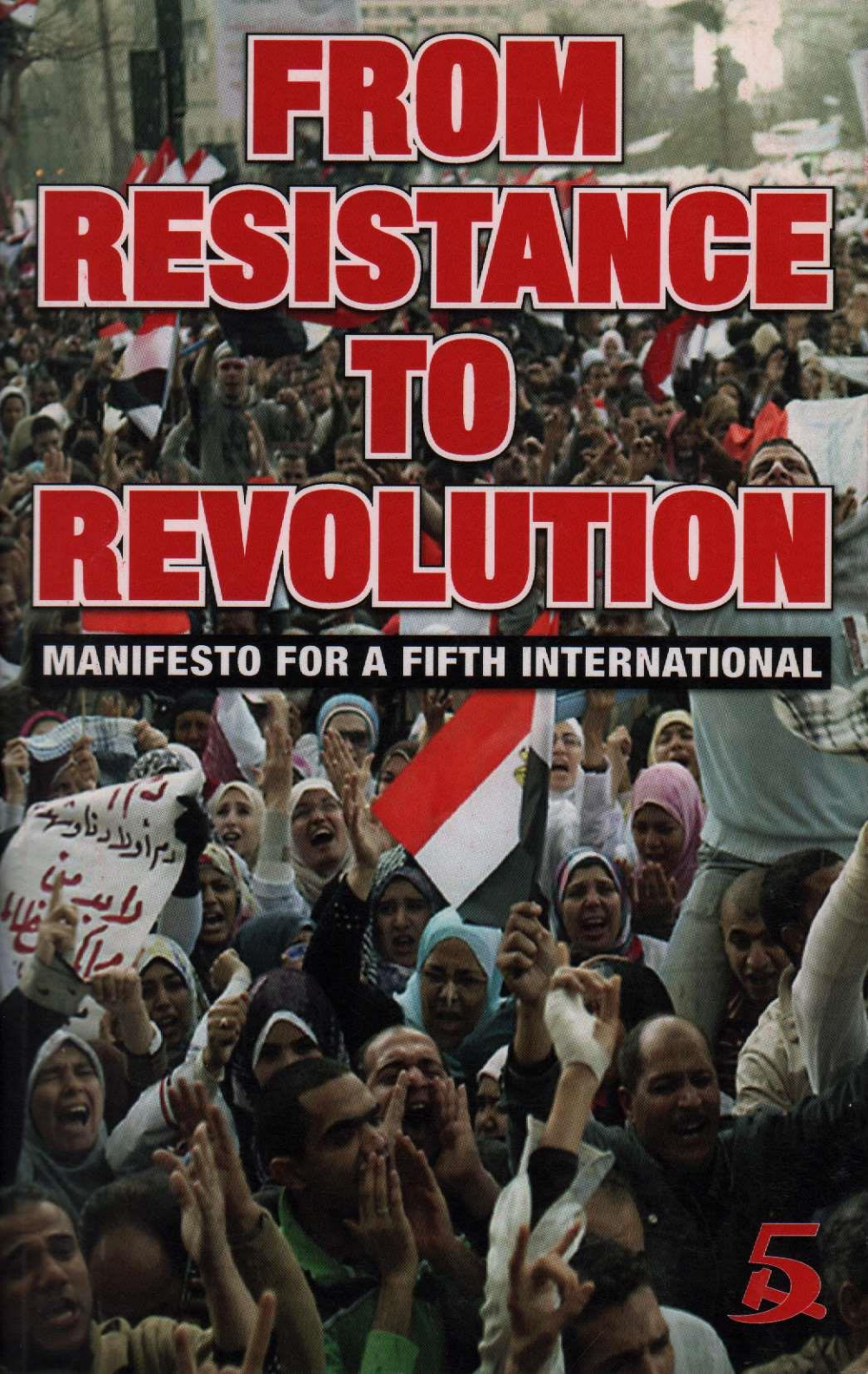
FROM RESISTANCE TO REVOLUTION

MANIFESTO FOR A FIFTH INTERNATIONAL



FROM RESISTANCE TO REVOLUTION

MANIFESTO FOR A FIFTH INTERNATIONAL

Published by



BCM 7750
London
WC1N 3XX

lfioffice@btopenworld.com
www.fifthinternational.org
First edition 2010

© League for the Fifth International 2010

CONTENTS

Preface v
The great crisis and the global resistance 1
An action programme that connects the
Resistance to the fight for social revolution 7
We won't pay for their crisis -
against unemployment, insecurity and poverty 8
Tax the rich, not the poor 10
Fight privatisation - for a massive expansion of public services 10
Stop the climate catastrophe 12
Transform our cities 13
For women's liberation 14
Against sexual repression – for lesbian and gay liberation 16
Libration for the youth 17
Defend democratic rights 18
From picket line defence to workers' militia 19
For the liberation of oppressed nations and peoples 19
Fight racism 20
For a workers' united front against fascism 21
Against militarism and imperialist war 22
Abolish the IMF and World Bank 24
The crisis of working class leadership 25
Down with reformism 25
Free our unions from bureaucratic control 27
Fight centrist vacillation 29
The struggle for power 32
For a workers' and peasants' government 33
For permanent revolution 34
The transition to socialism 36
Our goal - global revolution 36

PREFACE

This document is a programme of action addressed to the organisations of the working class, peasants, youth and oppressed peoples of the world engaged in a massive wave of struggles - either to win democratic freedoms as a means to overcome poverty and unemployment or in defence of existing social gains and rights. When workers in Tahrir Square in Cairo chant their solidarity with workers occupying the Capitol building in Madison, Wisconsin USA and these workers in turn sing, "Fight like an Egyptian!" we become aware how global the struggle has already become.

The year 2011 has already witnessed three revolutions - in Tunisia, Egypt and Libya and mass protests across North Africa and the Middle East. The youth-spearheaded revolts stimulated attempts to copy them in Zimbabwe, in North Korea, in China - using the new electronic media as organising weapons the spirit of revolution is stalking the world and tyrants are trembling once again. Even where revolution is not just around the corner militant resistance to capitalist governments is growing fast.

The Great Credit Crunch and Banking Crash of 2008 opened up a new historic crisis period for capitalism. Not only was there the deepest recession since the 1930s but the means governments took to escape the collapse of the world's banking system - bailing out them out with trillions of taxpayers dollars, euros, pounds- led to state debt crises which all ruling class governments declare can only be cleared by dismantling welfare systems, pensions, public health and education services and completing the counterrevolution which Thatcher and Reagan inspired stared in the 1980s – the mass sell-off of the public sector.

From Greece to Wisconsin savage austerity and destruction of public services are underway and workers are fighting back on the streets – besieging and storming the parliaments, calling for generals strike. It is to these militants that we present our action programmes. But nearly everywhere the official labour leaders are too tied to the system to lead effective resistance.

Thus the programme has three interlinked elements: strengthening mass resistance to the worldwide offensive of the capitalist class; confronting and overcoming the misleadership of the movement by social-democrats, populists, official 'Communist Parties' and trade union bureaucrats; and unifying the struggles into a revolutionary challenge to capitalist rule so we can build a world free of crises and wars.

The present crisis of capitalism reveals that, in the words of Leon Trotsky's Transitional Programme of 1938, the future of humanity is once again reduced to the crisis of working class leadership. Resolving that crisis is the basic task of the vanguard of the working class movement in every country. We offer this programme as a contribution to that struggle, and welcome critical comments from parties, groups and militants from across the international movement.

Dave Stockton
London, 2011

FROM RESISTANCE TO REVOLUTION

Manifesto for a Fifth International

The great crisis and the global resistance

Two decades of US–dominated globalisation brought the world to the deepest and most destructive economic crisis since the Second World War. Every nation was hit. First the credit system was paralysed. Then world trade and production slumped. Panicked by the prospect of complete economic meltdown, the leaders of the most powerful nations agreed to huge state bailouts of bankrupt banks that were deemed too big to fail, and launched massive stimulus packages to avoid the collapse of key industries. George W. Bush, Barack Obama, Angela Merkel, Nicolas Sarkozy, Hu Jintao and Vladimir Putin, all agreed to spend billions, trillions, to rescue the system... and recoup the losses later.

State debts soared to unprecedented levels. US and UK deficits reached 13.9 and 11.6 per cent of GDP. In the Eurozone, borrowings spiralled to twice or three times the supposed limit on budget deficits of 3 per cent of GDP. On the bond markets, the billionaires who lend money to nations flexed their muscles, demanding evidence that governments would enforce policies that guaranteed repayment with handsome profits. This "sovereign debt crisis" has crystallised into a series of huge austerity programmes as the ruling class tries to make the working class pay for the crisis through public sector job losses, tax increases, wage and pension freezes, and savage cuts in welfare provision.

While the West and Japan sink into stagnation, the low–wage and less technically advanced economies of India and China are growing massively. Far from stabilising the system, they are expanding capitalism's contradictions on a world scale.

At the geostrategic level, they emerge as powerful potential rivals to the dominant imperialist states. Economically, China holds billions in US bonds, while the USA demands that its Chinese creditor raise the value of the Yuan to help boost US exports, heightening the threat of a global currency war.

Above all, the massive scale of capitalist development in the East is creating millions of new industrial workers, adding a new dynamic to the interna-

tional class struggle. The Asian proletariat will play a decisive role in the world revolution in the 21st century.

The credit crunch, recession and debt time–bomb of 2008–2010 opened a new historic crisis for the capitalist system as a whole, a period in which intense struggles between the classes will give rise to revolutionary crises, counter–revolutions, instability and conflicts between rival powers. This is not just a typical downswing of the industrial cycle, one of the 'ordinary' ups and downs of the system. Its roots lie in the system's tendency to over–accumulation of capital. Decades of declining rates of profit reduced the opportunities for profitable investment in production in the imperialist heartlands. Instead, major corporations and financial institutions turned towards speculative investment on stock exchanges, currency markets and in the derivatives trade where millions could be 'made' at the click of a mouse button. More generally, in the globalisation years of 1992 to 2006, the ruling class tried to solve the problem with cheap credit and the creation of a vast bubble of fictitious capital in the form of consumer and household debt and all sorts of rarefied securities and derivatives. It didn't work. In fact the only lasting 'solution' for the capitalists is to destroy the 'excess' capital – and this is the inner meaning of the financial crisis and the austerity that has followed it. In the period ahead, the overall curve of humanity's development will be downward until either the capitalists inflict a huge defeat on the working class around the world, laying waste to productive capacity and plunging millions into poverty, or capitalism is itself overthrown. When we add to this the increasing danger of wars between the great powers for the redivision of the world, and the mounting risk of large–scale climate disasters, it is no exaggeration to say that unless capitalism is overthrown, eventually civilisation will be plunged into barbarism.

The huge bank bailouts have not solved the root causes of the crisis; rather they have ensured even more bubbles and subsequent crashes. The continued weakness of the credit system and the huge state debt means that the next recovery will be shallow and unstable, and austerity will dampen economic activity. Bankruptcies, factory closures and mass unemployment are continuing, exhibiting a profound trend to stagnation and outright decay of the productive forces in the imperialist centres. In the years and decades ahead, further economic shocks are a certainty, recessions will be sharp and deep and a long period of prosperity spanning several cycles is ruled out. As the major powers and their corporations are forced to struggle ever more aggressively with one another over the dwindling spoils, we can already see them manoeuvring to re–divide the world's markets, raw materials and labour supply, raising again the spectre of new wars between rival commercial powers.

This opening of a new historic crisis of the capitalist system comes at a time when the effects of the blind exploitation of humanity's natural environment have reached a critical point. Unless decisive measures are taken by all the industrially developed and developing economies, extreme climate events; prolonged droughts, disastrous flooding, melting of the ice caps, the expansion of deserts, will render large areas of the globe infertile and uninhabitable, unleashing famines and epidemics. The fact that production for profit is now in direct conflict with nature is a mighty proof that capitalism is a decaying and destructive system which must be transcended to assure a future for humanity. The conflict between the imperialist powers for resources and markets means that the idea of a "green" capitalist solution to the threat of climate catastrophe is a utopia. To save the planet we must abolish capitalism.

As the economy staggers out of recession, bankers and world leaders huddle together in a series of conferences. They agree on one thing: that the first priority for each state is to repay its billionaire creditors. They all agree, too, on who must pay: the workers and peasants of the world. They demand working people boost profits by accepting cuts in jobs, pay and pensions, by working longer hours, retiring later, paying more tax and higher prices for basic goods, by seeing services axed to the bone and benefits stripped away.

To divert the anger of those suffering mass unemployment and plummeting living standards, governments and media scapegoat migrants, asylum seekers, victims of war forced to flee ravaged countries. The USA and the European Union turn their borders into fortified barriers and deport those who manage to reach what they hoped was safety. In Italy and France, Roma people have their campsites bulldozed and their inhabitants deported. As Trotsky wrote 70 years ago, "The governments of the entire world have a written the blackest chapter in our epoch through their treatment of refugees, the exiles, the homeless."

On the other hand, we see tremendous working class resistance to the capitalist offensive. Around the world, workers have fought back. General strikes in South Africa, Greece, France and Guadeloupe, mass workers' action in Spain and Portugal, factory occupations in South Korea, the USA and Britain and a wave of strikes for higher pay in China. The resistance in each of these countries appears separate, but must be seen as a series of linked engagements in what is nothing less than a worldwide war of the employing class against the workers. The key to repelling the bosses' offensive is a united front of the working class, spanning all the workers' organisations, in each country and across borders.

The struggle is not limited to workers' resistance in the workplace. Across the semi–colonial world, in countries that have secured formal independence

but are tied by a thousand strings of exploitation to imperialist powers in North America, Western Europe and the Far East, mass movements have emerged against dictatorial restrictions on the democratic rights of the people. On the streets of Thailand, Nepal and Iran, this mass democratic movement has been driven to the point of launching popular uprisings against military, monarchical and religious dictatorship. In Honduras, the masses have raised courageous resistance to the US–backed *coup d'état*. In Afghanistan and Iraq, determined resistance continues against the US–led occupations, forcing the invaders to promise withdrawal. America's brutal Israeli ally faces sustained resistance, too, in Lebanon and occupied Palestine.

In each sphere of battle, the workers and poor have all too often seen victories snatched from our grasp, not by the strength of our enemies but by the weakness, and even treachery, of our own leaders. 'Moderate' trade union leaders in Europe and the USA either accept job cuts and trade away conditions in return for empty promises from the employers, or sacrifice the interests of the majority of the working class to preserve the jobs of a small elite of skilled workers. Social democrats accept the logic of the market and govern on behalf of the big capitalists, abusing the trust of their working class supporters and enforcing neoliberal policies like privatisation and pay restraint. Official Communist parties prop up liberal and social democratic capitalist governments as in Italy, and carry out neoliberal programmes themselves as in West Bengal, while their house–trained 'post–Marxist' intellectuals churn out volume after volume to justify the 'new politics' of age–old class collaboration. Populist generals and strongmen champion 'the masses' while resisting the workers' justified demands on the grounds of 'uniting the people'. In the struggle to resist imperialist occupations, middle class nationalist and Islamist guerrillas refuse to mobilise the masses of town and country for class struggle against occupation, fearing the roused masses might go on to challenge landlordism and capital itself.

Nowhere can this crisis of working class leadership be seen more clearly than on the international terrain. The ruling class coordinates its offensive globally, while each of our resistance movements struggles on in national isolation. They have their G8 and G20, their IMF and World Bank, their European Union and Central Bank. But the workers have no international organisation to bring our struggles together, to draw up a common strategy and lead a mass fight back. All we have are the enfeebled remnants of the organisations our grandparents built; international federations of trade unions under the tight control of seasoned bureaucrats opposed to struggle, and the Second so–called "Socialist" International of pro–capitalist parties like the British Labour Party, the German Social Democrats, the French Socialists. Their leaders see no alternative to the economic system that caused the crisis and rush to bail it out at our cost.

Yet the force that can stop this capitalist offensive in its tracks, the worldwide working class, is bigger than ever. The new millennium sees the workers form a majority of humanity for the first time in history. Against the few hundred billionaires and their admirers, stand billions of workers who make and circulate their profits. Our labour process is more internationally integrated, our interaction and ability to communicate with one another greater, than ever before. When we act together the machinery of exploitation shudders to a halt. The working class produces everything and can produce it without the exploiters, once we are conscious of our power and our interests.

All modern large–scale production, distribution, trade and communication relies on our labour yet we do not own the capital that sets it in motion. Of the forces of production we own only our ability to work, which we have to sell every day in return for a wage. Behind the facade of this apparently free and equal contract, hides systematic exploitation. Our wages reflect only a fraction of the value of the total social product we create. The capitalists take the rest in profits.

The working class can only recover this wealth collectively, by breaking up the state power of the capitalists and creating a state power under our democratic control. A workers' state would seize the property of the big capitalists, banks and corporations, and create a planned economy in place of the madness and crises of the market.

This strategy relies not on alliances with capitalists, on parliamentary manoeuvres or populist generals, but on the self–activity and self–organisation of the working class: it is the strategy of socialist revolution, the only way to overthrow this system of crisis, poverty and war.

Today, in the battles we are mounting against austerity, the working class is showing its potential power. These immediate struggles need to be coordinated to repel the bosses' offensive, and to be directed against the system itself: in short, today's struggles need to become the starting point of a struggle for revolution and the rule of the working class.

The capitalists recognise our potential power if we unite as a class, so they spread every means of deception to divide us: control over official education, state and millionaire control of the media, religious, racial and national prejudices and petty controls over daily life. To set the workers of one nation against another, to set men against women, to set white against black, Christian against Muslim, old against young, this is the capitalists' strongest weapon. That is why, in answer, every generation of anticapitalists has taken up the great slogan of Karl Marx: "Workers of All Countries, Unite!"

Today, faced with an historic crisis of the profit system, we need to ask the question: how can we unite the workers of the world? To answer this, anti

capitalists need to learn the lessons of two centuries of class struggle. The highest achievement of the workers was the formation of the four working class Internationals, each of which began as a world party of socialist revolution. They fought to organise the class struggle of the world's workers and poor.

Each of these Internationals represented a massive gain for the working class, yet each has in turn disappeared, gone over to the enemy, or abandoned the path of social revolution. The task today is to build a Fifth International. All over the world, the fighting organisations of the workers, parties, unions, cooperatives, the peasants, the urban poor, the women, youth, oppressed nationalities and minorities, need to assemble, convene a congress, debate policy under the strictest democratic conditions, adopt a fighting programme against the capitalist offensive, and found a world party to lead the fight for power.

Its immediate objective must be to promote the development of fighting forces that can make mass resistance more and more effective and transform it into world revolution. The programme of a Fifth International must aim not just to coordinate our existing organisations, the trade unions, peasant and landless workers' leagues, popular movements of the shantytowns, women's and youth organisations, but to transform them into the weapons of this revolution. Its supporters must fight doggedly within the mass organisations and, at the same time, they must not flinch from a break with the bureaucratic apparatus where it becomes an insuperable barrier to the workers' advance. They must aim to organise the unorganised, the unskilled workers, rural workers, the youth and the unemployed. The new International must aim to unite in its national sections all those political forces, both from existing parties and from new layers, that recognise the need for revolution.

To succeed, this Fifth International must have firm foundations. Its strength will be a common understanding of the capitalist world, of the historic goals of the working masses, of the tactics and strategy needed in the fight to overthrow capitalism and the states that defend it. It will need to embody all of this in its programme because it will need to win. The historic crisis of capitalism, which threatens humanity with economic and environmental catastrophe, poses once again Rosa Luxemburg's stark alternative: socialism or barbarism. It challenges revolutionary communists to respond to the task of building socialism in the 21st century, to become once more the leading force in the worldwide movement of the oppressed. The only alternative to capitalism in crisis is socialism, the only path to socialism is revolution, the indispensable instrument of the world revolution is a world party of social revolution. The time to build a Fifth International is now.

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 its 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. At every level of struggle, decision–making by democratic assemblies of all those involved must become the norm. Under the control of 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 the wives and partners of workers, 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 crisis – against unemployment, insecurity and poverty

Since the Great Crisis of 2008, tens of millions of jobs have been lost. Even in the richest country in the world, the United States, 50 million people had difficulty feeding themselves and their children in 2008. That the system throws millions out of work when there is so much work to do eliminating poverty, this alone should condemn capitalism to the rubbish bin of history. And the attacks go on. Around the world, capital is subjecting the workers to the twin weapons of inflation and deflation, inevitable products of their blind system of profit, either to slash real wages, or to wipe out even more jobs. Already, three billion people, almost half the world's population, live on less than two and a half dollars 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. Every day, 25,000 children die from poverty. Almost one billion were never taught to read or write. We cannot allow the capitalists to make this still worse.

Faced with the global bosses' offensive, we have to fight for a workers' united front; the common action of all the working class forces:

- Against all workplace closures and sackings, against all wage cuts.
- For strikes and occupations in all workplaces faced with closure.
- Nationalisation without compensation of every enterprise declaring redundancies, 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 the democratic control of the people.
- 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 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 without workers' consent; 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 a workers' veto on 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.

Tax the rich, not the poor

While billions live in poverty, a tiny minority live in unimaginable luxury. In 2010, after two years of global downturn, the number of billionaires reached 1,011. The investment decisions of these financiers and industrialists can bring entire countries to their knees. Just below the billionaires, hundreds of thousands of multi–millionaire rich idle their lives away at our expense. This 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 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; cancel all personal and state debts.
- Nationalisation of the stock markets
- Take over the capitalists' major industries – for nationalisation of the corporations without compensation under workers' control.

Fight privatisation – for a massive expansion of public services

Against a background of unemployment and falling wages, a massive series of austerity programmes aims to reduce the tax burden on the rich and make workers and the poor pay the cost of the crisis. Education, healthcare and

welfare systems that workers won as a result of decades of struggle are under attack. The millionaires who profit from our work have the nerve to demand that state provision be reduced "to encourage self–reliance and discourage the culture of dependence"! At the same time, they are salivating at the thought of the profits to be made when private enterprise fills the gap left by public service cuts.

- 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 privatisation. Nationalise basic services like water, energy, and transportation. Cancel public–private partnership deals, special economic zones and government sweeteners to business: for state owned development, funded by confiscating the profits of the privateers.
- 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, health and education, were handed over to private capitalists to run for profit, not need.

Yet nationalisation has come back onto the agenda. For the first time in years, a national government, in Venezuela, proposed not to privatise, but to nationalise major industries and farms, taking them into state ownership. Then, in 2008, we saw neoliberal governments rushing to nationalise large banks, taking over their debts and losses to save their system.

Socialists must learn to distinguish capitalist nationalisation, which is used to prop up the system, from working class expropriation, used to dispossess the bosses for good.

- 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.

Today, Venezuela under Hugo Chavez, tries to develop its economy free from the pressure of the big imperialist governments and multinationals, and sometimes even nationalises certain companies, usually under strong pressure from the workers. Communists support nationalisation, while always pointing out the limitations of what the capitalist governments are doing, and always pressing forward demands in the interests of the working class. We argue that there must be no compensation for the bosses and we demand control and management by the workers, not by armies of managers on huge salaries, but by elected committees of the workforce and working class communities.

Above all, communists 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".

Stop the climate catastrophe

The absolute failure of the 2010 Copenhagen Summit revealed that no consensus could be reached between competing capitalist powers on how to reduce carbon emissions and avert catastrophic global warming. Neither the "developed" major polluters like the US, Japan and the European Union, nor the "developing" giants like China and India, were willing to imperil their own profits by making the radical cuts in emissions necessary to slow and halt climate change.

If the bourgeoisie continues like this, worsening floods, droughts, famines and pandemics are inevitable. Economic and military rivalry prevents the great capitalist powers from combining their forces to solve these crises. The horror of the Pakistan floods, the South Asian Tsunami and the Haitian earthquake will be repeated many times over.

Worse still, governments and corporations continue to expand fossil fuel emissions and frustrate all the plans and proposals of the scientists to slow

or reverse the catastrophe.

The answer is a global shift in production away from burning fossil fuels and towards the development of sustainable energy. Because profit stands in the way of the necessary changes to production, and because the climate does not respect political and national borders but is by definition global, the means necessary to solve the crisis can only be imposed by a worldwide class with no stake in the profit system; the working class.

- For an emergency plan to transform the energy and transport system – a global shift away from burning fossil fuels.
- Make the big corporations and the imperialist states like the USA and EU pay for the environmental destruction they have caused in the rest of the world.
- For a plan to phase out energy production based on fossil fuels and nuclear power, and for massive investments in alternative energy forms such as wind, wave and solar power.
- For a huge global programme of re–forestation.
- For a massive expansion of public transport to combat pollution caused by the growth in use of the private car.
- Abolish business secrecy in the clean technology and energy sectors – pool the knowledge to create effective alternatives.
- Nationalisation under workers' control of all energy corporations, enterprises which monopolise basic goods like water, agribusiness and all air lines, shipping and rail enterprises.

Transform our cities

Over half of humanity now lives in cities, but the majority are shanty towns and slums without proper roads, lighting, clean drinking water or sewage and waste disposal. 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 environment. 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 shanty town dwellers have permanent or secure jobs. Their children have no nurseries, clinics or schools. Criminal gangs and police alike subject the people to harassment and extortion. Women and the young are driven to prostitution and coerced into sweatshops. Slavery and the trade in human beings has re–appeared.

This vast accumulation of human misery must end.

This cannot be done with the pittance of aid from the rich countries, the 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 and Bolivia they have forced through important reforms. Now, by a social revolution, in alliance with the working class, they must smash the capitalists' state and erect in its place a state 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 .
- 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.

Almost half of humanity still lives in villages, on plantations and in the rural communities of indigenous peoples. The gap between their incomes, their access to healthcare, education, communications, and that in the cities is often enormous. 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.

- Expropriate the land of the oligarchs 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.

- 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*: "the gradual abolition of the distinction between town and country, by a more equitable distribution of population over the country".

For women's liberation

The capitalist democracies promised women equality, but the promise is unfulfilled. 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.

In the global south, patriarchal relations in the countryside and ancient religious prejudices 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 unpunished. In every country, this oppression is rooted in the family structure of class society. Yet, massive change caused by capitalism open the possibility of changing this for good. 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 the crisis 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 headscarves and bans on women wearing Islamic face coverings. In Islamic countries, like Saudi Arabia and Iran, religious police enforce compulsory Islamic dress codes.

- 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 women's shelters. 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.
- End women's dual burden through the socialisation of domestic labour. For free 24–hour childcare and a massive expansion of cheap, quality public 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 and gay liberation

Lesbians, gay men and transgendered 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 been launched against lesbian and gay demands for civil rights. As with the oppression of women, religion often sanctions this hateful repression. Nor has the fight for equality been won in the democratic capitalist countries. The workers' movement and the socialist youth must come to the defence of lesbian, gay and transsexual people everywhere.

- Full rights for lesbian, gay and transsexual people including full legal rights to civil partnership and marriage.
- Stop all harassment by the state, the churches, temples and mosques: sexual orientation and all consensual sexual activity must be a matter of personal choice.

- Outlaw all discrimination against lesbians and gays. No discrimination in housing, in access to life insurance, in medical treatment, in access to work or to services.
- For the right of lesbian and gay couples to rear children.
- No bans on educating people in their sexual choices, no bans on the public expression of homosexual affection and love.

Liberation for the youth

The crisis hits youth hard both because they are the most insecure section of the workforce and easiest to dismiss. There are fewer jobs for school leavers, cuts in state budgets for education massively reduce the alternative of full time study in higher education. Impoverishing families increases the brutal treatment of children in the slums of the third world.

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.
- For the right to vote at the age of 16 or working age if sooner.
- 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. There should be no laws against consenting sex and no criminalisation of "underage" lovers. Sex education must be available in state schools, without religious or parental interference.
- 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.
- Drive business out of the education system. No control of the education system by the state bureaucracy. Students, teachers and parents 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, North American and European governments imposed a surveillance society and restricted or abolished rights accumulated over centuries of popular struggles.

At the same time, 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. 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.
- 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 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.
- Where fundamental questions concerning the political order are posed, we call for a constituent assembly. 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.

From picket line defence to workers' militia

Every determined striker knows the need for picket lines to deter strike breakers. 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, arrest and imprisonment of trade unionists in Iran, to murder on the streets by death squads in Colombia, 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. 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. 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 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. The greatest obstacle 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, the Chechens, the Sri Lankan Tamils, the Kashmiris, the Tibetans and many others, are denied the right to self–determination. Along with many indigenous peoples, they are subjected to ethnic cleansing and cultural, sometimes physical, 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, 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 bothers 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. 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.

- Down with all forms of discrimination against migrants. Equal pay and equal democratic rights irrespective of race, nationality, religion or citizenship.
- 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

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 anti–Semitism dead, indeed, the fast–growing Hungarian Nazi movement, Jobbik, combines both in a noxious mix of reactionary demagogy.

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, Ahmadis 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 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.

- 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.

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.

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 wiling 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.

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. Support the resistance. Hands off Iran and North Korea.
- For the closure of all US military bases around the world. No to 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 a professional or a compulsory conscription based army. 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.
- 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.

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 the years after 2000. 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 retuned 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 the countries of Latin America, Africa, South and East Asia and Eastern Europe.
- 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.

The crisis of working class leadership

The existing leaders of the working masses showed their weakness in the crisis of 2008–2010. Despite a spontaneous popular rejection of the bail–out of the bankers at our expense, the leaders of unions and socialist parties alike meekly accepted it. They said they had no alternative. There was an alternative, one they had all abandoned decades ago; socialisation of the banks, with no compensation to the billionaires, whilst guaranteeing the savings, pensions and jobs of the workers.

Our official leaders remain bitterly opposed to any attempt to take state power out of the hands of our class enemies, to replace their power with one rooted in the mass organisations of the working millions. They simply have no programme to dismantle and replace this bankrupt system that exploits and degrades the productive force of human labour and the resources of nature.

In this way, the crisis of capitalism creates an ever–deeper crisis of working class leadership. To overcome this crisis, to convert resistance into the fight for 21st century world revolution, we need to found a Fifth International with sections in every country. It must transform national labour movements, deliver cross border action and solidarity, and become a World Party of Socialist Revolution.

Down with reformism

In the rich imperialist countries of Europe and certain privileged countries of the south, Social Democratic and Labour parties have served the capitalists as parties of government for nearly a century. In Brazil, the Workers' Party (PT) has followed the same path, as have the two main Communist Parties in India (CPI and CPI–M). A privileged layer of bureaucrats and parliamentarians, who regard capitalism as an eternal system and serve the bosses whether in government or opposition, frustrate the workers' attempts to use these parties as weapons of struggle. Although they once traded their services for limited reforms, over the last twenty years they have gone further and adopted the neoliberal, pro–market, policies dictated by the capitalist class. Their "reforms" today are cuts in welfare, privatisation, and attacks on wages.

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 West 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, supported social cuts and privatisation. Ruling for capitalism has 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.

In apparent contrast, some Maoist parties, specifically those in Nepal and India, have played a more radical role. In Nepal, the Unified Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) played a leading part in the mass movement that overthrew the monarchy. But, having won the elections to a Constituent Assembly, it entered into government, with its leader briefly becoming prime minister.

This has highlighted, once again, the fundamental error in the Stalinist–Maoist strategy of "revolution by stages". This is based on the belief that in economically undeveloped countries the working class should not fight for socialism until there has been a "democratic stage" of capitalist development. Because of this, the Stalinists oppose the working class taking power and implementing a socialist programme of development. Instead, they insist the working class should form an alliance with the national bourgeoisie and not demand more than a democratic government.

The Communist Party of India (Maoist) has grown 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 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.

Cuba has enormous influence as the only state in the Americas where capitalism has been overthrown. Its health and education systems, in startling contrast to those of its Caribbean and Latin American neighbours, show something of what a planned economy and the exclusion of imperialist and native capitalist exploiters can do.

However, since the 1960s, Cuba's Communist Party has done nothing to spread revolution, beyond backing regimes that defy the US. Indeed, at key points, like in Chile and Nicaragua, it has urged strict adherence to the Stalinist stages theory and thereby contributed to the victory of counter–rev-

olution. Within Cuba itself, the one party state offers little room for democratic debate or independent workers' and peasants' organisations. Instead, the economy is entirely controlled by the party and the privileged state bureaucracy it represents.

The "Bolivarian socialist" governments of Hugo Chavez and Evo Morales have recently carried out genuine reforms for the working class and the urban poor. In Venezuela, since the masses defeated a US–backed coup in 2002, the revenues of the nationalised oil industry have been used in part to finance important social programmes for the poor. This marks them out from most regimes on the continent. At a time when capitalist globalisation was promoting itself as "the only way", they declared themselves socialists and claimed that they were transferring wealth and power to the working people. As a result, they earned the hatred of the US imperialists and their own oligarchies.

Nevertheless, despite these left populist measures, it is clear that Chavez, Morales and other Bolivarian leaders head not socialist, but bourgeois, regimes. They have not expropriated the decisive sectors of the big bourgeoisie or foreign corporations. Faced with workers' strikes and occupations, they have often repressed such struggles using the police and courts and arrested their leaders. As Chavez himself said in mid–2009 "we don't deny the market, but the free market". This compromise between socialism and capitalism is not sustainable. They are irreconcilable opposites and one must triumph over the other. 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.

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 the advanced capitalist democracies, decades of class struggle have secured legal rights for unions, so in place of outright illegality the state incorporated unions by granting privileges to their leaders and through

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, in the economic crisis, 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 bureaucrats often act as out–and–out 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 of them, 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 International must commit itself 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 We need organisations in the workplaces which do not accommodate to the dic-

tates of the bosses but which 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. Our watchword must be; action with the official leaders where possible, but without 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.
- Unity of all trade unions on a democratic and militant basis, totally independent of the bosses, their parties and their states.

Fight centrist vacillation

Between the mass reformist parties and revolutionary communism stand a myriad of unstable intermediate organisations, groupings and sects. Although these centrists claim to represent formal continuity with the revolutionary programmes of the Third International in the days of Lenin, or Trotsky's Fourth International, in their political practice they zig zag wildly between craven opportunism and helpless sectarianism.

When the opportunist mood is upon them, they systematically adapt their policy to that of social democracy, Stalinism, populism or petit–bourgeois nationalism. When this fails to break the hold of reformism, they typically retreat, nursing their wounds to sectarianism, opportunism's anaemic twin. Then they work to immunise their supporters from contact with the reformist masses, who repay the compliment by ignoring them in return.

Invariably, centrists cover for their own failings by appeals to the spontaneity of the masses, as if this spontaneity does not always demand con-

scious expression and leadership if it is to achieve results. If the centrists are adapting to reformist leaders, they hail the masses' illusions as forms of nascent class consciousness. If the centrists are in sectarian retreat, they deny that the masses hold illusions altogether or berate the masses for insufficient fighting spirit. In reality, they only reveal their own inability to connect revolutionary policy to the mass movement.

The common element of centrism, in both its opportunist and sectarian forms, is failure to fight in the mass movement to win the reformist masses away from the programme of reformism and to a programme of revolutionary transition.

None of this is to detract from the role centrist organisations can play in class battles, building solidarity, anti–racist, anti–imperialist and internationalist actions. Today, in some countries, such as France and Greece, forces like the New Anticapitalist Party, Syriza and Antarzya have grown sufficiently in the fightback to the crisis to mount a serious challenge to reformism, becoming more influential precisely at times when the class struggle overflows the banks of everyday parliamentary and trade union activity. Since, in the years ahead, this is ever more likely, we can expect to see substantial growth of some centrist organisations.

However, just as the capitalist offensive and the wave of resistance can push some centrist groupings forward, others find themselves unable to respond effectively. The inadequacy of their latest opportunist schemas or adventurist tactics are cruelly exposed by the changing conditions of struggle. Such is the case for the Socialist Workers Party in Britain, whose arch–opportunist attempt to create a joint reformist–liberal 'Respect' party with Muslim businessmen, collapsed ignominiously, resulting in further splits and disorientation, and derailing a key opportunity to break the trade unions from the neoliberal Labour Party after the Iraq War.

Internationally, the most prominent centrist organisation remains the Fourth International, followers of the ideas of Ernest Mandel. In France, its supporters have established the New Anticapitalist Party (NPA), bringing together thousands of activists looking for an alternative to the reformists and opening a key series of debates on the way forward in the French working class. At the same time, the NPA stands in elections on a reformist programme of its own, and has failed to mount a coordinated challenge within the resistance to break the hold of the official trade union leaders. Its leadership is torn between an impotent strategy of electoral blocks with the Communist Party and standing on a bold anticapitalist platform. The task of revolutionary communists is to help this party overcome its centrist heritage and develop a fully revolutionary transitional programme.

Worse, the Fourth International's supporters in Portugal, the Left Bloc,

voted in parliament for the EU's Greek bailout programme, including for its austerity measures. In Brazil, faced with the neoliberal programme of social democratic president Lula, the Fourth International cannot decide whether its goal is to build a revolutionary alternative to the reformists of Lula's Workers Party (PT), or to build a PT Mark 2, on a left reformist programme. Recognising that it has failed to become a world party, the Fourth International welcomed the call by Hugo Chavez for the formation of a Fifth International and correctly warned that this must be tied to no bourgeois state. At the same time, however, the Fourth International advocates, as a strategic goal, the creation of a "pluralist" international encompassing both reformists and revolutionaries. Here a vital distinction must be drawn!

Of course, in contemporary conditions, a new mass International is likely to be an arena of political struggle between revolutionaries and left reformist militants. But this can be no final goal. Again and again, in the period ahead, revolutionary crises in various countries will pose the question of power point blank. Unless revolutionaries can overcome the hold of reformism and defeat its domination of the movement, we will suffer defeat after defeat. When we recognise that reformist workers will be drawn into a new International, we do so not with the strategic goal of peaceful co–existence with their prejudices, but with a perspective of struggle, to wrest these militants from the leadership of the reformists and win the new International to revolutionary communism.

Other fragments of the Fourth International rally some thousands of activists across the world. The International Marxist Tendency and the Committee for a Workers' International, from the British–based tradition of Ted Grant, have adapted systematically to imperialism, both refusing to call for the withdrawal of British troops from Ireland and from the Malvinas. Both backed the shameful strikes for 'British jobs' against Portuguese and Italian workers in 2009.

Today, they cover for their refusal to solidarise with the resistance to imperialist occupation in Iraq and Afghanistan with phrases about workers' unity and dire warnings of Islamist reaction, as if the socialist movement could come to the head of the resistance in these countries without taking sides in the war against the US led invaders! Unconnected with the IMT and CWI, but singing from the same hymn sheet, the Worker–Communist Party of Iraq and Iran, and the Labour Party of Pakistan, advance the same criminal policy and reap the unintended but inevitable consequence: the Islamists' hegemony over the resistance is unchallenged (...by them at least).

In Latin America, a policy to break the hold of populism over the masses is crucial to revolutionary advance in Venezuela, Ecuador, Bolivia, Argentina. But this is the great blind spot of the principal break from the Fourth

International on that continent, the followers of the late Nahuel Moreno. Oscillating wildly between opportunism and sectarianism, Moreno's heirs either debase themselves before the leadership and reformist policy of Chavez and Morales, or diligently inform the working class of the polar opposite, that they have no illusions in their leaders. They dismiss demands on the workers' leaders to act as self–defeating, and refuse to fight for the mass workers' organisations to break from populism and form an independent workers' party.

In general, centrism remains unwilling and unable to break in practice with left reformism and thus ultimately with capitalism, and to build an open and bold revolutionary alternative. They often turn left under the pressure of the masses but then turn right under the pressure of the bureaucratic apparatuses in the name of 'realism'.

A new revolutionary International will need to attract thousands of the militants of these parties and groups, just as it will have to win tens and hundreds of thousands of the most militant reformists. It cannot do so by making concessions to centrism. In pre–revolutionary and revolutionary situations, centrist organisations will usually go further than the reformists but at the decisive moment, whenever the question of power is posed, they will either capitulate to the reformists or pursue disastrous sectarian or adventurist courses. It is no accident that the centrist organisations display the greatest instability on the very question of developing a new revolutionary programme, of building revolutionary parties and a new world party. Building a Fifth International therefore requires a relentless struggle against centrism.

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.

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. 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.
- 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 today, 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 indus-

try 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, ascending 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 cutthroat 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 – global revolution

Whether revolution breaks out and triumphs first in a backward, semi–colonial or an advanced imperialist country, it is vital that it spreads internationally. 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, Fifth International!

Across the world people are threatened by poverty caused by the economic crisis and oppression in the form of dicatorships and imperialist domination.

The global economic crisis showed the deep instability of the capitalist system as banks collapsed, stock markets plunged, world trade was paralysed and governments bailed out bosses to the tune of trillions.

Now the capitalists are trying to make the working class pay the cost of the crisis, through mass unemployment, pay restraint and cuts in vital services.

But from Greece and France to Korea and India a huge wave of workers' action has shown that millions refuse to meekly accept that working people and youth should pay the costs of this crisis. Resistance is spreading worldwide, but everywhere the leadership of the workers is holding back the scale of united action we need to beat the bosses' offensive.

The revolutionary movements in Egypt and Tunisia have shown the power of people to change the world. They also raise questions about what kind of movement we need to build to really end capitalism and oppression.

The working class movement urgently needs a new strategy. This manifesto outlines a programme to turn resistance into revolution – to unite the fight against austerity and social oppression into a direct challenge to the crisis-ridden system of capitalism itself.

ISBN 978-0955366444-4