchases by the US Federal Reserve came in three waves that only came to an end in 2017. That strategy has been described as "fundamentally a regressive redistribution program" (Reason Foundation a libertarian US think tank). As a result, US consumers hold a total of more than \$1 trillion in each of mortgage debt, student loan debt and credit card debt. Corporate debt is two and a half times that in 2008, much of it sub-prime, that is, dangerously overvalued. Dallas-based economist John Mauldin estimates the world has almost "half a quadrillion dollars", that is, \$500 trillion, in debt and unfunded pension and other liabilities, something he judges "unsustainable".

The long negative effects of the 2008 crash account for both right wing and left wing responses in politics. The prolonged rightward swing in the balance of political forces in recent years is a result of the failure of various movements of resistance including the Arab Spring, the Latin American "Pink Tide" and the Greek and other European anti-austerity movements. That trend has culminated in the election of various right wing figures around the globe. This is partly as a result of leadership betrayals, strategic failures and

defeats of the mass organisations of the working class and its allies. Now there can be no doubt that the workers' movement, with few exceptions, is on the defensive.

Right wing governments and presidents, led by Donald Trump, are using the bourgeois state to slash welfare, health and education systems and replacing permanent jobs on trade union negotiated wages, with precarious work on poverty incomes. Some, like Bolsonaro, openly set their goal as continued neoliberal "reforms", meaning the demolition of the welfare achievements of social democratic governments and even crushing the workers' and popular movements that fought for them. Such governments target democratic freedoms and trade union/workplace rights won over past decades and even centuries.

In many countries we also see the rise of reactionary populist street movements that can win mass support at the ballot box, using racist demagoguery, targeting migrant workers, national and religious minorities and refugees from wars and poverty. Many of these movements exhibit growing proto-fascist tendencies, including intimidatory street mobilisations and open threats to the organised workers' movement. Unless workers' and popular resistance grows and becomes more effective, the next economic crisis will speed these trends. That is why we need to resolve the crisis of working class leadership.

Inter-imperialist conflict

The measures imposed by ruling classes to defend their own wealth and status are two pronged. As ever they involve a series of assaults on the living standards and conditions of the working class, the rural and urban poor. Now, however, neglecting or throwing aside multilateral economic arrangements, they have resorted to attempts to force each other to pay the cost of the crisis. The high point of this strategy is embodied in Trump's "Make America Great Again" his trade and rearmament threats to China, Russia and, indirectly, the European Union. Trump has withdrawn the US from the WTO's dispute function and threatens to leave it altogether.

For China, in particular, further growth must plainly challenge United States' dominance in ever more regions of the world. This is embodied in Xi Jinping's goal of making his country a global superpower. It already has global reach in terms of investments in southern and eastern Asia, in Latin America and Africa. In 2009, China overtook the United States to become Africa's biggest trading partner, its companies earning \$180 billion a year. Anyone who believes China's aim is simply to aid development should note that its interest rates are actually higher than those of the Bretton Woods institutions (World Bank, IMF etc.) and that, when Sri Lanka defaulted on its loan payments, undertaken to build a huge new port facility at Hambantota, it was obliged to lease it to China for 99 years; echoing Britain's 99-year lease of Hong Kong in what China calls its "century of humiliation".

China is also increasing its naval and land forces to guard those assets, though it will be many a year before it can match the US fleets. The informal alliance with Russia has seen Chinese warships participate in naval manoeuvres, not only in the North Pacific but in the Mediterranean and even the Baltic. Beijing's strategy involves sponsoring local "strong leaders" who favour its plans, such as the famous One Belt, One Road, OBOR, initiative, denounced by Donald Trump. This foreshadows that OBOR will become a fault line of political earthquakes and eruptions in the decades ahead.

For the working class and its allies, none of the imperialist powers, old or new, nor their alliances, represent historically progressive forces or even "lesser evils", and socialists must not side with one or another, no matter how "critically". Of course, taking advantage of imperialist powers' rivalry and conflicts tactically is another matter. Inevitably, where there are movements against repression or denial of democratic rights in the imperialist countries themselves or in their respective semi-colonial client states, other imperialist states try to gain the allegiance of those movements in order to further their own interests.

While recognising the right of democratic movements to obtain aid and weapons from wherever they can, in all such cases they would be wrong to assume that the imperialist enemy of their domestic enemy is their friend or ally. We have to warn strongly against subordination to, and becoming a tool of, these false friends.

Cold wars turning hot

Temporarily in abeyance, the confrontation between the USA, the European Union and Russia threatens to break out at moments of domestic difficulty for the protagonists. The European Reassurance Initiative, launched by Obama after the 2014 Russian seizure of Crimea, will cost \$10 billion for the 2018 fiscal year. For all Trump's hostile remarks aimed at frightening the EU countries into greater military spending, the U.S. military commitment to NATO remains strong, with nearly 64,000 U.S. troops still stationed in Europe. Trump also remains committed to the trillion-dollar nuclear modernisation programme begun by the Obama administration.

The imperialist powers have intervened, directly or indirectly, into two civil wars, in Ukraine and Syria, making them more bloody and destructive. In Ukraine, the US encouraged one of its "colour revolutions" which were aimed at expanding Nato's reach deep into Russia's "near abroad". The 2014 "Maidan Revolution" was a mass movement led by reactionary and right wing forces which resulted in a coup d'état led by fascist militias, supported by the Odessa pogrom and the assault on the eastern, Russian-speaking, regions, prompting Putin's annexation of Crimea, and resulted in 10,000 deaths and 1.7 million refugees. Russia's role in the ensuing civil war between Kiev and the East was, however, thoroughly reactionary, in that it involved the effective liquidation of the independent antifascist and socialist forces, just as it aided the liquidation of revolutionary democratic forces in Syria. Those on the left who cannot resist imperialist Russia cannot lead an effective anti-war movement.

The result is that the whole of Ukraine is now terribly impoverished, divided, wracked by nationalist antagonism, infested with fascists and exploited by corrupt oligarchs. Russia has been subjected to Western sanctions and a New Cold War has broken to the surface, which temporarily boosts Putin's prestige as the strong leader defending his country against US and EU aggression.

It is in Syria, however, that the most destructive effects of the renewed rivalry between the imperialist powers is to be seen. Putin supported the vicious counterrevolution being waged by Bashar al-Assad against the Syrian Spring and the country's democratic revolutionaries. Russian and Iranian/Hezbollah intervention turned the tide with air power from the former and disciplined, ruthless fighters from the latter. The USA's intervention, under Obama and Trump, combined humanitarian hypocrisy with strictly limited logistical aid, carefully calibrated not to clash openly with Russia's hegemony in Syria.

The result has been as barbaric in its results as the US-led invasion of Iraq after 2003. Hundreds of thousands have been killed in Syria. Five million Syrians have fled their country as refugees and six million, half the country's pre-war population, have been driven from their homes within its borders, several million more are in need of humanitarian aid. Many of those who sought refuge in Europe eventually faced a clampdown by EU states by sea and by land.

Responsibility for the barbarism rests not simply with the imperialists but also with the rival regional powers that the war drew in: Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Iran and, to a lesser degree, Israel; backing various sides and adding to the bloody confusion. Added to long-term chaos in Iraq this allowed the expansion of ISIS and the criminal enormity of its "caliphate". This became the pretext for US involvement in alliance with the Rojava Kurds but also the de facto toleration of Assad as the lesser evil. It also provoked Erdoğan's intervention in pursuit of his war with the Kurds. Last, but not least, jihadi terrorism contributed both to the scale of the refugees seeking asylum in Europe and, through terrorist outrages there, to the

racist hostility with which many of these innocent sufferers were treated.

A further reactionary by-product was Saudi Arabia's genocidal intervention in Yemen's own version of revolution turned civil war. Although regional powers and jihadi terrorists were the proximate causes of all this destruction and terror, it is the imperialist powers; Russia and the US and its allies Britain and France, that bear the heaviest responsibility for the barbarism inflicted on the region. Not to be forgotten is the Saudi and Western backed counterrevolution of Mohammed El Sisi in Egypt and Trump's collusion with the Saudis in preparing some kind of strike against Iran and the Palestinians. In Yemen, 14 million civilians face starvation and, according to the Save the Children charity, 84,700 children may already have died between April 2015 and October 2018.

Tragically, the left in western Europe and the USA failed to mobilise serious forces either in solidarity with the democratic revolutionaries under attack, in Egypt as well as Syria and Yemen, or to expose the imperialist powers and their real motives. The belief that 'imperialism' means the USA, which made some on the left, especially those from a Stalinist background, unwilling to condemn and oppose Russian and Chinese imperialism, played a part in this. Confusion arising from this international context in both Syria and Ukraine ensured little international solidarity with the progressive forces in either country and, more generally, no international opposition to the War on Terror or organised working class solidarity with the victims of the 'refugee crisis' in Europe.

The Middle East has not ceased to be the world's most explosive powder keg. The attempts of Trump, the Saudi Crown Prince, Israel and the Egyptian dictator to create an alliance against Iran and its allies has aroused other states in the region against it and threatens to create a pan-regional conflict. However, in the decades to come, East and South Asia, as the theatre of rivalry between the USA and China, could be the arena for an even bigger and more deadly confrontation. In the Pacific, the U.S. Navy's Seventh Fleet conducts some 160 bilateral and multilateral exercises per year, such as the annual Malabar exercise with India and Japan, with aircraft carriers from all three countries. In the South China Sea, its freedom-of-navigation operations, or FONOPs, challenge parts claimed by China.

The developing world

Despite its attendant evils, capitalism's continued dominance also ensures social changes and even, partially, development. Not the least of these has been the creation in China of the single biggest working class the world has ever seen. Although still denied its right to organise independently, this class has already demonstrated its ability to force major concessions from employers and the state alike, as it has fought for safer working conditions, higher wages and social rights in the mega-cities in which it labours.

No less important has been the drawing in of millions of women, generally young women, into modern industrial production in countries all around the world. Often facing almost slave-like conditions, they have nonetheless waged courageous struggles both against economic exploitation and against their own social oppression, bringing a dynamic and vital force into the ranks of the world's working class.

The crisis-wracked nature of modern capitalism is also reflected in sudden eruptions of social crisis and revolution, even in regimes long renowned for their repressive stability. The Arab Spring, more than any other movement, expressed not only the yearning for democracy and human rights but also the necessarily international character of any serious revolutionary movement.

Within all too short a time, however, it also demonstrated the crucial role of leadership. Lacking an established and organised working class party, committed to a strategy of breaking up the power of police and the military and replacing it with its own class-based organisations, trade unions, parties, militias and workers' councils, the key mass movement in Egypt fatally ceded leadership to clerical forces who were

subsequently bloodily crushed by a military bonapartist coup under El-Sisi. The resultant dictatorship is even more repressive than Mubarak's.

In a world beset with economic uncertainty and growing nationalist rivalry, a shock in one country is rapidly transmitted to others. The Arab Spring inspired mass movements, often dominated by youth, around the globe, leading to the occupation of Wall Street itself, as well as public squares in country after country. Yet these, too, were unable to maintain any forward direction as they confronted riot police with little more substantial than assertions of the rights of the 99 per cent.

Elsewhere, in North Africa and the Middle East, instability prompted interventions by both global and regional powers, which in turn have spread instability even further afield, contributing not only to the mounting confrontation between the USA and Russia but also the 'migration crisis' within the European Union when faced with millions of desperate refugees on its borders.

This crisis massively speeded up the spread of racist populist successes at the polls (the rise of the AfD in Germany, the Brexit referendum) and on the streets (Pegida, Tommy Robinson marches in the UK). The rise of the right and the far right and the actions of right wing governments in Poland, Hungary and even Italy even threaten the disintegration of the European Union, certainly checking the ideas of a federal European super state able to stand up to the competition of China and the USA.

Clearly, Donald Trump represents the US version of the rise of the populist right, while the rise of Hindu nationalism and the electoral victory of Narendra Modi in 2019 make clear that this is not limited to the established 'metropolitan' countries. Myanmar's genocidal persecution of the Rohingyas and China's of the Uighurs are examples of long established dictators moving in an even more totalitarian direction, dragging 'democratic' hypocrites like Aung San Suu Kyi in their wake. The stunning triumph of the semi-fascist Jair Bolsonaro, with Lula rotting in jail, confirms the scale of the swing to the right in recent years. Also worthy of note is the role of religion in these reactionary movement (not just various Islamisms, but Evangelical Christians in the Americas, plus Hindu and Buddhist chauvinisms in South Asia, etc.) These are seedbeds for a new fascist ideology and mass plebeian movements.

The crisis of the European Union

The European Union with 513 million people, its single internal market, its free movement of people, capital and commodities, accounts for 24.6 percent of world GDP. The productive forces of European capitalism have long outgrown the state borders of Europe, creating production chains whereby components cross several borders before reaching the consumer. Just-in-time (JIT) production is the most dramatic expression of this. Marxists have always rejected breaking up large-scale units as the solution to their power and dominance. Rather, we have sought to transform, socialise and plan them in a way that takes humanity forward. Socialism requires a continental (and eventually global) scale of integrated production. The perspective of socialism in one country is even more reactionary now than it was when Stalin proclaimed it.

Cramping the productive forces back into 28 national states, re-imposing border controls and customs barriers, severing ties of economic and cultural exchange, increasing interstate rivalries, dividing yet further the working classes of these states in the name of a bogus national independence, can only foster economic collapse and increase the trend towards a new arms race and, ultimately, a third inter-imperialist war.

The crisis that has wracked the EU since 2008 shows that the capitalist classes of Europe are unable to perform the historically progressive task of unifying the continent. The dominant powers of the continent, especially the re-unified Germany, have proved unable to transcend their national capitalist egoism. As the

fate of Greece and to a lesser degree Portugal, Spain, Italy and Ireland shows, the imperialist centre has, via the Euro, subjected the periphery to trade domination and debt bondage. If not overcome, this domination will inevitably lead to revolt and fracturing of the Union.

The task of unifying Europe, a task communists realised was necessary a century ago, before the carnage of the two world wars exterminated millions of European workers, peasants, oppressed nations and ?races?, falls to the working class. The means by which it can achieve this is the Europe-wide revolution.

The actuality of this revolution, that is, its potential to be realised by European workers starting from today?s struggles against austerity, privatisation, inequality, racism and environmental destruction, is an objective necessity to avoid the material and human destruction of crisis and war.

Revolutionaries cannot support, even critically, for one minute, the European Union as it is with its institutions like the European Commission, the European Central Bank with its Euro, and the rules that underpin them and ensured the bludgeoning of southern European states into austerity. Nor can we support its military and diplomatic aid for the US-led adventure in Ukraine, its wars in the Middle East, its racist Fortress Europe policy on immigration. The EU needs more than reform, it needs a revolution.

The obstacles standing in the way of such a perspective are not objective ones but lie in the divisions of the European working class, its bureaucratic and bourgeois trade union and parliamentary leaderships. Nevertheless, a Europe-wide movement of resistance to austerity, the destruction of the welfare state and trade union rights, opposition to the imperialist war drive, all necessitate political coordination and as soon as possible the founding a new international party of the working class, a Fifth International.

Only in this context can the racist, nationalist and reactionary meaning of Brexit be grasped. The fact that large parts of the British left; the Lexiteers of the Communist Party of Britain, Corbyn?s Labour leadership, the SWP and Socialist Party (CWI) are infested with the idea of leaping over the large majority of Labour Party and trade union members, who remain pro-integration with Europe, to address the more backward layers of the class. This is not an accidental error of judgement but a sign of their strategic weakness, be it the theory of Socialism in One Country or (more likely in reality) social democratic gradualism.

Therefore, our slogan is not exit from the EU and a return to "independent" (capitalist) nation states but forward to a united socialist Europe, a federation of workers? states, established by a continent-wide social revolution. This does not mean that we hesitate to fight against EU or Eurozone policies in individual states such as the imposition of the Troika's austerity programme on Greece, or to stop them from privatising industries, infrastructure or services or blocking their nationalisation. We fight for immediate, democratic or transitional changes to the EU (e.g. continent-wide abandonment of austerity, democratic and workers? control over the ECB and the national banking systems, repeal of all the pro-privatisation measures in the EU treaties). But a strategy of continent-wide action, general strikes etc., can help spread resistance from the national flashpoints through solidarity action to the other states.

Workers? parties, old and new

As a general rule, the political impact of the new period has been to undermine and sometimes eradicate the popular base of established parties and unions while radicalising society on both the Left and the Right. It has also taken its toll on movements that were already in existence before 2008. This is especially visible in Latin America, where the Bolivarian, populist and social democratic regimes that rose to office in the last century and flourished in the early 2000s now have their backs to the wall. The economic models of (reformist) 21st Century Socialism, largely based on the export of raw materials, proved to be strictly temporary advantages, dependent on China?s unsustainable double-digit growth rates. Meanwhile, on the Left, we have seen the rise of Syriza, Podemos and Bloco and the movement which

elected Jeremy Corbyn as the first left wing leader of the Labour Party in Britain since the early 1930s. In the USA, too, we saw the growth of Black Lives Matter, Bernie Sanders' good showing in the 2016 Democrat primaries, and a series of "democratic socialist" candidates for state and city government in the 2018 mid-term elections.

In the rich imperialist countries of Europe, and certain privileged countries of the south, Social Democratic, Labour and mass Communist parties have long served the capitalists as alternative parties of government as has the Left Front in India (CPI, CPI-M and other left parties) at regional level. The South African Communist party within the African National Congress alliance has done likewise since the end of Apartheid. In Brazil, during the new century, the Workers' Party (PT) has followed the same path.

What they have in common is a privileged layer of bureaucrats and parliamentarians who, in practice, regard capitalism as an everlasting system and serve the bosses whether in government or opposition. They frustrate their working class members' attempts to use these parties as effective weapons of struggle. In Europe and Asia, although they once traded their services for limited social reforms, over the last twenty years these parties have adopted the neoliberal, pro-market policies dictated by the capitalist class and, in the post-2008 era, their "reforms" became austerity, privatisation and attacks on wages instead. Even the PT did the same once the oil boom ended.

With the restoration of capitalism in the republics of the former Soviet Union, in Eastern Europe and in China, the Stalinist Communist parties of the world have also moved far to the right. In Western and Central Europe, they have occupied part of the political space vacated by neoliberal social democracy. In words, they have criticised neoliberalism but in practice, as soon as they got even a share of government, parties like Rifondazione Comunista in Italy, the Parti Communiste Française and Die Linke in Germany, also implemented social cuts and privatisation.

Ruling for capitalism led the CPI and CPI-M government in West Bengal to act as enforcer for foreign and domestic capital against the villagers and tribal peoples whose land they wish to expropriate. The repression wreaked on the villagers of Nandigram in West Bengal became infamous worldwide. Their payment was to be swept away by a landslide in 2011 by the Trinamool Congress-Indian National Congress alliance and in the May 2019 election nearly their entire social base moved to the BJP, a Hindu nationalist party.

In apparent contrast, some Maoist parties, specifically those in Nepal and India, have played a more radical role. The Nepal Communist Party, NCP, a 2018 fusion of the CPN (Unified Marxist Leninist) and the CPN (Maoist Centre) whose two components won a landslide victory in the 2017 elections, giving them a huge overall majority in both houses of parliament and most provinces. Their commitment to the Stalinist-Maoist strategy of "revolution by stages", which rejects outright socialist measures and workers' power, makes it certain they will repeat the errors and betrayals of their sister parties elsewhere.

The Communist Party of India (Maoist) grew as a guerrilla force based among the landless and poor peasantry and Adivasis (tribal peoples) fighting to prevent their lands being taken over by multinationals or Indian billionaires. They pursue the old Maoist strategy of "surrounding the cities" but, in a country with a huge and growing working class, the limitations of the stages theory and the guerrilla strategy are evident, they cannot provide a strategy for socialist revolution in India.

The "Bolivarian socialist" governments of Hugo Chavez and Evo Morales carried out genuine reforms for the working class and the urban poor. The leaders, who came to power in the early 2000s, quickly capitalised on commodities exports, profiting from seemingly insatiable Chinese demand and disbursing funds to their patronage networks. States such as Brazil and Venezuela were able to boost public

spending and deliver public works that kept their leaders popular. Over the next few years, economic growth kept voters happy and elected officials in office.

The most radical leaders of Latin America's Left; Hugo Chávez of Venezuela, Evo Morales of Bolivia, and Rafael Correa of Ecuador, plus Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva of Brazil promised major change. The first three were able to come to power because of mass social movements and, in the case of Chávez, of a failed coup by the business and military elite which resulted in the mass of Chavez supporters winning over the decisive support of the rank and file and junior officers in the armed forces in a genuine popular revolution.

Lula won the presidency after the Workers' Party (PT) built up regional and city based power by mobilising the people of the favelas and held on to it for 14 years, from 2002. Their reforms were made possible by the boom years for export of commodities, especially oil and soya. The bolsa familia, a grant to 12 million poor families (50 million people), helped cut extreme poverty in Brazil from 9.7 to 4.3 percent of the population.

After 2012, as commodity prices fell, economic growth ground to a halt and Argentina, Brazil and Venezuela entered severe recessions in mid-decade. Venezuela's economy has been absolutely ravaged by hyperinflation under Chavez's successor, Nicolás Maduro, leading to a flight from the country of close on three million people with huge numbers living below the poverty line. Maduro has been obliged to impose vicious economic austerity and resorted to heavy repression, including rigged elections and extrajudicial killings. Just as, ten years ago, Venezuela boosted the prestige of 'socialism', now Maduro's repression is a weapon in the hands of Latin America's elites and their US masters to discredit it. The tightening of US and EU sanctions, especially on the state oil company PDVSA, has already yielded a mass exodus of people, medicine and food shortages, and blackouts in Caracas.

Despite their left populist measures, it is clear that Chavez, Morales and other Bolivarian leaders never expropriated the decisive sectors of the big bourgeoisie or foreign corporations. Faced with workers' strikes and occupations, they often repressed such struggles using the police and courts and arrested their leaders.

Likewise, Lula, Dilma and the PT never took steps against Brazilian capitalism, nor did they break decisively with imperialism or its agencies like the IMF. The PT rather governed in coalition with open bourgeois parties like the Partido Liberal (PL) and the Partido da Mobilização Nacional (PMN). It also gained the support of groups linked to other conservative parties, such as the Progressive Party (PP), the Brazilian Labor Party (PTB) and even the old oligarcic party PMDB, where it obtained the support of the Sarney family.

Their compromise between socialism and capitalism was not sustainable. Social reforms and nationalisations only become 'socialist' when a workers' state coordinates and defends them. Only with workers' control in the workplace, and workers' power in the state, can it become possible to eliminate the waste and chaos of the market and replace it with democratic planning.

A resurgent right, backed by the USA has been able to mobilise mass opposition on the streets of Brazil and Venezuela. In August 2016, Brazil's congress carried out a constitutional coup, impeaching Dilma Rouseff and attacking the social gains of the Lula years, imprisoning him and thereby barring him from standing in the 2018 elections. Thanks to these moves, the extreme right-winger Jair Bolsonaro has been elected President, threatening to smash the workers', poor and indigenous peoples' movements.

By comparison with the 'anti-capitalism' of the early years of the century, and the 'Occupy' movement inspired by the Arab Spring, activists like those of Syriza, Podemos and the Corbyn movement, or the

Sanders supporters and Democratic Socialists of America, show a much greater recognition of the need for action and answers at the governmental level and, in that respect, a greater political maturity. But their internationalism has hitherto been at a lower level than the earlier movements and their radicalism is less than either the post-war reformist parties or the anticapitalists of ten years ago. These strengths and weaknesses, and the dangers of their rapid rise but lack of organisational solidity, are best illustrated by the fate of Syriza.

Propelled to the left by the defection of its own right wing, Syriza drew support from the mass mobilisations of the Greek working class because it openly declared its refusal to collaborate with the Troika's austerity programmes. Unsurprisingly, given its origin as a coalition of different tendencies, Syriza had no developed programme for combatting the impositions of the Troika. In particular, it was not committed to transforming the ad hoc organisations of the mass movement into democratically controlled bodies that could implement measures against austerity.

Many on the left, led by the Fourth International, that is, the former United Secretariat, saw Syriza's rapid rise as confirmation of their rejection of the "Leninist" model of the party in favour of "broad" alliances that encompassed both revolutionary and reformist currents. While it is correct to relate to, or even join, such formations as Syriza wherever they represent a move by serious numbers of workers and youth away from liberalism, right wing social democracy or populism, to suppress criticism of the fundamental weaknesses of the Syriza project was to abandon revolutionary politics. Equally, so-called revolutionaries who stood aside, anticipating its failure, contributed nothing to the preparation of the working class for the battles that lay ahead.

The abrupt surrender of the Syriza government on the 12 July 2015, despite over 60 per cent support for No (Oxi) in the referendum, was not simply proof of a point of political theory; it was the turning point in the struggle of the Greek working class, a strategic defeat. As Germany's finance minister Wolfgang Schäuble said with brutal honesty, "voting changes nothing".

The lessons from Latin America and Western Europe are still those drawn by Rosa Luxemburg at the turn of the twentieth century. Reform and Revolution are not just different routes to the same goal, just a matter of choice as to the tempo of change, of patience or impatience. As she pointed out, they have different goals. One seeks to save capitalism from itself by legislation from above; through the machinery of the capitalist state. The other seeks to save the working classes from capitalist exploitation by their own self-emancipation.

Building a revolutionary party

It was Karl Marx who first asserted that the emancipation of the working class from capitalist domination was the task of the working class itself and would never be achieved by "saviours from on high" and that a working class party must be independent of all capitalist parties or personalities. Such a party, he stressed, must be internationalist, as expressed in the slogan from the Communist Manifesto and the founding principles of the First International, Workers of all countries, unite.

It must embody the unity of revolutionary theory with practice. Starting from the understanding of the laws of motion of capitalism, the nature of exploitation, the inevitable recurrence of economic, social and political crises, of the liberation not only of the workers but of all the oppressed, its theory exists to be implemented and to change the world. In turn, such a party's practice enriches and develops its theory.

It was the Russian revolutionary, Lenin, who distilled these lessons into a practical guide for building a revolutionary party, one whose task was to lead the working class in a revolutionary assault on the capitalist state with all its sophisticated instruments of repression and deception. The model of the party

that Lenin developed cannot be treated as a fixed formula that can be imposed on any situation; what a revolutionary party looks like will change and adapt according to the historical and national conditions.

However, there are fundamental principles that are vital and must form the foundations of any effective revolutionary party. These were outlined first in Lenin's classic work, *What Is To Be Done?* This included the statement, still highly controversial to this day:

Class political consciousness can only be brought to the working class from without, that is only from outside the economic struggle.

This does not deny that class consciousness originates in day-to-day struggles against the bosses and their state under capitalism, nor does it mean that the working class cannot emancipate itself, that workers must be led by 'outsiders,' by an elite of middle class intellectuals or 'professional revolutionaries'. It means quite simply that struggles over wages and conditions, over economic issues alone; waged by trade unions alone, will not develop spontaneously into a struggle for socialism; will not create automatically a revolutionary socialist consciousness. The unions' outlook starts from that of the separate trade or occupation and at a certain point these divisions tend to obstruct a class wide outlook. Secondly, workers are always subjected to powerful influences 'from outside'; to the ceaseless propaganda from the schools, the media, churches, mosques, temples, all stressing that capitalism is the only possible system.

This barrage of propaganda, aimed at keeping the workers divided and dominated by ruling class ideas, can only be combated by the ideas of socialism and revolution and these come 'from outside' the sphere of pure and simple trade unionism, that is, from a political party whose goal is to transform fragmented and sectional struggles into a political struggle which identifies capitalism as the enemy. This party cannot remain outside of the struggles of the working class. It has to be radically different from the reformist parliamentary parties, which leave the struggle in the workplace to the trade unions or, rather, to their officials.

For a Leninist party, its members must be the most hard working activists, able to explain not just the needs of the current struggles but that capitalism is the root not only of low pay, unemployment and cuts, but also of racism, sexism and war. They must be found in the most dangerous places of the class struggle. They must earn the free recognition of their fellow workers as the most reliable leaders, the vanguard, of the class struggle.

Lenin's idea is that the party members must be cadres, a military analogy referring to the NCOs and field officers of an army. They must be professional revolutionaries, meaning people who devote not a few spare evenings to politics but make it the centre of their lives. The great majority of such people must be workers if they are to be leaders in the class struggle. A revolutionary party will enormously stimulate the growth of a mass working class movement with which it would be indissolubly fused. That was what the Bolshevik Party was like and why it was able to turn the 'spontaneous' revolution of February 1917 into the conscious seizure of power by the workers' councils in October. These key principles of revolutionary politics and programme and internationalism are as relevant today as when Lenin developed them and it is the burning task of revolutionary socialists to put them into practice in the huge battles we face today.

Unfortunately, during the great mass struggles of 2009-2015 many young fighters, having seen that the mass Labour, Social Democratic and Communist parties were generally an obstacle to struggle, drew the conclusion that political parties as such could not take the struggle forward. They counterposed to them spontaneous social movements, such as the occupation of Cairo's Tahrir Square, New York's Wall Street, Madrid's Puerta del Sol or Athens' Syntagma squares. The answer, they thought, was to limit themselves to a direct mass democracy. But life proved that the democracy of a single place or a short

moment, even if it can sometimes overthrow governments or dictators, cannot replace them with the power of ordinary working people, it is not sufficient. Such a transfer of actual power within society will not happen unless there emerges a political alternative to the old parties with the determination and capacity to carry this out.

A revolutionary party must break with the reformism of the old left. Its own members must democratically control it. Its role is not primarily to win elections and therefore it should not be controlled by its MPs and local councillors, lording it over the membership, making up their own policies and pocketing top salaries and expenses for doing so. Unlike the capitalist parties, the revolutionary party must not make big promises and then, in power, do what the bosses and the bankers dictate. Its main task is to win the support of millions through leading them into action. Elections should be used to publicise its programme for mass action, to put tribunes of the people in the councils and assemblies to denounce the capitalists' representatives to their faces but, above all, to 'speak out of the window' to the masses. Their task is not to pander to ideas, claimed to be popular but in fact dictated by the millionaire media. When it wins MPs and councillors these must not control the party but be under its control.

Such a revolutionary party today could have a huge impact within the movements of resistance, arguing for tactics to take the movement forward, providing a voice for all the exploited and oppressed, fighting racism, sexism and imperialist wars as well as exploitation and poverty. It is the role of a revolutionary party to throw itself into every movement, whether for higher wages or more democracy, for justice for the nationally, racially or gender-oppressed, combining the fight for a united front of struggle in each case, whilst patiently explaining its politics and programme and winning the best fighters to its ranks. In the trade unions, such a party would organise the rank and file to take the lead. While the trade union leaders are dragging their feet about whether to call effective action to challenge the cuts, it could prepare workers to coordinate a general strike, with or without the trade union leaders, will a revolutionary party worthy of the name be ready for a revolutionary situation in which capitalism can be overthrown.

For a new, Fifth, International!

The struggle for the construction of a revolutionary party must be connected from the beginning with the struggle for a new International. The idea that strong, nationally anchored organisations must be built before an International would be possible, must be rejected in principle. It practically ignores and denies the international character of the class struggle. In practice, it must lead to adaptation to the pressure of national milieus - be they nationalist, populist or social-chauvinist forces. The revolution of the 21st century and a renewed workers' movement must build from the beginning on the principle of internationalism, that is, tackle here and now the task of building a new, proletarian international organisation of struggle.

The current world situation, the great problems facing humanity, can only be solved on a global scale. The struggle against the destruction of the natural conditions of life of humanity, the internationalisation of production, the attacks on the freedom of movement of refugees and migrants, the threat of trade wars and hot wars between rival imperialist blocs, to name but a few problems, require a cross-border, coordinated common struggle and revolutionary changes on a global scale. A retreat to national "solutions" can only strengthen the reaction, indeed is itself an expression of the strengthening of reaction.

At the beginning of the 20th century, the anti-globalisation movement put the necessity of a new mass international on the agenda. It developed forums of exchange and at its peak set in motion, or linked, mass actions, including demonstrations by millions against the Iraq war. In the end it failed, however, because of its reformist and petty-bourgeois leadership, which did not want to fight in nationally anchored mass organisations, be they trade unions or political parties, for binding international decisions.

The Great Recession and the devastating effects of the crisis, the mass movements of the Arab Spring,

the struggles in Greece and the occupation of squares once again placed the need for an International on the agenda. But here, too, the left failed on a global and continental level. Thus, the European reformist left, but also the radical and anti-capitalist left, completely failed in the task of uniting the resistance against austerity throughout Europe. It proved incapable of even rudimentarily developing a European programme of action against crisis and capitalism. Despite their populist character, Chavism and the Bolivarian movement had temporarily proclaimed the common struggle in Latin America and beyond. But this turned out to be a fairy tale.

After the beginning of a new, global period of crisis, after the biggest recession since the Second World War, the reformist workers' movement withdrew to the national terrain. Its "internationalism" is essentially limited to Sunday speeches. This corresponds to the position of the workers' bureaucracy, whose "bargaining power" is tied to its national capitalist class, therefore lagging behind the internationalisation of capital itself.

Even the "radical", left reformist, centrist, anarchist or libertarian left today seeks its salvation in the concentration on the national terrain. Even most "international organisations" today find it impossible to base their politics on an international programme, a common strategy and tactics. Either they are nationally directed sects, around which other sections orbit like satellites, or they are increasingly just loose networks that refuse to take binding decisions. They are thus throwing overboard all the lessons not only of the failure of the anti-globalisation movement, but also of the degeneration of the Second and Third Internationals.

This means that the majority of the global left takes a politically passive, if not a regressive, stance towards the spontaneous tendencies towards the formation of international movements. In recent years, international campaigns and movements that wanted to go beyond national restrictions have developed repeatedly, and have done so: The women's movement, which for several years has been coordinating its actions against global sexist attacks; the fight against the effects of climate change and the destruction of the natural basis of life and of the natural livelihood of humanity; the refugee movements that turned against the border regimes of the EU and other blocs; approaches to cross-border coordination of workers' struggles; solidarity movements against imperialist interventions and reactionary coup attempts. All these mobilisations represent approaches to international defensive struggles, coordinated actions. However, they do not yet go beyond the "networking" of independent national campaigns, all the more they do not develop an international programme for coordinated action.

However, this is not the fault of the masses that have been set in motion. It is above all the failure of the organised left. Many of them have drawn the fundamentally wrong conclusion from the defeats that international struggle and the construction of an International cannot be on the agenda today, that larger organisations and movements must first be built and developed on a national scale. Only on this basis would cross-border coordination of struggles and organisation be possible and meaningful. This platonic relationship to the international class struggle represents a fundamental political problem of our period, it is itself an expression of a global shift to the right, a strengthening of nationalism and so the national-centred politics exacerbates the problem.

Revolutionary Marxists, internationalists and anti-capitalists must fight this reactionary tendency irreconcilably. They must actively address the spontaneous internationalist tendencies among the workers, the women's movement, the youth, the struggles against imperialism and environmental destruction. Only in this way will it be possible to win these activists and fighters for a revolutionary programme. Just as revolutionaries have to fight for the transformation of the trade unions on an international level, so they have to stand up for trans-national action conferences and democratically responsible coordination of the

struggle. The social forums, which developed at the end of the 20th and beginning of the 21st century, can serve as a model without repeating their weaknesses, the lack of binding decision-making and joint action.

In the emerging global movements of the oppressed, as well as in national upheavals, revolutionaries must always emphasise the need for a new International. We advocate a revolutionary programme from the beginning, without, however, making approval of it a precondition for common international structures of struggle and real steps towards building a new mass international. In order to be able to stand up effectively and purposefully for such a perspective, revolutionaries themselves must fight on the basis of a common programme of transitional demands, a programme of world socialist revolution. We call upon all comrades, all socialist and communist currents who share such a perspective, to unite on an international programme that we put up for discussion here in order to stand together for a revolutionary response to the coming attacks.

Free our unions from bureaucratic control

All over the world, our trade unions are under attack from the capitalists. In the fight to rouse our unions to resist the bosses' offensive, the greatest obstacle is the paralysing influence of the caste of bureaucrats that holds our organisations in thrall to the bosses, their governments and their laws. The bosses' offensive is unrelenting and vicious. In the weaker and less developed countries (the semi-colonies), dictatorial regimes have turned unions into instruments of the state, banning strikes and outlawing the free election of union leaders. Independent unions and workplace organisations have to struggle under illegality, facing arrests, torture and assassination. In recent decades, trade unions have been under attack in the global south. Very large parts of the working class, even in big industries and the state sectors, are not unionised at all, as a result of neo-liberal attacks and repressive legislation. The fragmentation of the trade unions reflects and reinforces this, as well as the confusion, sectoralism and betrayals of the trade union leaderships. Revolutionaries not only need to demand the organising of the unorganised and fight to overcome this policy in the existing unions, but also to take the initiative to rebuild the trade union movement.

In the advanced capitalist democracies, decades of class struggle secured legal rights for unions so, in place of outright illegality, the state incorporated unions by granting privileges to their leaders and by drawing them into co-production schemes of class collaboration. But the capitalists continued stripping away rights and putting unions under ever-greater legal restrictions, impeding effective union activity and mass recruitment. Western courts repeatedly demonstrate the class character of bourgeois law by intervening to overturn strike votes, confiscate union funds and back union busting companies.

Today, capital finds independent trade unions more and more intolerable. We have to defend our unions, fight for their independence from the capitalists and the state, take up the fight to recruit millions of new members from previously unorganised sectors, from the insecure and super exploited sections of the workforce, many of them young people, migrants or 'illegals'. This struggle will meet intransigent opposition from within, from the highly paid and undemocratic trade union bureaucracy, which sees its task as an eternal one; negotiating deals in an everlasting capitalist economy. In crisis times, these deals become 'give backs' to the bosses, trading conditions for jobs and vice versa.

The ideology of the bureaucratic trade union leaders is poison to the class consciousness of the proletariat. Instead of internationalism, in the imperialist centres they rely above all on a company-centered logic, defending the competitiveness of "their" company. In this way, the trade union bureaucrats, together with the social-chauvinist reformism of social democracy and the self-proclaimed socialists, bear responsibility for ensuring that racist ideologies and national narrow-mindedness can also implant themselves in parts of the working class in times of a shift to the right or that they are not effectively fought against.

The bureaucrats often act as policemen for the state and employers, victimising militants and helping expel them from the workplace. Revolutionaries organise within the unions to increase their influence, up to and including winning the leadership, whilst always remaining honest to the rank and file and as open about this as state repression and union bureaucracy allows. In the bureaucratic unions, we will stimulate the creation of rank and file movements, aiming to democratise the running of strikes and other forms of struggle and to replace the permanent and overpaid caste of top officials with elected and instantly recallable leaders, paid the same wages as their members.

But even the most democratic trade union movement cannot suffice. The syndicalist idea that unions should be independent, not just from the bosses but from working class political parties, too, can only weaken the resistance of workers and the fight for working class power. Instead, revolutionaries aim to orient the unions to fight not just for sectional interests but for those of the working class as a whole; across crafts and trades, across sectors and industries, for the casual and the permanent staff, for the present and future workers, not just in one country but internationally. We promote class, not just narrow trade union, consciousness. In this way, the unions can once more become real schools for socialism, and a massive pillar of support for a new revolutionary workers' party.

A new working class International and revolutionary parties in every country must commit themselves to renewing the existing unions wherever possible, but not flinch from a formal break and the formation of new unions where the reformist bureaucracy makes unity impossible. Unorganised precarious workers can be organised as can new high-tech industries, despite tyrannical employers or systems to discourage collective action by class collaboration in the workplace. We need organisations in the workplaces which do not accommodate either to the dictates or the blandishments of the bosses but defend the workers with militant methods of struggle such as mass strikes, occupations and, when necessary, a general strike. Unions must not be bureaucratically controlled from the top down but be democratic, where differences can be freely debated, where leaders can be controlled and, if necessary, recalled immediately.

We cannot wait until the unions are transformed; we need to fight now. We demand that the current leaders fight for the urgent needs of the masses and we warn the rank and file not to trust them. We fight for the formation of rank and file movements in the existing unions so that the officials' stranglehold can be broken and action delivered despite them. While we argue for political organisation within unions, we oppose politically separated unions because this only serves to disunite the workers, leaving many under the influence of reformist or even non-working class leaderships. We fight for the formation of industrial unions, which maximise the collective weight of the workers in bargaining with employers. Where several unions currently exist either within an industry or within companies or workplaces, we fight for their amalgamation on a class struggle basis and for joint committees under rank and file control for purposes of bargaining and taking action. We fight for unionisation of the vast numbers of our sisters and brothers not yet organised, to open the unions to young workers and the racially oppressed. If union bureaucrats prevent this then new unions need to be formed. Our watchword must be; action with the official leaders where possible, but without them, even against them, where necessary.

We need unions and mass organisations that can really unite the mass of the working class and the oppressed and are not dominated by male and better-off layers drawn solely from the dominant national or racial group within a given country. This means we promote full rights and full representation in their leadership structures to the lower strata of the working class and the poor, to women, youth, minorities and migrants. Therefore we fight for:

- The organisation of the unorganised workers, including women, migrants and casual labour forces.
- Unions to be under the control of their members.

- For the right to caucus independently for all socially oppressed groups: women, racial minorities, LGBT.
- Unity of all trade unions on a democratic and militant basis, totally independent of the bosses, their parties and their states.

An Action Programme that connects the resistance to the fight for social revolution

For too long, the programmes of the working class parties of the world have been divided between a minimum programme of piecemeal reforms, each of which can be clawed back by the capitalists if they retain state power, and, if it appears at all, a maximum programme which sets out the goal of socialism, but disconnects it from present-day demands and presents it as a far-off utopia, rather than linking it to the real struggle as it takes place around us.

The programme of a new International needs to break with this failed model. It must advance a series of integrated transitional demands, connecting the slogans and forms of struggle needed to repel the capitalist offensive with the methods we will need to overthrow bourgeois rule, establish working-class power and begin a socialist plan of production.

This transitional programme takes up all the vital social, economic and political demands of the day, including those immediate and democratic demands which can be granted before overthrowing capitalist ownership, such as a guaranteed living minimum wage, real equality of pay for men and women, heavy taxation of the rich and the big corporations. At the same time, it warns that capitalism in its historic crisis will grant such reforms only when faced with a threat to its very power and property. Even then, the capitalists will try to reverse their concessions as soon as the immediate danger is past or the pressure of class struggle is relaxed.

Today, the idea that we can reach socialism along a slow and peaceful road of social reform and trade union bargaining is even more utopian than in the past. A programme for socialism must challenge the fundamental 'rights' of the capitalists: the right to exploit, the right to put profit before people, the right to grow rich at the expense of the poor, the right to destroy the environment and deny our children a future.

To win today's battles means fighting with our eyes on the future. A Fifth International, therefore, will need to raise demands and propose forms of organisation that not only answer today's vital needs but organise the workers so that they can take and exercise power. Combining these elements is no artificial exercise; they are bound together by the real conditions of class struggle in this period of capitalist decline.

To open the road to the future society, our programme demands the imposition of workers' control of production and its extension into ever wider spheres, from the factories, offices, transportation systems and retail chains to the banks and finance houses. This means the abolition of business secrecy, a workers' veto over the bosses' right to fire workers, workers' inspection and control over production, an automatic rise in wages for every rise in prices to combat inflation, and the nationalisation without compensation (expropriation) of capitalists whose sabotage would otherwise cause disruption.

Moreover, the struggle to win these demands, to impose them on the bosses, will require new forms of organisation that go beyond the traditional limits of trade unionism or a party limited to winning elections. At every level of struggle, decision-making by democratic assemblies of all those involved must become the norm. Subordinate to those assemblies, elected and recallable delegates should be charged with the implementation of decisions and leadership of the struggle. From strike committees elected by the whole workforce to price-watch committees that include all the workers, male and female, in the communities, from workers' inspection teams that investigate companies' accounts to picket-defence squads that protect strikers, such organisations are necessary not only to win today's battles but to form the basis of

tomorrow's fighting organisations in the battle for state power and then the future organs of the workers' state.

Workers engaged in struggle against austerity today can raise these demands individually and severally against specific attacks, but the programme's socialist goal will only be achieved when they are taken up and fought for as an interrelated system of demands for the transformation of society. The full transitional programme is a strategy for working class power. For this reason, our demands are not passive appeals to governments or employers, but rallying slogans for the working class to overthrow and expropriate the capitalists.

We won't pay for their crises ? against unemployment, insecurity and inequality

Before the Great Recession broke in 2008, unemployment in the USA, the richest large country in the world, stood at around 5 percent. By October 2010, it had doubled to a peak of 10 percent.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, 8.8 million jobs were lost by that date. Although in 2018, as a result of the recovery, unemployment had fallen to 4.1 percent in February 2018 and 3.9 percent in August, 12.6 percent of Americans were still living below the poverty line according to federal statistics; some 43.1 million Americans. So where is the wealth? Well, in the pockets of 540 US billionaires, with a combined net worth of \$2.399 trillion, over a quarter of the world's total, both in terms of property value and number of owners. The top 1 percent of households received approximately 20 percent of the pre-tax income in 2013. The bottom 50 percent earned 13 percent in 2014.

Worldwide, three billion people, almost half the world's population, live on less than two and a half dollars a day. At least 80 percent of humanity lives on less than \$10 a day. Well over a billion are living in absolute poverty. Some 2.6 billion lack basic sanitation and 1.6 billion live without electricity. More than 80 percent of the world's population lives in countries where inequality is remorselessly widening. It is plain that the capitalists use millions upon millions of unemployed or precarious and part time workers as their reserve army to be used only when profits are at their peak and cast aside to fend for themselves in times of recession or stagnation. Bosses and international corporations move their factories, banks and offices to wherever they can extract the maximum profit, driven by competition with their rivals. Capitalist production constantly sucks workers in before spewing them out again, expecting the cost of their maintenance to be borne by the working class, in the family home or increasingly by Food Banks and in refugee camps. We demand they pick up the tab.

In addition, Artificial General Intelligence (AGI) and Robotics threaten a massive replacement of living labour; with autonomous weapons already replacing soldiers and self-driving vehicles replacing drivers. Under capitalism, like all previous waves of mechanisation, employers dream only of reducing labour costs, not the hours of labour. AI threatens the jobs of white collar, office workers on an enormous scale. Yet the working class learned long ago that opposing the application of new technologies (Luddism or machine breaking) is a hopeless response. Workers' inspection and control, the reduction of hours of labour, the elimination of dangerous forms of labour, need to become social objectives. AI and robots, under a planned and socially owned economy, could enormously liberate humanity and enhance human labour and magnify the spheres that human intelligence can address.

Faced with the old and new bosses' attacks on labour, we have to fight for a workers' united front; the common action of all the working class forces both within every country and across the borders and the oceans:

- Against all workplace closures and sackings, against all wage cuts.
- Against mass redundancies - maintain workers on full pay by the employer or the state!
- For strikes and occupations in all workplaces faced with closure.

- Nationalisation without compensation of every enterprise declaring redundancies, every company threatening to move abroad, every enterprise refusing to pay minimum wages, every enterprise that fails to respect protective legislation or pay taxes. The entire existing workforce should continue production under workers' control and management.
- Nationalise the banks without compensation and merge them into a single national bank under workers' control.
- For a programme of public works to improve social services, healthcare, housing, public transport and environmental conditions under the control of the workers and their communities.
- Cut the hours, not the jobs. Share the available work amongst all who are able to work. For a sliding scale of working hours to reduce the working day and absorb the unemployed, with no reduction of pay or conditions.
- For a national minimum wage with rates determined by committees of the workers to ensure a decent living for all.
- Against job insecurity: no to all forms of insecure, informal, temporary contract working (précarité). All contracts should be rendered permanent, with full legal protection. Wages and conditions to be governed by collective agreements controlled by trade unions and workplace representatives.
- Against inflation. For a sliding scale of wages to rise 1 per cent for every 1 per cent rise in the cost of living. Delegates elected in the workplaces, shantytowns, workers' organisations, women, small traders and consumers to draw up a workers' cost of living index. Pensions must be indexed against inflation and be guaranteed by the state, not left to the mercy of the stock markets.
- Open the books. Around the world, governments and private employers alike are sacking workers, claiming bankruptcy, the need for efficiency savings, the need to improve productivity. Private and public sector workers should reply: 'Open the books! Open all accounts, databases, financial, banking, tax and management information to workers' inspection!'
- Fight the intensification of work. Down with the bosses' constant speed-up and 'efficiency drives' which are actually nothing more than attempts to intensify exploitation and boost profits, endangering our health, safety and lives.
- No to outsourcing and offshoring; instead of conflict between workers of different nationalities for the same jobs, level up all pay rates and build international combines of workers in the same enterprises and branches of production. Collective agreements and legal rights to apply to employees of subcontracting companies as if they were employees of the main contractor.
- For workforce control over management decisions; not co-production, 'social partnership' or other forms of class collaboration in which our unions administer the bosses' cuts, but a fight for workers' control of production and the introduction of new technologies to benefit workers and their families, not displace or impoverish them.

Tax the rich, not the poor

While billions live in poverty, a tiny minority live in unimaginable luxury. In 2016, the number of billionaires reached 1,810. The investment decisions of these financiers and industrialists can bring entire countries to their knees. Just below the billionaires, hundreds of thousands of multi-millionaires live in shameless luxury at our expense while 852 million people go hungry and 16,00 children die from hunger-related causes every day.

The class of parasites loudly denounces any attempt to tax them and redistribute their wealth. They move their money into 'tax havens' and manipulate their citizenship and legal residence status, to avoid paying tax at all. At the same time, they never stop campaigning for the working class to pay the bulk of the tax burden, through indirect taxes on basic commodities like fuel and food, through sharp cuts in taxes on

business and wealth.

Not the workers and small traders but the rich capitalists, industrialists, bankers and financiers should pay.

- Seize the private wealth of the billionaires and the super-rich.
- For swingeing taxes on the rich and big corporations to fund services, schools, hospitals, and a massive programme to abolish poverty
- Fight the tax dodgers ? abolish tax havens, close down the tax avoidance industry.
- Abolish all indirect taxes
- Nationalisation of the stock markets
- Take over the capitalists? major industries; for nationalisation of the corporations without compensation under workers? control.

Stop privatisation; for a massive expansion of public services

Against a background of falling real wages in recession and recovery alike, a remorseless series of austerity programmes, cynically named ?reforms? aim to reduce the tax burden on the rich and make workers and the poor continue to pay for declining health, education and welfare services. Public services, outside of the sphere of private profit, that workers won as a result of more than half a century of struggle, are being demolished or handed over to the privateers to make fortunes from them. The millionaires, who already profit from our work, want to profit from our childhood, old age, sickness. They have the nerve to demand that welfare and pensions be reduced ?to encourage self-reliance and discourage the culture of dependence?!

- Not a single cut in public services, not a single privatisation.
- Defend the best existing social and health care systems and extend them to the billions not covered at all. Nationalise private schools and healthcare; put education and hospitals under the control of workers and users. Schools, hospitals, doctors, medicines and universities should be free to all at the point of delivery.
- No lowering of pensions: increase them and extend them to all those not yet covered. Nationalise private pension schemes and combine them into a single guaranteed state pension.
- No more privatisations! Nationalisation of basic infrastructure such as water, energy and transport! Termination of all public service contracts with private parties (PPP), all special economic zones and state benefits for the business world: state research and development financed from the confiscation of private profits!
- Workers and the poor should combine to draw up an inventory of basic improvements in services and infrastructure, for a massive programme of public improvements.
- For nationalisation without compensation.

For years, the very idea of nationalisation seemed lost in the mists of history. Far from nationalising private property, capitalist governments around the world were privatising the public sector. Crucial services and resources, like water, electricity, health and education, were handed over to private capitalists to run for profit, not need.

Important as public services are, especially when they are free to all at the point of delivery, paid for out of progressive taxation or insurance, they are still not socialism. Buying their inputs from capitalists, paying compensation to former owners, competing with private enterprise, using capitalist management methods and always vulnerable to cuts by capitalist governments, they can never fully escape the straitjacket of the profit system. Workers must learn to distinguish capitalist nationalisation from working class socialisation and expropriation, used to dispossess the bosses for good. Only thus can highest quality services, from the cradle to the grave, be planned and delivered to abolish need and establish equality.

- Oppose bailing out the capitalists at workers' expense.
- Resist the socialisation of losses and the rescue of bankrupt capitalists by the taxpayers.
- Nationalisation of assets, not losses.
- The new state owner should resolutely refuse to sack large parts of the workforce just to hand the enterprise back to the capitalists at a cheap price.
- Reject compensation for expropriated capitalists.

In place of a mix of state and private ownership in a chaotic dog-eat-dog market system, we want a democratic plan of production, in which all resources of the world, including human labour, are allocated rationally, according to the will of the people. Then we will really be able to produce for human need, not greed. Above all, revolutionary socialists link the fight for expropriation of this or that industry with the need to expropriate the capitalist class as a whole. Because, as Leon Trotsky put it, state ownership will produce favourable results ?only if the state power itself passes completely from the hands of the exploiters into the hands of the toilers?.

Abolish the IMF and World Bank

The system of international financial institutions (International Monetary Fund, World Trade Organisation and World Bank) was exposed and discredited by a series of bold mass mobilisations around the world in last decades. Their hypocritical claims to be cancelling third world debt and setting fresh development goals have proved totally hollow as rich countries failed to make good their promises and even cut their aid budgets. Their claims to have created a ?new paradigm? for a crisis free world were exploded by the crash of 2008. Those NGOs who thought the international financial institutions would somehow fade away, or self-reform, have been cruelly disappointed. As the pretence of counter-crisis measures gave way to austerity programmes, the IMF and its auxiliaries returned to the attack. Now, more than ever, it is necessary to keep up the resistance, demanding:

- Unconditional and total cancellation of the debt of all semi-colonial countries.
- The imperialist states must compensate the semi-colonial world for the plunder of its natural and human resources.
- No to protectionism by the developed countries against the products of the global south. Abolish NAFTA, the Common Agricultural Policy and other protectionist weapons of imperialist states. However, we support the right of Third World countries to defend their markets from cheap imports from imperialist countries.
- Abolish the IMF, World Bank and WTO.
- Nationalise the big banks and corporations under workers' control.

Stop environmental disaster, fight environmental imperialism

The degradation and destruction of the environment and of natural resources on earth continues unrestrained and is becoming more and more threatening. The increase in extreme weather events, unprecedented destructive and frequent storms, floods and forest fires, the increase in droughts, the melting of ice caps, which will lead to a threatening rise in sea levels and threaten many countries with total flooding, all these are indications of the progressive climate change on Earth.

Climate change, caused by the massive emission of greenhouse gases, represents the greatest threat to the natural basis of life on our planet. But it is truly not the only one. Acidification and increasing littering and pollution of the oceans, overloading and disruption of nutrient cycles, overuse of drinking water resources and pollution of water reservoirs, decimation of biodiversity and accumulation of toxic chemicals in the environment - all these are very threatening developments for the existence of mankind as a whole.

While interventions in and use of the environment for human needs are necessary and will continue under

socialism, it is capitalism that destroys the environment for the sake of profits out of its limitless urge for capital accumulation. The world's major economic powers stubbornly refuse to take effective action to change course. The incompatibility of capitalist "development" with the preservation and restoration of a desirable state of the environment on which all life depends for human societies is particularly evident here. The insatiable urge of capital for maximum profit is forcing not only the exploitation of human beings but also of the natural resources necessary for future human progress.

These phenomena, together with the threat of a global war, testify to the fact that capitalism is a dying system. The decisive question is whether it will be overcome in time by a revolutionary upheaval, or whether humanity will walk the path to barbarism and social regression. Trump's 2017 announcement that the U.S. will reject the Paris Accord to limit greenhouse gas emissions and other "climate killers" confirms this. But the US withdrawal conceals the fact that neither the "developed" main emitters of the world like the US, Japan and the European Union nor the "developing" giants like China and India are really willing to endanger the profits of their corporations in order to make the necessary emission reductions. Worse still, most governments and large companies continue to ignore all plans and proposals by scientists and environmental activists to slow down or reverse the impending disaster.

Capitalism not only destroys the natural foundations of life, but has developed into a global system of environmental imperialism. The exploitation in the semicolonial countries is systematically intensified without regard to the ecological and social consequences in order to increase the profits in the imperialist centers. The socio-ecological effects are systematically transferred to the semi-colonies. Environmental imperialism is characterised by uninhibited world markets in which trade is organised in favor of the rich imperialist countries. The basis for this is the ever-increasing concentration of capital and the oppression of semicolonial countries through control over critical technologies and capital exports.

All protests of the affected people in the semi-colonies against the projects of the big agro-, seed-, mining-, energy companies etc. immediately lead to the appearance of the international donors and institutions, which the governments on the spot then mostly find as willing enforcement organs. In the imperialist centres, the actual policy of overexploitation is then combined with cynical campaigns about allegedly "sustainable" production that is just for the local people. Every programme in the struggle against imperialism must, based on the people affected and the global interests of the working class, also centrally develop demands for the struggle against the global ecological predatory exploitation at the expense of the semi-colonies in particular.

Climate change and environmental degradation can only be mitigated and reversed if control over production is removed from the hands of the large capital formations that have brought humanity to the brink of disaster. In recent decades, strong resistance against environmental destruction and the threats of climate change has developed, from local initiatives against certain big projects, big movements against the wrong political answers e.g. to climate policy, resistance in semi-colonies, but also environmental movements in the imperialist centres. In Europe it was the youth, who led the way, with global student and school strikes and direct action. The labour movement must link up with them, supporting and extending their actions and campaigns without trying to subdue their spirit. In certain areas, the previously uninhibited actions of large corporations and their helpers with regard to environmental issues could be slowed down. It is necessary to extend these successes to a social control over the socio-ecological effects of economic decisions. Democratic, legitimated control bodies consisting of employees, consumers, those affected by large-scale projects, young people fighting for their future, etc. must be formed and empowered to decide on projects, risk levels, threshold values, ecological measures, etc. Capital must be systematically confronted with social control with regard to the socio-ecological effects of its actions. Ultimately, only the socialist revolution will overcome the system of environmental imperialism and enable the planned optimal

use of resources under the control of the majority worldwide.

The following demands are not simply directed at state and supra-national environmental policy, but are demands that can only be implemented in an international movement that implements the previously described form of democratically legitimised social control over the measures demanded here.

- For an emergency plan to restructure the energy and transport system ? for a perspective of finishing the global consumption of fossil fuels!
- The big corporations and imperialist states like the USA and the EU must pay for the environmental destruction they have caused in the rest of the world. For reparations to help the semi-colonial countries bring about the necessary ecological change.
- For a plan to phase out fossil and nuclear energy production... For massive investments in renewable forms of energy such as wind, water and solar energy as well as in suitable storage technologies!
- For a large global programme for the reforestation of destroyed forests while at the same time protecting the existing close-to-natural ecosystems!
- For the protection and right to self-determination of indigenous peoples!
- For supporting the struggles of indigenous peoples and populations threatened by environmental destruction!
- For a global programme to protect water resources. For massive investments in drinking water supply and wastewater treatment!
- For a global programme to conserve resources, avoid waste and manage waste.
- For the conversion of agriculture to sustainable cultivation methods. For the expropriation of large estates and the distribution of land to the people who (want to) cultivate it. For animal-friendly husbandry conditions on all farms! For the intensification of research into sustainable farming systems under the control of farmers and workers! Where necessary, obligatory use of environmentally sustainable methods of cultivation, such as organic farming, while taking into account the need to ensure food security.
- Free public transport for all and massive investments in public transport systems! Conversion of the transport system into a system based on rail transport, both for passengers and for freight. At the same time massive reduction of car, truck and air traffic!
- Abolition of trade secrets! Abolition of patent protection! To bring this knowledge together to create sustainable alternatives to existing technologies. Real support for less developed countries through technology transfer!
- Nationalisation of all environmental resources, such as soil, forests and waters.
- Nationalisation of all energy corporations and companies with monopolies on basic goods such as water management, agricultural industry as well as all airlines, shipping and railway companies under workers' control!
- For a restrictive policy concerning chemical products based on the precautionary principle! For a ban on chemicals that are proven or likely to be hazardous to health and/or the environment, such as glyphosate! Threshold values or danger levels with regard to the use of chemicals must be determined by organs of democratically legitimised social control!

Transform our cities

Over half of humanity now lives in cities, but the majority of them are living in shantytowns and slums without proper roads, lighting, clean drinking water or sewage and waste disposal. Their flimsy structures are swept away by earthquakes, hurricanes, floods and tsunamis as we have seen in Indonesia, Bangladesh, New Orleans and Haiti. Hundreds of thousands die not simply from these ?natural? events but from the poverty-stricken human infrastructure. The flood of people into the cities is driven by the

failure of capitalism, landlordism and agribusiness to provide a living in the countryside.

Few shantytown dwellers have permanent or secure jobs. Their children have no nurseries, clinics or schools. Criminal gangs, drug dealers and police alike subject the people to harassment and extortion. Women and the young are driven to prostitution, sexual slavery or semi-slavery in dangerous and health-destroying sweatshops. Real slavery and the trade in human beings has re-appeared. This is yet another phenomenon that bids capitalism be gone! This increasing accumulation of human misery must end.

This cannot be done with the pittance of aid from the rich countries, by Millennium Goals, from NGOs or charities run by churches, mosques and temples. Nor can self-help or micro credit schemes solve problems so huge. The population of the barrios, favellas and townships can, as they have shown, take their destiny into their own hands. By mass mobilisation in Venezuela, Bolivia and South Africa they have forced through reforms. But, by a social revolution, in alliance with the working class, they can smash the capitalists? repressive state and exploitative economy and erect in its place a society based on committees and councils of the workers and the poor, as an instrument for the complete transformation of our cities.

- For housing, light and power, sewage and waste disposal, health clinics and schools, roads and public transport for the inhabitants of the vast and rapidly growing shantytowns which surround all the major cities of the ?developing world? from Manila and Karachi to Mumbai, Mexico City and Sao Paulo.
- For a programme of public works under the control of the workers and the poor. For free local public transport and commuter traffic for the workers!
- Massive investment in social and health services, housing, public transport and a clean, sustainable environment.
- Support the struggles of small farmers, peasants, rural workers and the landless.

The land question and rural life

45 per cent of humanity still lives in villages, on plantations and in the rural communities of indigenous peoples. This will fall to one third by 2050 according to the UN. The flight from the countryside is motivated not simply by the attractions of city life. For most of the migrants these are more than offset by slum life, crime and super-exploitation. It is rather the failure of capitalism to provide a minimally decent life in the countryside. The failure of land reforms has accentuated rural unemployment and landlessness. The gap between their incomes, their access to healthcare, education and communications and that available in the cities is often enormous. In addition, they face the devastation of the rural environment by industries like logging, mining, and by monocultures and activities that lead to flooding and exhaustion of the soil. At the same time, capitalism relentlessly concentrates landownership in the hands of a wealthy elite or international agribusiness. From China and Bengal to South America and Africa, peasants and indigenous communities are driven off the best land and forced to migrate to the slums of the cities.

Life on the plantations that produce sugar, coffee, tea, cotton, sisal, rubber, tobacco and bananas reproduces many of the features of slavery and indentured labour. Plantation workers are often thrown into debt bondage. A revolution in the countryside, led by the proletariat, the landless or small landholding peasants, still remains a powerful ally of the urban workers and the latter an indispensable support for their sisters and brothers in the countryside.

- Expropriate the land of the oligarchs, former colonial plantations and the multinational agribusinesses and place them under workers?, poor peasants? and agricultural labourers? control.
- Land to those who work it.
- Abolition of rent and cancellation of all debts of the poor peasants.
- Free credit to purchase machinery and fertiliser; incentives to encourage subsistence farmers to

voluntarily join production and marketing co-operatives.

- Free access to seeds, abolish all patents in agriculture.
- Modernise rural life. Full electrification, internet access and modern civic facilities. Stop the draining of youth from the countryside by encouraging creative and cultural activities.
- Against poverty in the countryside; equalise income, access to health, education and culture with the cities. This alone can slow and reverse the pathological urbanisation of capitalism and open the road to the goal set out in The Communist Manifesto: 'Uniting work on the land and in industry, making for the gradual elimination of the contradiction between city and country.'

For women's liberation

The capitalist democracies promised women equality, but the promise remains partial and unfulfilled. In the twentieth century, women, thanks to the first wave feminist and socialist agitation before the First World War and the need to draw women into production and public life posed by the war effort of the major powers, meant most women were given the vote alongside universal suffrage for the hitherto huge unenfranchised sections of working class men. But gaining the vote did not mean real political power either for women or the working class. The Second World War drew even more women into production as did the planned economy of the USSR. Women joined trade unions in ever-greater numbers.

The continued burden of childcare and domestic labour held back women from equally well-paid jobs or continuous careers. The militant workers' movement and second wave feminism in the imperialist countries and national liberation movements in the so-called third world won a series of important victories for women with birth control and the right to terminate pregnancies in some countries enabling women to exert choice about the number and timing of childbirths.

This period also saw greater consciousness of patriarchal ideology, the small number of women in leading roles in education, politics, trade unions and business. It also challenged domestic violence within the family, rape and sexual harassment. But for all this, in Europe and North America, despite equal pay laws, women's wages are on average only 70 per cent of men's and often much less. Women still bear the double burden of childcare, care of the elderly and managing the individual household, alongside their jobs. Rape, sexual harassment and domestic violence are rife. Reproductive rights are restricted and under constant attack.

Even this partial liberation of women is extremely uneven on a global scale. In the global south, the international division of labour, ancient patriarchal relations in the countryside and religious prejudices, revived by fundamentalists of all faiths, magnify these inequalities. Women are denied the right to control their own bodies, to decide if they wish to have children and, if so, when and how many. Domestic violence, family rape, even murder (so-called 'honour' killings) often go largely unpunished.

Yet, over the last decades, millions of women have been drawn into mass production, especially in manufacturing in the cities of South and East Asia and Latin America. During crises, in the textile, electronic and service industries, where women make up some 80 per cent of the workforce, they have often been the first to be sacked, with employers leaving wages unpaid, breaking legal obligations to give notice and with governments and courts turning a blind eye. Most cruelly exploited are the huge numbers of migrant women workers whose families back home will starve without their remittances.

Today, male dominated governments around the world show a prurient interest in controlling women's right to determine their own clothing. In Europe, racists demand restrictions on the wearing of the hijab or niqab and impose bans on women wearing Islamic face coverings. On the other hand in states, like Saudi Arabia and Iran, religious police enforce compulsory Islamic dress codes. Radical salafist groups and jihadis have tried to re-impose old and oppressive customs on women. We stand:

- Against all forms of legal discrimination against women. Equal rights for women, to vote, to work, to education, to participate in all public and social activity
- Help women to escape concentration in the informal and family business sector. Public works programmes to provide full-time job opportunities with decent wages for women.
- Equal pay for equal work.
- All women should have access to free contraception and abortion on demand, regardless of age.
- Fight sexual violence in all forms. Expansion of publicly owned, self organised shelters from domestic violence and rape. Self-defence against sexist violence, backed by the workers? and women?s movement.
- No to laws which either oblige woman to wear, or not to wear, religious clothing. Women should have the legal right to dress as they please.
- For a ban on child marriage and forced marriage.
- End women?s dual burden through the socialisation of domestic labour. For free 24-hour childcare and a massive expansion of cheap, quality public canteens, communal kitchens, restaurants and laundries.

We can never achieve a society in which all human beings are equal if we do not show our determination to overcome sexual inequality in our own movements of resistance. We must back the right of women within the workers? movement to meet independently to identify and challenge discrimination, the right of women to proportionate representation in leadership structures, and the right to establish formal women?s sections of parties and unions.

- For an international working class women?s movement, to mobilise women in the fight for their rights, to strengthen the struggles of the workers everywhere, to link the fight against capital to the fight for the emancipation of women and a new social order based on real freedom and equality. The task of communist women is to build such a movement and fight to lead it along the path of social revolution.

Against sexual repression: For Lesbian, Gay and Trans people?s liberation

The historic inequality of the sexes, going back millennia to the emergence of class society and the state as an instrument of the exploiters over the exploited, led to repressive rules and customs regarding sexuality and masculine and feminine gender roles. Heterosexual relations outside marriage or family or caste arrangement and homosexuality were severely sanctioned, including with capital punishment. People who transgressed binary sex or gender roles were stigmatised, bullied, driven to suicide or murdered. In many countries this is still the case today.

Lesbians, gay men and trans people have legal equality only in a minority of countries. In many, they are threatened with punishment by the state, with physical harassment and even death. In Africa, a wave of violence and repression has followed lesbian and gay demands for civil rights. Most religions sanction this hate-filled repression. The workers? movement and the socialist youth must come to the defence of lesbian, gay and trans people everywhere.

- Full rights for lesbian, gay and trans people including full legal rights to civil partnership and marriage.
- Stop all harassment by the state, the churches, temples and mosques: respect for any kind of sexual orientation. All consensual sexual activity should be a matter of personal choice.
- Outlaw all discrimination and hate crime against lesbians, gays and trans people. For the legal right of trans people to live, dress, socialise, as the gender/sex they identify themselves as belonging to. No discrimination in housing, in access to life insurance, in medical treatment, in

access to work or to services.

- For the right of lesbian gay and trans people to bring up children.
- No bans on educating people in their sexual orientation! No intrusion into the sexual life of consenting individuals. For free expression of all forms of sexuality and relations!
- For the right of LGBT+ to form caucuses to challenge oppression in the trade unions and workers' parties.

Liberation for the youth

Capitalist crises hit youth hard because they are both the most insecure section of the workforce and the easiest to dismiss. In the years following the 2008 Great Recession, youth unemployment was double that of adults. There were fewer jobs for school leavers and cuts in state budgets for education that severely reduced the alternative of full time study in higher education. Impoverishing families increases the brutal treatment of children in the slums of the third world. It is certain that the next crisis will produce similar results.

At the same time, far from championing the youth, in many countries the trade union bureaucracy and the reformist apparatus of the workers' parties restrict and repress the spirit and the rights of the youth. No wonder: youth are a powerful revolutionary force in all countries, filled with fighting spirit, free of many of the prejudices and conservative habits inculcated by bourgeois and reformist parties and unions. They are a vital element of the revolutionary vanguard. A Fifth International must allow them to learn from their own experience and lead their own struggles by encouraging the creation of a Revolutionary Youth International. We fight for:

- Jobs for all young people on wages and conditions equal to those of older workers.
- Scrap cheap labour training schemes, replace them with apprenticeships on full pay with guaranteed employment afterwards.
- End all child labour.
- Free education for all from infancy to the age of 16 and higher education and training to all who want it, at 16, on a guaranteed living grant. Cancel all student debt.
- For the right to vote at the age of 16 or working age if sooner.
- No outlawing of clothes, music styles or culture of the youth. Freedom of expression.
- Down with the phoney war on drugs. Legalise all drugs under a state monopoly to guarantee purity and remove the drug gangs, with education and health services to mitigate and eliminate addiction and unhealthy abuse.
- For youth centres and decent housing, funded by the state but under the democratic control of the youth who use them.
- Stop cuts in education. For massive investment in the public education system. Employ more teachers and pay them higher wages. Construction of more state schools. Nationalisation of private schools.
- Against all restrictions to free access and fees for schools and universities.
- No to all religious or private control of schooling and for secular, state-funded education.
- As they develop their sex lives, young people face intolerance, repression and persecution. Sex education must be available in state schools, without religious or parental interference, so the youth can live their sexuality as it develops, according to their sexual orientation and their own choices.
- For strict laws against rape and sexual harassment, in the family, in the home, at schools and orphanages, at work. Protect children from abuse wherever it comes from, priests, teachers, parents.
- No control of the education system by the bourgeois state! Students, teachers and representatives of the working class movement themselves should fix curricula and manage

schools democratically.

Defend democratic rights

At home and abroad, the western imperialists pose as the defenders and advocates of democracy. They are lying. After 9/11, and the jihadi terrorist attacks in Europe in the last decade, North American and European governments imposed anti-terrorism laws which created a surveillance society and restricted or abolished rights accumulated over centuries of popular struggles.

In the global south, the democratic rights that allow the working class, the peasants, the urban and rural poor to organise and mobilise a fight back are themselves undermined by the courts, the police, the hit squads of the bosses. In the Philippines, Rodrigo Duterte's War on Drugs, in two years has seen police engage in a spree of extra-judicial killings, estimated as between 12,000 and 20,000. In Mexico and other central and south American states, the war on drugs has also led to army and police murders which involve leftists and trade union and peasant leaders as their prime targets. A huge assault on democratic rights is pending in Brazil under Jair Bolsonaro.

In Palestine, and especially in blockaded and repeatedly bombed Gaza, the Palestinians are a constant target of the Zionist settler state. Within Israel and the West Bank, it practices a regime not dissimilar to that of Apartheid South Africa. The ceaseless and heroic struggle of the people of Palestine deserves the fullest support including the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions, BDS, movement. Our goal must be the right to return of all Palestinian refugees, the dismantling of the Zionist State and the creation of a single state for two Hebrew and Arabic speaking nations in Israel-Palestine. Such a state can only solve the antagonism between the two peoples created by Zionism by becoming a socialist state, where farms, factories, etc. are owned in common and democratically planned to assure social equality.

The poison of racism and pogroms against minority and immigrant communities is used to divide and undermine resistance. All over the world, it is the masses' own organisations that must take up the fight to protect and extend democratic rights. Our democratic organisations of struggle are the bedrock of any real 'rule of the people'. Through regular election, the recallability of delegates and representatives, opposition to bureaucracy and its privileges, the working class movement can be the springboard to a new society.

- Defend the right to strike, freedom of speech, of assembly, of political and trade union organisation, the freedom to publish and broadcast. Abolish all anti-union laws.
- Demand the removal of all undemocratic elements in capitalist constitutions; monarchies, second chambers, executive presidents, unelected judiciaries and emergency powers.
- For the unrestricted right to a jury trial and the election of judges by the people.
- Fight against the increasing surveillance of our society, including of the internet, and the increasing power of the police and security services. Down with the repressive apparatus, replace it with militias drawn from, and controlled by, the workers and popular masses, alongside breaking the soldiers from their high command and winning sections of them for the revolution.

Wherever fundamental questions concerning the political order are posed, we call for a constituent assembly to redraft democratic rights and indeed to decide on the social basis of the state. The workers' should fight to ensure that deputies to the assembly are elected in the most democratic manner, are kept under the control of their electors and are recallable by them. The assembly must be forced to address all fundamental questions of democratic rights and social justice; agrarian revolution, nationalisation under workers' control of large scale industry and the banks, the self-determination of national minorities, abolition of the political and economic privileges of the rich.

Liberate digitalisation from control by state and corporations!

Since the 1960s, advances in computer technology and networking, and their application to many areas of production and everyday life, have been key factors in the progress of productive forces. With the Internet, mobile digitisation and artificial intelligence, new stages of development have been reached at an ever-increasing pace in recent years. Cloud computing and other elements in the sharing of resources, ever closer connections between product requirements and product provision, the secure processing of transactions and complex logistics chains via blockchain, etc. have created great potentials for productivity increases in recent years. In fact, however, large monopolies (Amazon, Microsoft, Alphabet, Facebook,...) dominate in all these areas, exploiting these productivity gains for their monopoly profits. An essential factor in this is their enormous control over users' data and information, from the sale of which they can make large profits. Many companies are now trying to gather data about their employees in all possible aspects in order to better control them and compete for performance. Similarly, states (not only China and the US) use artificial intelligence and their access to the networks to get more and more comprehensive information about their citizens, to evaluate them and, if necessary, to identify, locate and monitor them.

Modern computer technologies are used by the secret services of the world to realise an all-encompassing surveillance. The revelations about the NSA scandal in 2013 bear witness to this. Since then, the expansion of surveillance has accelerated.

Revolutionaries must be aware that face recognition in public space, Trojan programmes and the mass storage of data are part of the class struggle of the capitalists and are massively used against them and the workers' movement and not for the "security" of the population.

Attempts to contain these dangers, for example through data protection regulations (such as the European General Data Protection Regulation) or regulations to contain hate postings, are little more than fig leaf actions. Hardly any user can really use the alleged possibilities to control his/her data. The mass of abuse possibilities by the state, corporations and right-wing organisations is growing at a pace which all these measures are only hopelessly lagging behind.

- Expropriation of large IT monopolies under the control of employees and democratically legitimised user committees!
- For a plan for the socially meaningful use of the productive progress of IT technology
- Fight the surveillance from private enterprises and capital like Google, Facebook and employers who use IT to keep citizens and workers in check. A first demand should be for them to go public with algorithms and systems they use to gather information.
- For the social control (by democratically legitimised user committees) of the data collected by the state and companies and of the procedures for their use and networking.
- No to monitoring tools that spy on the network behaviour of users and employees! No to upload filters and other methods that are intended to prevent the free disposal of content shared on the net and to force the form of goods on the net content! Instead, we want to expand the share-economy and state financing of its basis (e.g. state financing of open source under producer control instead of dependence on the "donations" of the IT companies)!

From picket line defence to workers? militia

Every determined striker knows the need for picket lines to deter strikebreakers. No wonder the capitalists everywhere push for draconian anti-union laws to try to make our pickets as weak and ineffective as possible. At the same time, the bosses are allowed to hire security guards and private thugs to intimidate the workers. From attacks on workers? marches by mechanised police as in Greece to arrest and imprisonment of trade unionists in Iran, harassment of militant workers goes on. When the police and the employers? thugs resort to open repression, even the most militant mass picketing can prove insufficient as it did in the historic British Miners? Strike of 1984-5. The most notorious case this century was the

Marikana massacre, where South African police killed 42 striking miners on the instruction of today's President and former miners' leader, Cyril Ramaphosa. Every serious struggle shows the need for disciplined protection, using weapons to match those used against us.

We should begin with the organised defence of demonstrations, of strike pickets, of communities facing racist and fascist harassment as well as the self defence of the sexually oppressed. Always asserting the democratic right to self-defence, militants should launch a public campaign for a workers' and popular defence guard, based on the mass movement.

In countries where there is a right to bear arms, the workers' defence guard should take full advantage of it. Where the capitalists and their state have a monopoly of force, all means are justified to break that monopoly. Revolutionaries must fight within the mass organisations of the working class and peasants for the creation of defence squads, disciplined, trained in combat, equipped with the appropriate weapons for success. In key moments in the class struggle, mass strike waves, a general strike, the creation of a mass workers' militia is essential, or the movement will be drowned in blood like in Chile in 1973 or in Tiananmen Square in 1989. By rising to the challenge, the means of popular defence can become the instrument of revolution.

For a workers' united front against fascism

Capitalist crisis ruins the middle classes and drives them to a frenzied search for scapegoats, while the long-term unemployed sink ever deeper into despair, making them vulnerable to racists, right wing nationalists, religious demagogues and outright fascists.

In the imperialist countries, this often takes the form of classical fascism targeting racial, national and religious minorities, migrants and Roma as scapegoats. In particular, in Europe, Islamophobia, hatred of Muslims, is a fast-growing threat, with marches against mosques and agitation against the hijab and burka spreading under cover of the official ideology of 'anti-terrorism' and a non-existent threat of the 'Islamisation of Europe'. Nor is antisemitism dead, indeed, the fast-growing Hungarian Nazi movement, Jobbik, combines both in a noxious mix of reactionary demagoguery.

In the semi-colonial world, fascistic forces often emerge out of communalism and religious bigotry, directing the masses' emotions against minorities such as Muslims in India, Tamils in Sri Lanka, Hindu, Christians, Ahmadis and Shia in Pakistan.

Fascism is a force of civil war against the working class. By stirring ancient hatreds and promoting irrational fears, it mobilises the petit bourgeois and lumpenproletarian masses to first divide, and then destroy, working class and democratic organisations. It then gathers into its hands the entire apparatus of state control to impose a regime of super-exploitation on the workers under the direct supervision of the police and its auxiliary gangs. Its admiration for mass murderers like Anders Breivik and Brenton Tarrant is testimony to its brutal aims.

Its growth as a mass force is testimony to the intensity of the crisis which enrages millions and drives them to despair, and to the betrayals and failures of the leadership of the working class. It can only be defeated by unleashing the revolutionary movement of the working class and its allies, appealing for a workers' united front of all workers' organisations against fascism and a working class antifascist militia to repel its attacks on the labour movement and minorities. As Leon Trotsky said, if socialism is the expression of revolutionary hope, fascism is the expression of counter-revolutionary despair. To repel it, the despair of the masses must be converted into a revolutionary class offensive against crisis-ridden capitalism, the system which repeatedly gives birth to fascism. As fascism relies for its strength on mobilising masses enraged by the effects of capitalist crisis, the struggle against fascism will only be completed when its

source, capitalism, is uprooted.

- For a workers? united front against the fascists.
- No reliance on the capitalist state and its repressive apparatus.
- For organised self-defence of workers, national minorities and youth. An antifascist militia can break up fascist rallies, demonstrations and meetings and deny a platform to the racist and fascist demagogues.

Against militarism and imperialist war

Every capitalist economic crisis carries with it the threat of war. Competition between states intensifies. The bosses try to divert the people away from class struggle and into struggle against a foreign foe. From Afghanistan and Iraq, to Honduras and Sierra Leone, the major imperialist powers like the USA and Britain use direct occupation, foment coups and promote civil wars to impose their puppet regimes. They encourage their client rulers to act as regional policemen, tasked with undermining rival governments and repressing the people.

Today, the great economic downturn has opened a period of revolutionary crisis of the system as a whole, heightening the struggle between the imperialist powers to re-divide the resources of the world. At first, the contours of these new rivalries, tensions and standoffs between the USA and China, Russia and the EU, are only dimly discernible. Nonetheless, they carry the threat of more deadly regional and proxy wars, and ultimately of a new world war, a desperate annihilatory clash between the declining world powers and new, rising, empires.

If the working class leaves international diplomacy, the making of war and peace, in the hands of our rulers, then our fate is to be cannon fodder. That is why the working class needs a new International, as the First International explained in its founding statement, ?to master themselves the mysteries of international politics; to watch the diplomatic acts of their respective governments; to counteract them, if necessary, by all means in their power?.

The great antiwar mobilisation of 2003, which brought 20 million onto the streets of every major city in the world, proved conclusively that this is possible. Initiated by the European and World Social Forums, the movement?s failure to stop the war was solely due to the fact that the ESF and WSF were not willing and able to organise further mass actions including strikes, street blockades and mutinies.

The vast scale of the worldwide marches showed the potential for global action by the working class to stop wars, or turn them into revolutions; the failure of the movement to stop the Iraq war revealed the need for a more disciplined organisation with more determined goals, a Fifth International.

Under capitalism, the workers have no fatherland. In the imperialist countries, the working class movement can never support ?national defence? and must always seek the defeat of their rulers whether in colonial wars of occupation in Iraq and Afghanistan, or in any clash with rival imperialist states. It is the duty of revolutionaries to use the war to bring about the downfall of the system, to turn the imperialist war into a civil war.

The working class also needs to defend the remaining degenerated workers states against economic blockades and military threats by imperialist powers, without giving any support to their ruling bureaucratic castes. The struggle against capitalist restoration rather requires the struggle to overthrow those regimes by a political revolution.

In semi-colonial countries, it is necessary to defend the nation against any attack by an imperialist power or

one of its local proxies or policemen. At the same time, revolutionaries give no support to the bourgeoisie's conduct of the war. By fighting for a united front of all national forces against imperialism, by exposing the weakness, vacillation and timidity of the propertied classes in the anti-imperialist struggle, revolutionaries strive to bring independent working class forces to the head of the fight to free the nation from imperialism and open the road to socialism. In fratricidal clashes between semi-colonies over territory or resources, then the defeat of your 'own' country is a lesser evil than suspension of the class struggle at home; the war must be turned into an uprising for working class power and peace.

The major imperialist powers, the USA, Britain, China, the EU states, spend hundreds of billions on their war machines. Today, they claim to act in humanitarian interests, but this is camouflage for their real goal, to assert and maintain their military domination of the world. In poorer nations, too, huge proportions of the national budget are spent on the army, in countries like Pakistan and Turkey the military seeks to play a direct political role itself.

- No to imperialist wars and aggression. Fight the imperialist occupation of Afghanistan, Iraq, Palestine, Chechnya, Venezuela. Support the resistance. Hands off Iran and North Korea.
- For the closure of all imperialist military bases around the world! No to US, EU and other imperialist military interventions.
- Dissolution of all imperialist-dominated military alliances like NATO.
- Not a penny or a person for any capitalist army, be it professional or compulsory conscription based. Workers' representatives in parliament must oppose all military spending by capitalist governments.
- Military training for all under the control of the workers' movement.
- For full civil rights for soldiers, the setting up of soldiers' committees and unions and the election of officers. Defend soldiers, who defy illegal or immoral orders!
- In a reactionary war, the enemy of the working class is at home. For the defeat of imperialist governments in time of war; for the victory of colonial, semi-colonial and working class states against imperialist armies.

For the liberation of oppressed nations and peoples

The starting point of internationalists is that workers and peasants of every nationality should unite, since in no nation can they solve their problems in isolation. One of the greatest obstacles to achieving this internationalism is national oppression: the fact that the world system is based on the systematic oppression of some nations by others. Lasting unity between nations cannot be achieved where one nation oppresses another. Today, whole nations, the Palestinians, the Kurds, Rohingyas, Uighurs, Balochs, Kashmiris the Chechens, the Sri Lankan Tamils, the Kashmiris, the Tibetans and many others, are denied the right to self-determination. So too are many indigenous or tribal peoples. They are subjected to ethnic cleansing, rounding up into concentration camps, the suppression of language and culture and in the worst case even genocide. The working classes, especially those whose national ruling classes are responsible for such oppression, must give support and practical aid in the struggle of oppressed nations for liberation.

- For the right of self-determination of oppressed nations including their right to form a separate state if they so wish.
- For the right of indigenous peoples to their lands, free of settlement aimed at making them a minority.
- Equal rights and citizenship for members of national minorities.
- Against official state languages. Equal rights for national minorities to use their languages in the schools, the courts, the media, in dealings with public administration. For the right of migrant communities to use their mother tongues in school.

Fight racism

Racism is one of the deepest and most pernicious of the many forms of oppression capitalism creates. Its roots are coiled deep in the history of capitalist development. The world market and trade grew under the domination of powerful capitalist states which plundered weaker powers. Slavery in America, the fruits of empire in Britain, Holland and France, wars of conquest by Germany and Japan, all required that the oppressors deny the very humanity of those they enslaved. The Africans, the Indians, the Chinese and South East Asians and the Jewish people all were presented by the new imperial powers as sub-humans unworthy of the rights they reluctantly extended to their own populations at home.

By systematically instilling the new ideology of racism, the imperial powers justified their crimes overseas, bound their own people to support for national military adventures, however criminal, inured their own workers to the rebellious spirit of their colonial brothers and sisters, and promoted deep divisions between the indigenous and migrant sections of the working class at home.

Today, after the great Civil Rights movement in the USA and the victorious national movements that expelled the colonialists from India, Algeria and Vietnam, and defeated apartheid in South Africa, the bourgeoisie of the imperialist powers swears by anti-racism. Yet, these same governments systematically discriminate against black, African, Asian and migrant communities in their home countries, impose racist immigration controls and subject racial minorities to the worst housing, the lowest pay and persistent harassment by police. The Black Lives Matter movement has drawn attention to the killings by armed cops of young African Americans and similar harassment of Asians and Latinos. In Europe, east and west, Roma and Muslim communities are the targets for police raids and forced deportations, incited by incessant vile racist propaganda by the millionaire media.

The EU's so-called refugee crisis where Syrians, Afghans, Iraqis and Yemenis fleeing war, plus sub-Saharan Africans fleeing poverty and the effects of climate change have been obstructed from crossing the Mediterranean and threatened with camps and deportation. The workers' movement must integrate the migrant workers in a common struggle against racism and capitalism.

- Down with all forms of discrimination against migrants. Equal pay and equal democratic rights irrespective of race, nationality, religion or citizenship. Full citizens rights for all migrants, including the right to vote!
- Remove all specific laws and restrictions concerning people with foreign citizenship. Open the borders. Fight racist border controls that prevent the free movement of workers and the oppressed across borders.
- For the right of Muslim women to wear religious dress (veil, niqab, burka) if they wish, in all areas of public life, and for the right of women in Muslim countries and communities not to wear religious clothing, free from legal, clerical or family coercion.
- Full asylum rights for all those who flee war, oppression and poverty in their home countries.
- Fight racism and all forms of racial discrimination. Launch a fight against racism in all sectors of the labour movement. No to strikes against the employment of foreign or migrant labour.
- The workers' movement, especially trade unionists in the press and broadcast media, must mount a campaign, backed by direct action, to answer and halt racist hate propaganda.

The struggle for power

Our goal is political power, power to change the world forever so that inequality, crises and war, exploitation and classes become a distant memory. But revolutionaries alone do not make the revolution. Objective preconditions are needed; a deep economic, political and social crisis that the ruling class is unable to solve so that it becomes divided itself. Subjective conditions too are needed: the working class and the lower middle class must be unwilling to continue to support the old order because of the suffering

and chaos it has brought about. In these conditions, a pre-revolutionary or revolutionary situation comes about and in such conditions a substantial number of revolutionary vanguard fighters can win the majority of the working class to the perspective of revolution.

Revolutionaries must recognise pre-revolutionary and revolutionary situations and be the most courageous protagonists in them of the overthrow of power. They must fight for leadership through determined and correct propaganda and agitation in mass movements, uprisings or civil wars and courageously show the way. For revolutionary organisations and parties, missing revolutionary situations, passive commenting, leading one's own struggles separate from the masses, fear of the revolutionary masses or even subordination to non-revolutionary forces are unforgivable centrist mistakes that led to the defeat of the workers again and again in the past.

The transfer of power from one class to another can only be accomplished by the insurrection of the exploited masses led by a revolutionary party of their vanguard fighters. Since the bourgeois state is an armed instrument of repression, its hold can only be broken by taking control of these forces away from the high command and officer corps, by winning over the rank and file soldiers and by forcibly dissolving those detachments that remain loyal to the counter-revolution.

We cannot take over the old state apparatus; we must destroy it and replace it with a completely new state, a state in which the working class, the peasants and the urban poor, administer society through councils of delegates elected in the enterprises, the barrios, the villages, the schools and universities. Time and again such bodies have arisen in revolutionary crises; from the Paris Commune, through the Russian soviets, the German Räte, Chilean cordones to Iranian shoras. They arise as organs of struggle, councils of action, but only clear revolutionary leadership can enable them to become organs of insurrection and then of a new working class state power.

As long as there remains an old ruling class capable of taking back power, the working class must do everything necessary to prevent it. Whilst a workers' state will be the fullest and freest democracy for the formerly exploited classes, it will, at the same time, be a dictatorship against those who seek to restore capitalism. This, no more and no less, is what the dictatorship of the proletariat really means. It cannot be dispensed with until the most powerful ruling classes of our planet have been disarmed and dispossessed.

However, a workers' state must not allow a caste of bureaucrats to exercise dictatorship over the workers, nor can it be a state in which only one party is allowed to exist. The working masses must be able to express their different views in different parties, ones that have to compete democratically to win and retain a majority in the workers' councils. Nor must our socialism be one where a president, a caudillo or a lider maximo, concentrates all initiative in their hands and surrounds himself with a cult of the personality like a Stalin, a Mao or a Castro.

For a workers' and peasants' government

Economic crises and wars create revolutionary situations and force the working class to seek a governmental solution in its interests. But such social crises do not wait for the working class to create a mass revolutionary party ready to take power. In its absence, the working class looks to its existing trade union and reformist party leaderships. When right wing parties are in power, reformist workers may not passively wait for the next regular election but try to kick them out by direct action (general strikes, factory occupations) and bring their own parties to power.

Revolutionaries must warn that the reformist leaders, even if brought to power by mass action, will still do all they can to serve the capitalist class by demobilising the struggle. However, to leave things at the level of denunciation of the reformists would be to abandon the method of our transitional programme, which is

not an ultimatum and does not expect that workers must abandon their organisations before they can fight for the vital demands and slogans of the hour.

In such circumstances, we call on all the existing workers' leaders, unions as well as parties, to break with the capitalists and form a government to solve the crisis in the interests of the working class, holding itself accountable to the mass organisations of the working class. The workers' organisations should demand that such a government take punitive economic measures against capitalist sabotage; expropriate their industries, banks etc., and recognise workers' control of them.

If the working class seeks a government that will solve the economic, ecological and inter-state crises of our epoch, that government cannot rely on the existing organs of the bourgeois state, political, repressive or economic since these are inextricably linked to, and staffed at their top levels by, the very class causing them and obstructing their solution. It must be based on the fighting organisations of the working class, organised and prepared to impose its programme of control and expropriation on big capital. This task requires a different kind of state or, as Lenin said, a semi-state, working through the self-administration and self defence of the producers.

To prevent inevitable sabotage by the civil service heads, police provocations, military or 'constitutional' coups, we would need the creation and arming of a workers' militia and the breaking of the control of the officer caste over the rank and file of the army.

As long as revolutionaries present a growing alternative to the reformists, such a workers' government could act as a bridge to the revolutionary seizure of state power by the working class, with all power transferred into the hands of directly elected councils of recallable workers' delegates (soviets) and the establishment of a revolutionary state.

- Break with the bourgeoisie: all workers' parties to maintain strict independence and to refuse to enter coalition governments at local or national level with the parties of the capitalists.
- For a workers' and peasants' government: expropriate the capitalist class. Nationalise all banks, corporations, wholesale trade, transport, social, health, education and communication industries and services without compensation and under workers' control.
- The nationalised banks should be merged into a single state bank under the democratic control of the working class, with decisions on investment and resources made democratically as a step towards the formation of a central plan under working class control and the development of a socialist economy.
- Introduce a monopoly of foreign trade and capital controls.
- A workers' and peasants' government should base itself on the councils (soviets) and armed militias of the workers, peasants and the urban poor.
- The full state power of the working class can only be achieved by the break up of the armed power of the capitalist state, its military and bureaucratic apparatus, and its replacement by the rule of workers' councils and the workers' own militia.

For permanent revolution

In the semi-colonial countries, independent in name only and subject to political interference and economic control by the major imperialist powers, the masses have still not secured many of the basic rights established in the first capitalist countries in the English Revolution of the 1640s, the American Revolution of 1776 and the French Revolution of 1789. Equally, in the semi-colonial world today, many basic tasks of capitalist development such as national independence, agrarian revolution, democratic rights and the legal equality of women remain unfulfilled.

As a result, many national revolutionary forces today, influenced by bourgeois democratic thinking, and by the 'stages theory' of Stalin, still upheld by official Communist parties, believe that the solution to semi-colonial underdevelopment is to complete the democratic revolution and establish true national independence and a modern republic, through an alliance of all classes that oppose foreign domination and support democratic development.

This schema is the common strategy of disparate forces in the semi-colonial world, from Fatah and the PFLP in Palestine, through to the democratic movement in Iran, the Communist Party in the Philippines and the Maoists in Nepal. Yet, history has shown time and again that in these countries the national bourgeoisie is too weak, and too closely tied to foreign capital and the imperialist powers and corporations, to lead a classical bourgeois revolution to victory.

That task falls to the working class. To head the national revolution in alliance with the peasants, the workers will need to maintain strict independence from the capitalists and proceed not only to secure the fullest democratic rights but to overcome the limitations of capital; they cannot leave power in the hands of a bourgeois class inherently incapable of breaking with imperialism and able to secure its own privileges separate from the masses. They must press on directly to social revolution. This is the strategy of uninterrupted or permanent revolution.

The working class must champion the establishment of full democratic and national rights in oppressed and semi-colonial nations. The working class must come to the head of the fight against imperialist domination whether by debt, occupation, control by multinational corporations, or the imposition of client dictatorial regimes.

- The working class organisations must appeal for the formation of an anti-imperialist united front of all popular classes while maintaining their own independence.
- No participation of the workers' organisations in any bourgeois regime, however radical its anti-imperialist rhetoric might be.
- For councils of workers' and peasants' delegates.
- For a workers' and peasants' government to proceed from the democratic to the social revolution, socialising ownership and control of industry and agriculture, renouncing imperialist debts and spreading revolution to other countries, promoting regional federations of working class states and socialist development.

The transition to socialism

The socialism for which we are fighting needs large-scale means of production in the hands of the working class who can democratically plan their development to meet human need and progressively obliterate inequality and social classes.

Under a revolutionary workers' state, there will be no monstrous, bureaucratic plan, such as existed under Stalinism, where a caste of privileged bureaucrats tried to decide everything centrally. After the revolution, the working class will socialise the banks, the key financial institutions, the transport and utility companies and all the major industries. This will provide the foundations for a series of interlocking plans, integrated and coordinated from the local to the regional, to the national and the international level, each decided after debate by a workers' and consumers' democracy.

This is not a dream as the bourgeois propagandists claim. Modern technologies make it possible to discover and communicate needs and necessities around the globe in seconds and then coordinate production and transport to meet them. Every modern multinational corporation already works in this way. But, in contrast to the capitalist corporations, we will utilise the achievements of modern technologies not

for the profit of a few but for the benefit of all humanity.

Artisans, shopkeepers and small-scale peasant farmers will be able to retain their family enterprises as private property, if they so wish. At the same time, they will be encouraged to free themselves from the insecurity of the market and cut throat competition by gearing their production to the society wide plan for economic development. The idea that socialism can be based on small scale private ownership or cooperatives is a backward-looking utopia that can only, over time, recreate the conditions of a market economy and encourage the accumulation of capital once again.

Nonetheless, the socialisation of small peasant property, small shops, and so on must happen gradually and voluntarily and not by force as under Stalin.

Our goal: World Revolution

Whether revolution breaks out and triumphs first in a backward, semi-colonial or an advanced imperialist country, it is vital that it swiftly spreads beyond that state's borders. This is necessary both to defend what has been gained and to achieve the full potential of socialist society. Wherever the workers seize power, they will be attacked by foreign capitalist powers, especially the main imperialist powers. The most effective form of defence is therefore the spreading of the revolution to those countries through aiding the struggle for power by their working classes. Moreover, as the degeneration and ultimate collapse of the Soviet Union proved, it is impossible to complete the building socialism on a national level. 'Socialism in One Country' is a reactionary utopia.

The productive forces developed by capitalism over centuries demand an international order. Since the beginning of the twentieth century, the nation state itself has become a fetter on their further development. Therefore, the necessity for the strategy of Permanent Revolution flows not only from the need to combat continued resistance from the old ruling classes but from the fact that a rational and sustainable development of humanity's productive forces can only be finally achieved on a global level.

Then, on the basis of a globally planned economy and a world federation of socialist republics, we will be moving towards a common level of wealth and complete equality of rights for the whole of humanity. As a result of this process, social classes and the repressive features of the state will gradually die out. But first we must begin. In country after country, wracked by the historic crisis of the system, we must hurl capitalism into the abyss. World Revolution, and nothing less, is the task of the coming Fifth International.

Workers and oppressed people of the world ? unite!

Forward to a new, a Fifth International!

Adopted by the 11th Congress, June 2019

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