



16th World Congress Discussion - 2010

Contribution from Argentina to the debate on the international situation

14 February 2010

1) Capital's system of domination/rule and exploitation is sustained in each historical period on the basis of a specific model of accumulation, reproduction and distribution that in turn requires a specific political hegemony that at each moment articulates international and national relations of forces in an organic form. But this organic nature appears weakened in a crisis. **Are bourgeois-democratic institutions, which furthermore are subjected to mafias and shady deals of all types, in a condition to support the blows of the world crisis?** Moreover, even certain multinationals seem to have become autonomous from the national States where they originated, and the creation of a global State does not seem viable, given that new institutions such as G20 have not so far provided all the effectiveness that the system requires. **Is current management of the crisis adequate?**

2) The current economic crisis and the Iraq war lead to the discovery that the EU does not appear as a new hegemonic centre; the many states and persistence of nationalisms seem to have set limits on its political and economic coordination.

Public debt is critical in certain European countries and explosive in

others. These imbalances are proportionally lower than those of the United States, but they face major difficulties of external financing. All the means of budgetary balance of the European Union have remained overburdened. In his recent visit to Buenos Aires, Paul Krugman said Spain had no way out other than devaluation. What way out is there for Italy, Ireland, Greece or England today? The Euro seems to be in serious difficulty. **So what can become of the European Union as a supranational institution?**

3) It seems to us that the document lacks an full description of the state of the working classes and all the subaltern groups on the world level. Fragmentation, identity, xenophobia, racism, migrants ... new subjectivities. It is worth emphasising that if neoliberalism has found no solution, it has established a relation of social and political forces that is absolutely favourable to capital and absolutely unfavourable to workers. The crisis has stripped neoliberalism of legitimacy, however it has not reversed this reality, which prevents a social response adequate to the crisis in the conjuncture and, with a perspective of power, leads to discussions about the question of the subject.

4) The document lacks a description

and characterisation of the situation of the workers' and social movement in the US - degree of organisation and readiness to struggle - also in terms of minorities and migrants. What can the probable course of the class struggle be in the centre of world capitalism? What will happen? What can happen? If anything will...

B) Some specific questions: proposals for amendments and additions

1.1. At the end of 1st paragraph conclude:

"The heads of State meeting in the G-20 in London issued a call to all countries not to resort to protectionist measures, while in Viña del Mar (Chile) at the meeting of "progressive" leaders, the representatives of Spain, Britain and Chile showed alarm at the "populist and protectionist tendencies and protectionism stimulated by the crisis".

"However multinational bodies with their general proclamations are one thing and the attitudes of each country in terms of their national

economies are something else. Thus the US, France, China, Britain and Spain have applied different versions of "buy national"; Germany, France, the US and Russia among other countries have enacted administrative measures limiting foreign investment; in the European Union which claimed to be a model of social integration there is a resurgence of racism and xenophobia and foreign workers are expelled, particularly towards Eastern countries. In Latin America protectionist measures taken by Argentina are provoking reactions from Brazil, which pleads in international forums for a greater opening of trade".

"This does not mean that there has been a break in world trade as in the 1930s, however it is possible that at the end of 2009, trade will have contracted by 10%, although for major exporters - Germany, Japan, China - this percentage will practically triple, while direct foreign investments in the world will fall by 21% in 2008 and it is possible that this trend will continue in 2009. The transfers migrants send to their homelands have fallen rapidly (this is particularly significant for countries such as Mexico and Ecuador), and some flows have reversed from the south to the north. Tourism and international transport have also contracted.

Thus the crisis has undermined the pillars of globalization: i.e. the world trade of commodities. Capital and human mobility has fallen and currency flow between countries has contracted. WTO, which is trying to revitalise itself, has been stagnant for several years."

After "recovery in Asia..." add: "For Latin America a 4.1% growth is hoped for, a growth that contrasts...

At the end of the whole point add: "along with the absence of strong trade unions and workers' parties advocating a different way out"...

1.2. At the end of the point add: For this reason, the G20 outcomes are a retreat to the past that was shattered by the crisis. The end of the Washington Consensus was decreed, but this was set in the centre of the IMF decisions and its order of

priorities is clearly neoliberal".

1.4. Complete: "According to ILO, in Latin America the crisis has meant 2.2 million newly unemployed, raising the region's rate to 8.4% and entailing a strong increase in informal work.

In the paragraph "Privatisations are confirmed, except in certain cases - exceptions - such as the social security system in Argentina or the Japanese postal service", just for information we wish to point out that in Argentina the national airline, the postal service and services providing clean water and environmental remediation have been recovered. It is clear that the major privatisations such as the railways and petroleum industry have not been touched. Furthermore, we have to take into account the State seizure of the extraordinary agrarian rent, with which subsidies to maintain rates and jobs have been financed,. Including the strong growth in the GDP in the last six years the participation of the internal market was much greater than the contribution of exports. Moreover, while the central countries are issuing to provide subsidies, with other criteria, here there is no issuance, but using available funds. It seems necessary to report on this situation because in the classification of blocs of governments in Latin America, the Argentine government is included in the social liberals when in truth it is a case unto itself. This is a discussion within the Argentine left, but it should be made known".

2.1 Beginning of the point

"Unilateralism, which elevated the US to hegemony, is in crisis nowadays and power is spread out we will see if it is moving towards a multipolar scheme or an association among powers. In the immediate term the economic and military power of the US are not at stake, no other power could take over for it. However, the world is showing a new structure of international power that G8 can no longer contain, which is why G20 is necessary. China, India, Brazil and Russia seek to have their own weight in decisions and are acting with more and more independence (as Iran and Venezuela have done in other arenas). However the presence of these new powers can be seen as a recognition of them, or as a form of co-option by the

world order. The IMF reform hoped for that would respond to the new configuration of world power has been deferred. The US will continue to rule and the body will continue to impose its conditions to grant loans.

At clause a) On the subject of FTAA and Trinidad and Tobago we propose: "Since the fall of the FTAA, the US has not had a global policy for Latin America, except for pressure and threats of aggression. At the Summit of the Americas in Trinidad and Tobago, the Obama administration has been trying to rearm its relations with its "backyard", isolating some countries (Venezuela, Bolivia) and co-opting others (Brazil, Argentina), however all of this has been such a failure that they did not succeed in signing a final declaration.

Nowadays, Latin America is disputed territory. On the one hand, the empire is aware that South America has been at the centre of resistance to neoliberalism and that in this crisis anticapitalist tendencies can hold sway, for this reason its response is twofold: on the one hand it puts the emphasis on lowering the level of tensions, affirming diplomatic relations and negotiations; on the other hand it seeks the return of the 4th fleet, the military coup in Honduras and the agreement for seven new military bases on Colombia's territory reveal the real content of the new administration. The current situation in Haiti with the humanitarian collapse could lead to a full US occupation, concluding in the long run with a new associated state.

"On the other hand, the recent VII Summit of ALBA nations and the resolutions approved propose a response to the crisis that breaks with capital's logic. Strengthening this alliance tends to shape a defensive regional structure that will make it possible to raise ant-imperialist barriers and to deepen measures such as nationalisations".

At clause c) We think the paragraph speaking of maintaining the dollar at a high level or organising a competitive devaluation should be inverted (because the latter is currently underway).

2.2. at the beginning of this point:

The United States retains a dominant position ... add ... “until the time of the crisis 60% of growth in the world economy could be explained by US consumption – US society consumes more than it produces and covers the gap with imports – however now American consumers are more concerned with paying their debts to prevent seizure of their belongings, due to the fall in value of their assets, than consuming. Consumer confidence is very low and has started to restore the rate of savings (7% of the GDP, the highest in 50 years). Under these conditions who will replace the US consumer as a world motor force? And yet we must underline the rise of Brazil (which will grow 5.5% in 2010, driving a good part of the South American region), Russia, India and China (which will grow 8.5% in 2010, driving the entire ASEAN) (BRIC).

Comment on China: The G2 within G20 is an expression of this cooperation, but also of interdependence. The US is the country with the largest deficit in the world and China has the largest surplus. 60% of the US deficit is financed by China. Both countries are part of a sort of integration through trade and investment flows.

The world crisis has sped up the rise of China. It is already the world's first exporter and second economy, from January of this year and the free trade zone between China and ASEAN will come into effect, the third in the world in value and the first in population. Unlike the 1990s when China's growth was sustained by its exports, now the real motor of Chinese growth is its internal market. Domestic demand, which drags all the exports from Southeast Asia, has grown by 20% in the last quarters, the outcome of three convergent policies: an enormous infrastructure plan (16% of the GDP); a systematic reduction in interest rates and the creation of a health system that will succeed in covering 90% of the peasant population (approximately 720 million people) in 2009/2011.

Standard & Poor y Moody's have recently estimated that the Chinese economy will grow by 12% over the next two years.

At this point Brazil is described as “imperialist”.

We have doubts as to this description, it seems to us that the imperialist capital that does exist in Brazil is not of Brazilian origin, and it is difficult to locate the country in some of the classical Marxist definitions of imperialism. Moreover it doesn't appear to us that there is a finance capital of Brazilian origin. On the contrary, we do think that Brazil remains a dependent capitalist country, hegemonic in Latin America, that on the one hand is subject to the interests of imperialism, yet on the other, the defence of its national space, seeking leeway (UNASUR) and has contradictions with the US. Yes, it does seem interesting to point out that it is the only country in the region with a national defence programme. This is a subject for debate and we think the opinion of the Brazilian comrades is important.

2.4. first paragraph: After “workers’ strikes, add “and popular mobilisations” ..., These are hundreds, thousands ... change “Indians” to read “original peoples”.

This leads to three types of government: we propose replacing the entire paragraph to read:

“There is a bloc of countries where one finds rightwing or far-right governments in Mexico, Honduras, Colombia or Peru, combined with brutal sectors of the oligarchic right that has not abandoned the perspective of overthrowing Chávez and Morales. The recent victory of the Neo-Pinochetist right in Chile could strengthen a Pacific bloc, with Peru and Colombia, to stage an imperialist counteroffensive in the region. All these sectors are on the offensive today, supported by imperialism's political-military elites.

A second group of governments is the focal point of processes of greater radicalisation and partial breaks with imperialism, such as Venezuela, Bolivia and Ecuador, and others whose course is still difficult to predict such as Paraguay and El Salvador. They have implemented policies of partial distribution of rents in favour of social programmes and to the poorer layers of the population, declaring their support for social movements. In the

development of their internal contradictions and under imperialist pressure, they can progress towards decidedly anticapitalist positions. All see Cuba as a reference point. We are on their side against North American imperialism and local oligarchies.

“A third type of Government, with all its nuances, includes Brazil, Chile, Uruguay, and Argentina, with a “neodevelopmenalist” variation in the latter case. Continue with the original text “These are social liberal governments respecting ... that gave the PT government a real popularity.

We support.....continue original paragraph to the end.

4. An anticapitalist programme

The proposals centre on winning back positions specific to the Welfare State (for example, public services under social control) or reforms (redistribution of wealth) but there has been no mention whatsoever of experiences of factory occupation, self-management and alternative politics (for example occupying lands and cultivating them) or putting a stop to open-pit mines and to turning farmlands over to soya production.

When discussing the redistribution of wealth, it seems important to us to point out that the “problem” is not poverty as the World Bank says, and, especially in Latin America, the Catholic Church, discussing targeted programmes that are exactly what WB is backing. On the contrary, we think it is worth pointing out that the “problem” is the fact that the concentration of wealth requires the expansion of poverty and put the emphasis on the redistribution of wealth. This will not require targeted programmes, but comprehensive ones.

We also think that in terms of programme we must draw conclusions from recent years in Latin America. The region has been a real laboratory for social-political experiences: strikes with factory occupations, relenting firms under workers' control and management, worker-state co-management experiences, productive enterprises self-managed by unemployed workers' organisations, neighbourhood self-organisation and recuperation of public spaces,

community forms of management, various forms of partial empowerment... These experiences

should make up part of our programme.

Buenos Aires, January 2010.

Group in Argentina

SAP Denmark Amendment to "Role and Tasks"

14 February 2010

In spite of the evolution within the traditional social democratic parties from classical reformism to social liberalism and in spite of the weakening of these parties, reformism still exists within the working class and reformist political parties still play a decisive role in Europe.

For revolutionaries and anticapitalists reformism is and will in the foreseeable future remain a political challenge and a political opponent. First, most classical social democracies have kept some form of ideological and organisational bonds to the working class and to the trade unions. This is why we cannot rule out that they will turn tactically to the left or propose and even implement limited reforms benefitting the working class or marginalised groups. The recent class rhetoric from Gordon Brown towards the Conservatives can prove to be a step in this direction.

Secondly, we can state the fact that in many countries reformist parties actually exist or are being formed. In Sweden, Norway and Denmark these parties - Vänsterpartiet (VP), Socialistisk Venstreparti (SV) and Socialistisk Folkeparti (SF) respectively - have a long history. In Denmark SF has distinctively grown stronger in the last few years, and in total gained more supporters than the established social democratic party has lost. In France the Left Party in alliance with the CP gained more votes than the NPA in the European elections. In Germany Die Linke is a

similar example.

Even in well established broad anticapitalist parties we face the risk that reformist currents will develop and grow stronger.

As long as the working class in each country and in recent times is lacking experience with the reformist parties in practice - ie. in government - rising dissatisfaction will often lead to greater support for these parties. The working class will at first try to use them for self defence and for change. For revolutionaries and anticapitalists it is not feasible to change the balance of forces and grow decisively and qualitatively until the reformist currents have proven in practice that they will rather defend capitalism than the working class.

This faces revolutionary and anticapitalist forces with important tasks and tactical choices. Under all circumstances it is necessary to develop a political alternative to the reformist currents - an alternative that clearly supersedes the established system.

Dependent on the concrete circumstances in each country revolutionaries can try to build left wings within the left reformist parties that are most open and has the strongest relations to social movements and mobilisations. In other countries the task is to build broader parties on a clearly anticapitalist platform and with a united front tactical offensive towards the reformist parties.

Finally there will be countries where sections of the Fourth International must fill this part because it is not practically possible to establish broad anticapitalist parties.

In replacement of the last three lines of section 3 and as an introduction to section 4:

"In conclusion, the situation in the working class movement has the following characteristics:

- The trade unions are weakened - in some countries decisively
- The traditional social democratic parties are quantitatively weakened
- The traditional social democratic parties have moved away from classical reformism and towards social liberalism
- In many countries the reformist currents are represented by several different parties
- Some countries have seen the development of important anticapitalist organisations and currents

This situation faces revolutionaries and anticapitalists with new openings but also a new task: Reorganising and rebuilding the working class movement on a new anticapitalist and ecological platform

[The whole of section 4 follows from here without any amendments]

Puerto Rican contribution on the Role and Tasks discussion

16 January 2010

Basing ourselves on our experience, we support the orientation toward the creation of broad anti-capitalist parties. Such parties can be a fundamental link in the road to the creation of the revolutionary parties mentioned in the statutes of the Fourth International, adopted in the 2003 Congress. We similarly support the 10 points included in the fourth point of the resolution as programmatic orientations that we should push for in the process of creation of anti-capitalist parties. It seems to us, nevertheless, that to call these parties anti-capitalist and not revolutionary is not a mere terminological quirk: one thing is not the same as the other. It is not a question of raising a wall between them. The importance of anti-capitalist parties lies precisely in the possibility, in their potential, to evolve in an increasingly clear, explicit and conscious revolutionary direction. Nevertheless, such an evolution, not even the adoption of the 10 points outlined in the resolution, much less a practice oriented by them, is assured beforehand. We cannot simply suppose that broad anti-capitalist parties, made up of "left reformists" and "revolutionary nationalists", will spontaneously flow in that direction. For that, a constant, systematic, and, thus organized intervention of those favoring that evolution is necessary. From this follows the need for an organization of those favoring that orientation within the broad anti-capitalist parties that may emerge. It seems to us that the resolution mentions but does not emphasize sufficiently the need for this organization.

The notion of anti-capitalist parties seems important to us, but not only in the context indicated in the resolution, defined by the evolution of social-democracy toward social-liberalism,

on the one hand, and the presence of working-class and social resistance, on the other. It can also have an important role in attracting to a revolutionary position sectors which are beginning to perceive the need of a break with capitalism but that, for different reasons (including the image of socialism projected by Stalinism in all its variants or by diverse sectarian currents, etc) are not yet willing to call themselves or do not yet think of themselves as socialist or communist. This is the case in our country, where there is no significant social-democratic tendency.

In that sense, the term "socialism of the XXIst century" is both legitimate and useful: it creates a space that invites a break with the tendencies that dominated socialism in the XX century, namely, social-democracy and Stalinism. It allows us to present the need for something different from those two currents as a central aspect of any present and future socialist project. It is, therefore, positive that Chávez and others have popularized this notion of "socialism of the XXIst century". It is an opportunity that we must take advantage of. We feel until now we have not done so sufficiently. It would be hard to think of a world current that is not the Fourth International that has thought-out, debated and elaborated more well-rounded positions regarding alternatives to social-democracy and Stalinism, that is to say, that is better equipped to intervene in the debates on the characteristics of a socialism of the XXIst century: think, for example, of our positions on socialist democracy, women's struggles, LGBTT struggles, the ecological question, and now, climatic change, among others. It seems to us that a more visible and active intervention in the ongoing debate about a socialism of the XXIst century should part of the

role and tasks of the Fourth International in the coming period. We need documents, articles, books, pamphlets, etc. which make are documents and elaborations available as contributions to that renewal of the socialist project.

We agree with the indication that in the near future the combination of the right-ward evolution of social-democracy, on the one hand, and social resistances, on the other, can promote the emergence not only of the type of broad anti-capitalist party that we promote, but also of diverse hybrid formations, nurtured by the discontent or rejection of the complete adaptation to neo-liberalism of the existing parties. This is also the case in the contexts where there is no significant social-democratic party. Besides social-democracy and broad anti-capitalist parties there may also appear very diverse formations that may or may not become anti-capitalist parties, or may open the path for the emergence of such parties, but which are not that type of party. How should we classify, for example, a structure such as the PSUV in Venezuela? In so far as such formations emerge it may be convenient for the struggle to create broad anti-capitalist parties both that our current work within such parties or remain independent of them. Everything will depend on the specific situation in each country. In other words, we see no contradiction between adopting an orientation toward the creation of broad anti-capitalist parties, on the one hand, and the recognition, on the other, that in the immediate future formations that we cannot describe as such may also emerge, and in which it may also be necessary to actively intervene. To fight within those organizations for the 10 points indicated in the resolution may the form of working for the creation of broad anti-capitalist

parties at this moment and in certain countries. It seems to us that the resolution should encompass the possibility of these variants.

Furthermore, the orientation to the creation of broad anti-capitalist parties does not annul the possibility of processes of regroupment between revolutionary organizations. In Puerto Rico, the section of the Fourth International has recently joined other groups in such a process. The result has been the emergence of the Movimiento al Socialismo, a modest structure, which is nevertheless quantitatively and qualitatively superior to that which existed before. But it is not a broad anti-capitalist party, but rather, a regroupment of Marxist sectors (with the exception of our section, not originating from "trotskyism"). To recognize the possibility and desirability of taking advantage of such opportunities is not in contradiction with the perspective of creating broad anti-capitalist parties. On the contrary, we think they should be combined: one of the topics to be discussed with other organizations is precisely their position regarding the creation of that type of broad anti-capitalist party. In our case, one of the points of agreement of our unification was the shared perspective of the creation of a broad workers' party (or party of labor and the communities, or party of working people: the name is under discussion). Thus, it seems to us that

the resolution which states our orientation toward the creation of broad anti-capitalist parties can and should include the desirability of taking advantage of the possibilities of regroupment with other revolutionary organizations.

We agree that we must pose the need for an international organization within the broad anti-capitalist parties that may emerge. We also agree with the appreciation that a new international structure composed of such parties is not something that will emerge in the near future, or, at least, whose emergence will coincide with the creation of such parties in specific countries. Furthermore, even if such a structure were to emerge, the intervention of those that favor the evolution of its components in a revolutionary direction will require an international coordination. In other words: a) the need for the groups of the Fourth International to act as such within the broad anti-capitalist parties, b) the need to promote international links among such parties, c) the desirability that our sections active in different anti-capitalist parties coordinate their efforts, including if the latter do manage to coalesce into some form of new international and d) the probability that for the time being such parties will not create such an international, are all reasons that lead to the conclusion, clearly indicated in

the resolution, of strengthening the Fourth International as the only structure of its type in the world.

We agree with the amendments presented to include in the resolution aspects related to women's and LGBTT struggles and to promote our youth work.

We also support the indications that we should avoid the language associated with official publications (emergent capitalist countries) or of discarding "the old" to build the new to the extent that this refers to persons (beyond the fact that an absolute opposition between old and new is not very dialectical, to say the least: from where can the new emerge if not from a present which is constantly turning into the past?) On the other hand, we do not agree with the use of the term "empowerment" of the dispossessed, oppressed, etc. We feel terms such as self-organization are more adequate. The term empowerment, at least among us, is associated not only with self-organization but also with the notion that with that organization and the self-confidence it generates (which of course we fully aspire to), the oppressed can progressively conquer "portions" of power, thus avoiding the need for political action or defying the capitalist state, that is to say, a perspective which is not at all interested in posing the problem of revolution.

Building the anti-capitalist left

16 January 2010, by **Thomas Eisler**

Our organisational frameworks in each country differ very much and even in some countries comrades who identify with the FI have made different choices. These choices - when we for instance take the examples of Germany and Greece - are more a tactical choice. Nevertheless when we describe our tasks today we share common perspectives.

1. Towards the proletarian socialist revolution. We share the conviction that the problems that humanity can not be solved without replacing the capitalist system with another system that not only put people before profit but totally abandons the hunt for profit as a determining factor. We are convinced that such a transformation can only happen if it is lead by the working class.

2. In most countries of the world such a transformation is not on the agenda today. Our task is to contribute to a development of the class struggle in a broad sence that will put the change of society as a real possibility. In order to do so we need political forces with that perspective.

3. We strive to build a broad anticapitalist left. Such a left has the

following tasks:

a. Put forward a response to the questions which are raised in the struggles and in the general debate. The response has to be concrete solutions and demands that can be directed as agitation towards the masses. Such demands and solutions should not be limited by the constraints of capitalism or what would be accepted by the ruling class. In that terrain we follow the method of the transitional programme.

b. Attract layers of radicalised people and youth. In that sense it needs to be a visible pole of attraction and be able to direct its agitation towards the masses. In most countries this implies being part of the electoral process and a need to have some weight in order to be taken seriously.

4. The building of organisations to fulfill the tasks has to be based on the political environment in which we are situated and the concrete possibilities we have – or may not have.

5. In some cases we are building the section of the Fourth International and have no organisational platform with other radical left currents or we only do so in temporary alliances.

6. In some cases we build parties we consider anticapitalist. I.e. parties that put forward anticapitalist demands

and solutions and put building the movements over being part of a governmental left.

7. In some cases we might be part of broader left parties with a left reformist orientation. These parties like Die Linke might have some anticapitalist rhetoric but are limited by their orientation towards the institutions. In such parties we take part if it is possible to build an anticapitalist current and these parties are a pole of attraction for radicalised layers.

I think the text which is proposed by the IC in many points are unclear and partly mistaken, but I supported it because I thought it was the best basis for our discussion that we were able to put forward.

Reformism

The text underestimates the possibilities that reformisms has to win support. This goes for the Social Democracy as well as green or left reformist parties. Also the text underestimates the possibilities that breaks in the Social Democratic and reformist parties can lead to new political organisations to the left as was the case with the formation of Die Linke in Germany. Even with the relative success of the NPA in France we have seen the continuous importance of the PCF and their

alliance with the Parti de Gauche.

International organisation

I don't think that the question of a new International necessarily will be posed in new (or existing) anti-capitalist parties as it might be understood from point 7 in the document. On the contrary it is one of the fields where the FI has a specific contribution. But if the convergence of different forces on the national level is complicated this is even more the case on the international level. We should work towards international networks and alliances based on common understanding of the political tasks and which are frameworks for open exchange of experiences and discussions of political differences. This is in contradiction to international cooperation that is limited to tactical alliances and diplomatic relations where real political differences are not dealt with openly which I think is part of the problems with the ELP.

With the EACL we took the opportunity put the anticapitalist left at the center for political debate on the European left. But today the ELP exists with resources beyond what the EACL ever had. To maintain the EACL as proposed by Mathieu and Patrick doesn't make any sense. We have to look for new opportunities for convergence and debate.

Youth: A central sector for the anticapitalists

6 January 2010

Though youth does not really have the means to stop the economy, the ruling class dreads youth, as we saw when a breeze of panic blew on the governments after the riots in Greece. The fear that it could spread to its own youth forced the French government to postpone the implementation of a high school reform. A curfew had even been implemented in France during the revolt of suburban youth.

What do they fear?

It's without a doubt the frequency and the massivity of youth mobilisations. These last years, massive youth mobilisations took place in almost every country, and very frequently in some of them; anti-globalisation counter-summits, mobilisations against the war in Iraq and the occupation of Palestine, fights for democratic rights, strikes against the reforms of education and university (last year only: in Italy, Croatia, Britain, France and the Spanish

State). We even saw some interaction at an international level between these struggles. The mobilisation in France against the CPE gave confidence and an example for Greek youth, who led an important strike in the universities the following year. Last year, many young Europeans identified with the Greek youth revolt.

It is also the radicality of these mobilisations that gives them a particularity. In a violent society that

has no future to offer them, youths have very few to lose. Thus, they do not hesitate to confront the State, the police, and the institutions. The wish to get rid of this system is widespread in this sector. Young people identify with anticapitalism and the idea of revolution more easily.

Most of the time, youth mobilisations meet important sympathy from the workers and the population, as if the youth were saying loudly what the majority couldn't afford to say. Thus, in many instances, youth mobilisations restored to our social camp the confidence in our ability to resist; and in some cases other working sectors engaged in mobilisation, following the youth.

Of course, these mobilisations develop more often among student youth, in the universities and high schools; but we also find this spontaneity, this radicality and this stronger will to fight among young workers. In the workers' strikes of these last years, young workers were often found in first line.

b) Particular characteristics of youth explain these specificities

Youth is defined by two major factors: its dependence on certain state reproductive institutions and its transitional situation towards the social division of labour. Youth is not a homogenous social group. It contains sectors with different or opposing class origins and/or orientation, and it therefore includes conflicting interests. That's why the student movement often chooses forms of organization that are different, more spontaneous and less coherent than those of the working class (e.g. trade unions, confederations etc).

However, although youth is diverse, is not a homogenous social layer and even if a student, an unemployed marginalised youth, a precarious young interim worker... live different realities, there are some common characteristics to all: this period of transition, of non-determination, and a particular relation to the institutions (family, school, army, police, even the workplace). Young people are supervised, there is a will to subdue them, they do not have the possibility

to make their own choices, in the workplace they do not have the same status as the other workers...

Youth is characterized by a particular place in the social division of labour: youth either has not yet entered the production system (student youth); or it has been integrated to it either for a short period of time or in an on-and-off way (alternating precarious small jobs, periods of unemployment, return to tuition...). Hence youth is less subjected to the mechanisms of work alienation. Student youth has more time to think about the working of this society, and mobilising is easier since it does not imply a loss of wage or a risk of being laid off.

Youth is less settled in life so really has much less to lose in a change of society. Youths do not own a house, a car; do not have children or a stable job. The stronger will to fight is also due to the fact that youth is less demoralised. It did not undergo the series of working class defeats, the setback of our rights and the degradation of living conditions that weighs on the workers' ability to mobilise.

Additionally, an important element is that youths have their whole life to build in this society that objectively has no future to offer them. It is obvious that the will to be done with this system is stronger when one still has 60 years to live in it than when one's life is mostly past.

One more unifying feature of youth is that it is entering, or it is about to enter, the social division of labour under certain historical circumstances and class relations that differentiates it from the past generations. The present youth generation for example comes to the foreground during a serious crisis of capitalism, which severely harms their future perspectives. On the other hand, it has not experienced the international workers' class's defeat of the late 1980's. It is therefore more likely to radicalise further during next years. There are some contradictions in many European countries: for example you are adult enough to work, to produce (in a more precarious way, of course) at 16, but not adult enough to vote, to get married or to take

decisions on your own health (abortions, surgical operations...). Youth can take some decisions (as producers) but not all of them. This contradiction makes youth understood as a passive and subordinate subject: to be taught, prepared, held, punished... and only in a few aspects are young people seen as equals. This status makes the youth want to rebel (even if they have differences: students, precarious...).

That is why they develop common attitudes, notably a yearning for autonomy and a will to revolt against the institutions that supervise them, against the establishment.

c) Youth at the heart of ruling class attacks

Youth is at the heart of a contradiction: its ability to protest represents a danger for the ruling class, but at the same time attacking youth is for them one of the easiest means of attacking the rights of the workers, of lowering the cost of work and therefore partly make up for the fall of the average rate of profit, which is a permanent problem for capitalists since the early 1970's. It is easier to break the statutes and lower the wages when one starts before the workers' entry into the work market. Thus, youth is at the heart of the governmental attacks. Education reforms and the Bologna process in the universities at a European level aim at devaluing diplomas. Attacking education, the ruling class prepares the workers to have no more collective guarantees, with an increasingly individualised curriculum, to have lower wages with diplomas not recognised in collective conventions, to be working on demand and to be adapted to the specific needs of the companies, with more and more public/private partnerships in the universities.

In Europe, the youth has also suffered the crisis stronger: from 2008 to 2009, the unemployment rate in Europe increased by 1.5% (reached 8.8%) and the youth unemployment rate increased by 3.7% (reached 18.4%). The Spanish state is the European country with the highest youth unemployment rate (last year the youth unemployment rate increased

12 points while the general unemployment rate increased 8 points) The second one is Italy, where the difference between the general unemployment rate and the youth unemployment rate is 17%.

Mass youth unemployment, which grew even more with the crisis, leads youths to accept ever worse working conditions, being less paid, more precarious. It is used as a pretext by the governments to implement specific statutes for young workers: employers' contributions exemptions for the companies hiring youths, specific working contracts with less rights, lower wages...

To solve the contradiction between youth's strong capacity of mobilisation and the necessity to attack it in priority, the ruling class is forced to deploy a repressive apparatus to try and subdue youth's explosions: police control, school discipline, exhausting timetables of studying and every-day life, ferocious repression of the movements (police in high schools, army in the universities, State of Emergency against the suburb riots in France).

Even if the working class is the central force to throw down capitalism, it is obvious that youth is a decisive element, that plays a role in class struggle, which we must try to gain to our organisations and whose mobilisations we must try to influence. The IVth International organisations must try and organise the new militant generations that emerge in the different countries.

2. What place for youth in our organisations and how to build in this sector?

a) Youth: a priority

To achieve this, intervention towards youth must be a priority for our organisations, meaning implementing a regular activity where youth are concentrated: universities, high schools, but also companies employing a lot of young precarious workers

(Mac Donald's...). The elaboration of this activity must be discussed as such within in our organisations. It must be a major and daily concern. Being attentive to these mobilisations, maintaining a permanent elaboration and a regular activity towards this sector are the only means to influence its struggles and gain the new militant generations to our organisations.

b) Build organisations able to seize youth specificities

We must also build militant frameworks able to seize the specificities of this youth: different ways and means of politicisation, faster rhythms of mobilisation, stronger radicality. The majority of youths come to politics through and for action. We must build organisations for action, that are in direct link with the mobilisations and useful for building these. It is also necessary to adapt in some way to the faster rhythms of mobilisation by offering daily militant frameworks.

To answer to this radicality, we must display our anticapitalist and revolutionary profile.

c) Within the organisations, need for specific frameworks to coordinate intervention towards youth and allow youths to make their own experiences.

To respond to youth's aspiration to a certain autonomy, our organisations must offer youth specific frameworks allowing them to elaborate among youths and to make their own experiences: youth organisation, youth sector within the parties or other form of youth structure within the party...

Having a coordinated self-organised structure makes the youth not to delegate on older and more experimented comrades but assume responsibilities, discuss the orientation, elaborate campaigns and so on. This way, young become conscious militants faster. The youth area also understood as an area of creation of conscious militants.

We also need a specific elaboration on matters that concern youth more particularly, as well as a specific elaboration of material: tracts, brochures, newspapers, posters... At the same time, we need more attention to include specific matters

and movement that concern the youth in our whole medias.

The experience of these last years proves that all our sections need to reinforce the coordination of youth activities within our organisations. Trying to coordinate youth within our organisations is one of the conditions for an efficient intervention.

d) A strong effort of education

For young people who often live their first political experience when organising within our sections, a particular effort of theoretical education must be made, to allow them to acquire rapidly some tools for action and to gain them to militancy and revolutionary Marxism for the long run. This task gets even more urgent considering that youth's radicalisation and politicisation is often more fragile, unstable and difficult to maintain for a long period. The systematic implementation of a basic education on Marxist economy and social movement history and revolutionary strategy is an indispensable element. Making the theoretical texts available in the form of low cost brochures participates of this effort. In this framework, maintaining the yearly Youth School in the IIRE at the end of August is a decisive element. Each section should be concerned upstream about being able to register youths in the school each year.

e) The Youth Camp

In the same way, the IVth International youth camp is a central gain. It is a living education in internationalism: a too rare experience of activist-to-activist sharing on our struggle experiences, an element for a better understanding the world and for developing fraternity, comradeship at an international level. For many youths, this youth camp is what founds their profound attachment to the IVth International and their deep conviction of the necessity of internationalism. In this respect, it is an important element for building and reinforcing the IVth International.

This camp must be maintained but also reinforced. Each section must be concerned with its success, by

developing mobilisation campaigns for the camp towards our young sympathisers where we usually intervene, financially helping youths who want to participate to the camp, popularising this experience in our organisations.

Dimitri, Mathilde, Julien, JB, Caroline, Damien, Morand, Suzanne [NPA,

France]

Daniele, Tatiana [Sinistra Critica, Italy]

Pechi, Patricia, Javi, Alex [Izquierda Anticapitalista, Spanish State]

Iro, Manos, Charis, Fanis [OKDE, Greece]

Youth Commission [RSB, Germany]

Giorgos [Socialist Resistance, Britain]

Contribution submitted for the youth comrades by Philomena (IC France) and Thomas (IC Denmark), responsible for work with the youth sectors

RSB Germany: Towards a broad International at any price?

14 December 2009

1. We think there cannot be a single tactics for building a revolutionary organisation. Yet the text in discussion suggests that there can be a universal building line, although situations in countries may be very different and although most of the sections cannot apply the tactic of regroupment with other forces and still less apply the line of building a broad organisation. Thus "broad parties" cannot be the universal goal in building our organisations.

2. We insist on emphasising that in our opinion there is no reason to play down the difference between reformism and revolutionary Marxism. Moreover: with the current, very grave crisis of capitalism the term "anticapitalist" has come into fashion in the vocabulary of very diverse forces. However, this term is losing its concrete relevance and is no longer sufficient as a guideposts. The tasks before us have not become smaller and there is no objective common ground between reformism and revolutionary communism; on the contrary. With the loss of leeway for reformism, almost all reformist parties are becoming further and further integrated into the capitalist system. As a result, on this level our tasks have become more difficult and complicated, if we do not want to merely cling to the skirts of reformism.

3. The draft resolution fosters the illusion that in the near future we will be able to create a new international or at least a new international framework ("dans la perspective d'un nouveau regroupement international / in the perspective of a new international grouping"). To achieve this goal and facilitate this task, the text proposes to build the 4th International based on "our vision of the future". But nowhere is this described or is what it involves laid out. Yet what are the programmatic bases we want to struggle for? Without this absolutely necessary clarification, any policy tending to force this course of regroupment and broadening can be a slippery slope towards an adventure with unforeseeable consequences. What do we mean by "21st-century socialism"? This calls for an intense debate within the International in order to learn from our sections' different experiences and theoretical and programmatic contributions.

4. What is a "pluralistic left"? If it is an inherent value, it calls for more concrete characterisation, because in the absolute, a pluralistic organisation can be anything whatsoever. Just note: the fusion of two reformist currents, claiming to be "open" does not make this into a broad party as some of the authors of the draft resolution are imagining.

5. In the near future, there is no question of us being in a position to rebuild the international workers' movement. We can make some slight contribution, but setting this reconstruction as a task can lead us to lose sight of what is actually possible, thereby "forgetting" the crucial lessons of the history of the workers' movement (and our own history).

6. Finally, we need a thorough debate on the evolution of reformist parties (in our opinion, some are former reformists), in particular social-democratic parties. Indeed, it is totally unsuitable to apply a general characterization to all of these parties, as the differences are too major according to the stage of concrete evolution of their shift to the right and their integration to the capitalist order. A collective debate on the criteria to be retained would be very useful as overly rough appreciations (or those that are only orthodox at first glance) can lead us to make huge errors, or paralyse us politically (by holding us prisoner to ritualistic formulas). We have to ask the sections concerned to conduct a recent analysis of the state and evolution of social-democratic and ex-Stalinist parties in their countries. Ascribing a supposedly unchanging class nature, or a function in the current course of the class struggle that is also unchanging is in no way Marxist and can lead us to fail to take real changes

into account and to pointlessly chase after reality out of ignorance. Just one example: if the adjective “reformist” is so common in analyses where it is used with no further specification, then it becomes evident that any new social-democratic formation that develops to the left of an existing social-democratic party is automatically “left reformist”. The problem with this is that if we proceed thusly, the descriptors (reformist and left reformist) lose any content. In certain cases, this can lead to profound errors in estimating concrete political evolutions.

This said, we also want to submit some of the explanatory comments we had already made to the International Committee to the Congress preparatory discussion and to the delegates:

Despite wishful thinking and repeated calls we must observe that the left is not joining together in “broad parties”. The question “what party to we want to build”, “what should be the nature of a broad party, if the participation of revolutionary Marxists is to be meaningful or “what processes of unification should we participate in” is truly the decisive question. But this very question is often forgotten.

As long as we do not debate these key questions collectively we won’t make progress. We don’t entirely share Tariq Ali’s observation that “the Left and social movements in Europe (Italy is the most recent example) are in an advanced state of decomposition” but we cannot share in the euphoria, in particular about EACL (European Anticapitalist Left) harboured by some comrades. The EACL project is the most obvious expression of a vague perspective and divergent concepts.

In our opinion the International has the best analyses and a programme that has best passed the test of history, but it is really disoriented in terms of building the revolutionary organisation.

In order to avoid any misunderstanding we insist on making the following comments:

- No doubt must arise about our unshakeable orientation favouring an

offensive common action policy (united front). The heart of this orientation is and must remain our work in the extraparliamentary opposition and the trade union left.

- We are ardent partisans of candidacies in elections. There is no activity that has contributed as much to the dissemination/propagation of our ideas as Olivier’s candidacy.

- The current debate must concentrate on the question: how can we take part in truly anticapitalist forces, coalitions or fronts? And secondly: what do we want to achieve in these? Because the process of differentiation between forces that merely fight neoliberalism and those that view themselves as anticapitalist or more precisely “revolutionary” is nowadays the most important differentiation in a good number of countries (probably most European countries).

And when matters are to be dealt with in very concrete terms, in many cases even this distinction will not be sufficient, as very diverse forces claim to be anticapitalist.

The mechanical transposition of a specific model to other countries has led many comrades in the International to speak out for an almost unspecified “broad party”, even in regions and cases where we could not really expect the creation of an anticapitalist force.

We have to draw up a frank balance sheet of our work in “broad parties” because in various countries the formation of “broad parties” has met with failure. In Italy PRC has taken a steady rightward course. In Brazil, the “broad party” project, PT, which even seemed anticapitalist at its beginnings has evolved towards a neoliberal project.

Behind the anti-neoliberal party/anticapitalist party debate, we can discern the older debate opposing reformist party and revolutionary party. One of the key points is the attitude towards the bourgeois state apparatus.

Anti-neoliberal parties and government participation

The debate on “broad parties” has developed in two discussions: about building anti-neoliberal parties and building anticapitalist parties. The project for left renewal through building broad parties is the outcome of several erroneous conclusions:

* Is it really important or even primordial to build (perhaps even above all on the electoral level) an alternative to the social-democratic governments as so many texts of the International and EACL state? Isn’t it much more important and finally, more decisive, to build an alternative to ruling-class policies? Thus, doesn’t this mean building resistance from below and not fostering the illusion that we can present a governmental alternative?

This has several implications. It is true and undeniable that good electoral campaigns, and in consequence good electoral outcomes can provide an encouragement and important boost to spreading revolutionary ideas. But this must not be overestimated or become the only goal. Finally, it is primordial to support work among workers, to do organizing work, to build links with other components of the existing extraparliamentary movement while building this movement. The International must clearly reject shortcut or breakthrough strategies. IST’s strategy for example is closely linked to a programmatic shift.

By calling for the building of an alternative to social-democratic governments, aren’t we fostering illusions in terms of the actual relationship of forces in the real possibilities coming out of a vote for ... a broad party? Given the actual relationship of forces (at least in Europe) we must recognise that we are very far from a context in which the vote for a left party could considerably change the relationship of forces by providing this alternative

a victory. Either this alternative is not truly representative of the class struggle, or else it is a substantial force in the class struggle, in which case it won't win the elections and will remain a minority; in most cases a very small minority.

In no way does this mean our ideas and proposals will remain in the minority. Not at all! But under the conditions of parliamentary politics, the bourgeois order and the relationship of forces, in the middle term other majorities will only surface during great struggles and mobilisations.

Given the decline of left forces and the stagnation in most countries in recent years, some comrades have drawn the conclusion that more than ever before we must obtain electoral successes in order to find a means of emerging from the working class's defensive situations through changes in the electoral party panorama. Another erroneous idea, the outcome of the search for a shortcut, is combined with this. It is no longer really important to strengthen the "class struggle" forces within the class itself and strengthen the revolutionary organisation (or organisations). What has become most important for the comrades is the size of the organisation; independent of the force behind the political and programmatic bases of a possible regroupment or fusion. For years now we have become overcome with joy at the first inklings of an ongoing regroupement. Then we are taken aback when after a very short time, this experience proves unviable and a poor political response to the demands of the class struggle.

Here we must question above all the prized concept of "plurality". What is so positive in plurality per se, at first sight? If the term puts the emphasis on the plurality of sources and origins and if we can put forth a concordance as to central class struggle question, we will be able to doubtless observe that it has a considerable political success as an effect.

But usually this term refers to or suggests something else, that is ongoing political differences whose impact is played down - via compromises on formulas or setting

aside certain questions. At an extreme, we can get the impression that we must not only produce this plurality but also have the task of keeping it going, making it permanent.

Why is the emphasis so often put on plurality? Is a less pluralist party necessarily less effective or less democratic? But representativity is not necessarily linked to the pluralistic nature of a party. Is it harmful to the success or historical justification for a party if this party is less pluralistic than for example the Brazilian PT or PRC in Italy? Was the Spartakusbund split from SPD an error? In our tradition we have always considered that they should have left SPD at least 10 years earlier, to form a combative, class struggle party as Lenin did. As we know Trotsky rallied Lenin's positions. Do we no longer share these convictions?

Anticapitalist party and broad party

Too often the International's statements and articles centre on electoral successes, hoped for, achieved or not. In our press there are countless articles giving us the impression that electoral politics and winning parliamentary mandates are the supreme goal of our work.

Another grave error in the orientation of the International and its sections flows from this. If winning parliamentary mandates (or more broadly, good electoral results) has become the supreme goal, then comrades will soon be ready to make political concessions in order to achieve good results by forming coalitions with other forces. This does not imply that it isn't allowed to have electoral agreements among revolutionary forces. Moreover common candidacies - as long as these are based on a revolutionary and class struggle programme - can be useful. It doesn't seem to us that this is necessarily the best choice in each specific case, but a common candidacy cannot and must not be ruled out straight off.

Here it is necessary to recall one of the principles of revolutionary propaganda. Revolutionary Marxists have always remained faithful to the conviction that unity of action ("all together") is something very precious. The best example of the application of this principle is the Bolsheviks' line in 1917 when they struggled ("all together") with other forces for the slogan "land, bread and peace", mobilising broad sectors of the oppressed classes, culminating in the revolutionary struggle in autumn 1917 and the fall of the old regime. But Bolsheviks and revolutionaries always propagandised for another society (for socialism) under their own banners. What can only be done for a very limited time is joint propaganda alongside another organisation. Such propaganda must start out from the class struggle and implacable antagonism to the capitalist system and the bourgeois parliamentary order.

We do not consider it useful to apply a universal tactics for the building of "broad" parties, "anti-neoliberal" parties or "anticapitalist" parties. Often such tactics get blown up into strategies, which - in the best of cases - prove to be mere chimeras when confronted with the reality of concrete traditions, evolutions and perspectives of the actual workers' movement in different countries. In the worst cases, schemas are imposed on sections, causing them quite a few problems. We are not opposed in principle to similar tactics or those of the same kind on the international level, but we see them as useful only in the context of an international upturn in workers' struggles, for example as in the years 1917- 23, 1934-37, 1968-1974/75). During defensive periods, the differences between workers' movements in their respective countries are much starker, so it is much harder to apply a common tactics. And it goes without saying that this cannot be resolved via Zinovievist methods. Independent of such considerations, we insist on maintaining strategic principles on an international level, such as non-participation in bourgeois governments, the struggle against war, for building social movements, to build class struggle tendencies in trade unions, for women's liberation

Contribution to the debate on the Role and Tasks of the FI in the form of amendments

13 December 2009, by Yvan Lemaître

This question cannot be stated in the same terms as in 1992 for two reasons. First, the overall economic, social and political situation is not the same, we must take the measure of the "tipping of the world" to rediscuss our perspectives and our tasks. Then experiences have been made, the results of which oblige us to stress the need for independence from the politics of the old reformist parties and the importance of formulating, advocating and implementing programmatic and strategic orientations in keeping with revolutionary Marxism.

From this perspective, it seems to me that the text does not include the contribution of the battle for the foundation and construction of the NPA enough.

These amendments have no other ambition than to point those questions whose answers can only be written as a collective work, that of the FI through its collaborations, discussions and confrontations as well as with other anti-capitalist and revolutionary currents.

In bold, what is added, italic what is deleted

Part 1. Last paragraph.

In conclusion, the crisis makes obvious the failure of the **bourgeois classes, of their** neoliberal ideology, incapable of offering a solution. All the contradictions inherent to this social system are going to explode without social democracy and the centre left being able to offer an adequate response. Even neo-Keynesian measures, which have not been adopted anyway, would not be enough

to resolve the crisis. **Thus, the gap between the rhetoric and pretensions of the ruling classes and the reality of the suffering and tragedies that they impose upon the peoples and workers, the intensification of their pressure on them, create the conditions of exacerbated social tensions and political crisis. Our primary concern is to work for unity to defend the workers' and peoples' rights, to build parties acting in that perspective independently from the institutions.**

Part 3. Last paragraph.

In the context of the chronic crisis of capitalism, the combination of social resistances and this evolution of the apparatuses of the *traditional neoliberal or reformist* left *open a new space for the radical left* **make necessary and possible for the revolutionaries to carry out a policy combining the research of unity of the anti-neoliberal and anticapitalist forces and our own perspective of a revolutionary transformation of society.** This puts on the agenda the reorganisation and rebuilding of the workers' movement on a new basis that *of anti-capitalism and eco-socialism of class independence around the social, democratic, environmental demands of the workers and the lower classes confronted with the global crisis of capitalism.*

Part 5.

This is the aspiration perspective in which the *problems of building the question of the place* of the Fourth International **and in building** new anti-capitalist parties and new

international currents *are* **is posed**. We expressed it in our own way, from 1992 onwards, so in the last two world congresses, with the triptych "New period, new programme, new party", developed in documents of the International. *We confirm the essential of our choices at the last World Congress in 2003 concerning the building of broad anticapitalist parties. The content given to this formula must be enriched by a critical assessment of the different experiences (especially Brazil and Italy) of building broad anti-capitalist parties since our last World Congress in 2003.*

The Fourth International is confronted, in an overall way, with a new phase. **This implies clarifying and redefining its tasks.** Revolutionary Marxist militants, nuclei, currents and organizations must pose the problem of the construction of anti-capitalist, revolutionary political formations, with the perspective of establishing a new independent political representation of the working class **in a context where the global crisis of capitalism gives all its relevance to the project of revolutionary transformation of society.** That is true on the level of each country scale and at an international level. On the basis of the experience of the class struggle, the development of the global justice movement, defensive struggles and anti-war mobilizations over the last ten years, and in particular the lessons drawn from the evolution of the Brazilian PT and of Communist Refoundation in Italy and from the debates of the French anti-liberal left, revolutionary Marxists have engaged in recent years in the building of the PSOL in Brazil, of

Sinistra Critica in Italy, of the new anti-capitalist party in France, Respect in England. In this perspective we have continued to build the experiences of the Bloco de Esquerda in Portugal and the Red Green Alliance in Denmark. *The common goal, via different paths, is that of broad anti-capitalist parties. These various attempts to address the crisis of the labor movement can only be successful if we learn the lessons of past failures. Certainly it is not a question of taking up the old formulas of regroupment or revolutionary currents alone. The ambition is to bring together forces beyond simply revolutionary ones. These can be a support in the process of brining forces together as long as they are clearly for building anti-capitalist parties. Although The objective is to give ourselves the means to contribute to the building of mass parties, tools for the workers' struggles in the perspective of socialism.* There is no model, since each process of coming together takes account of national specificities and relationships of forces, *our goal must thus be to seek to build broad anti-capitalist political forces, independent of social democracy and the centre left, formations which reject any policy of participation or support to class-collaborationist governments, today government with social-democracy and the centre left. It is on the basis of such a perspective that we must be oriented. What we know of the experiences of differentiation and reorganization in Africa and Asia point in the same direction. It is through this process that we can make new advances. It is this question which must form the framework of the next congress of the FI. but the political and programmatic content of our work and involvement in the various processes must be clearly defined: independence from the Social Democrats and the center-left, rejection of any political involvement or support to governments of class collaboration, independence from bourgeois institutions, defence of a policy to respond to the crisis of capitalism challenging capitalist private property and putting forward the nationalization of the*

financial system under the control of the workers and the population. The reconstruction of the labor movement can only be done by breaking with the policy of class collaboration and compromise of the old reformist parties, the Social Democrats and Stalinists. By participating fully in the various current processes, the sections and activists of the FI give themselves the objective of formulating, both in their daily militant practice and in their political work, the political basis of regrouping in the perspective of building broad parties for the revolutionary transformation of society. It is this question that should be at the heart of the next congress of the Fourth International.

Part 6. End of paragraph:

These few elements show the type of orientation that we want to implement: **to seize every opportunity to carry out the debate, to defend an independent perspective from that of the old left politics, a perspective built on the development of class struggle.** The different conferences this year such as those in Paris or Belem show the necessity and the possibility of joint action and discussion by a large number of organizations and currents of the anti-capitalist left in Europe. It is now necessary to continue a policy of open meetings and conferences on topics of strategic and programmatic thinking and joint action through campaigns and initiatives of international mobilization.

Part 7. Paragraph 1.

The Fourth International and its sections have played and still play a vital road in defending, promoting and implementing an **anticapitalist programme combining a social, democratic and environmental plan to meet the needs of the working class confronted with the crisis, a programme that raises the question of power in a socialist perspective, of demands that are both immediate and transitional towards socialism;** a united-front policy that aims for mass mobilization of workers and their organizations; a

policy of working-class unity and independence against any type of strategic alliance with the national bourgeoisie; opposition to any participation in governments in the advanced-capitalist countries that merely manage the State and the capitalist economy having abandoned all internationalism.

Part 7. End of paragraph 2.

Let us note, nevertheless, a major difference between the FI and all these tendencies, over and above political positions, and which is the credit of the International is that it is based on a democratic coordination of sections and militants, whereas the other international tendencies are "international-factions" or coordinations based on "party-factions" which do not respect rules of democratic functioning, in particular the right of tendency. The historical limits of these international "Trotskyist" currents ", like other ex-Maoist or ex-Communist currents, are as many difficulties **we must try to overcome to advance prevent us today from advancing** in the crystallization of new international convergences. **Their conceptions do not meet the needs of the new revolutionary movement; they are inevitably confronted with their own limitations and experience a crisis. One of our concerns must be to help surpass the old Trotskyist movement by fighting against the sectarianism engendered by past struggles.**

Part 7. End of part.

In the present relationship of forces, the policy for advancing towards a mass International must rather take the road of open and periodic conferences on central political questions - activity, specific themes or discussions - which make possible the convergence and the emergence of anti-capitalist and revolutionary poles. **Through these joint activities, we have the desire to build links that can only be fruitful if, step by step, political, strategic and programmatic agreements emerge.** In the new anti-capitalist parties which may be formed in the years to come, and which express the current stage of combativeness, experience

and consciousness of the sectors that are the most committed to the search for an anti-capitalist alternative, **the question of international links or even a new International is and will be posed today.** *We act and we will continue to act so that it is not posed in terms of ideological or historical choices, which are likely to lead to divisions and splits. The emergence of a new International will necessarily stand in the continuation of the attempts to regroup on an international level that are at the heart of the labor movement. This does not mean that references to the past may suffice to provide the political and programmatic foundations of a new International. It must be posed on a double level, on the one hand* **Conversely, the search for real political convergence on tasks of international intervention, on the other the pluralism of the new formations, which must bring together currents of various origins: Trotskyists of different kinds, libertarians, revolutionary syndicalists, revolutionary nationalists, left reformists, does not spare us the defence of Marxism. Quite the**

contrary, it stresses its necessity, its urgency because we are convinced that to be able to reappropriate the best in the history of the struggles for emancipation, we require the theoretical framework of critical and revolutionary Marxism.

The practical and concrete forms of this work must be defined according to each situation. So in general, when there have been concrete steps towards new parties, we have proposed that the new broad anti-capitalist party functions with the right of tendency or currents, and that the supporters of the Fourth International in these new parties organize themselves in ways to be decided, according to the specific situation of each party. Our Portuguese comrades in the Left Bloc, our Danish comrades in the Red-Green Alliance, our Brazilian comrades in the PSOL, are organized, in particular forms, as a Fourth International current or in class struggle currents with other political tendencies.

But this is not necessarily the rule. Thus, within the NPA the members of the FI did not consider it

necessary to organize as a current. The fertility and the contribution of Marxism in the construction of new workers' parties can be demonstrated through achieving the tasks of the party at all levels of responsibility and activity.

Part 9.

We have, in fact, a particular role that is recognized by a series of political currents: *We may be the only ones who can to be able to make political forces of various origins converge.* This is for example, what in Latin America the Venezuelans comrades of left currents of the Bolivarian process say to us. It is also the case in Europe, in the framework of the relations of the EACL and of other currents. So, the next world congress must be an important step for the meeting of all these forces. *This Congress will be a congress of the FI and there will be no organisational growing over at this stage.* But we want the FI to play the role of a "facilitator" of convergences in the perspective of new international groupings.

Yvan (France)

Socialist Action USA: A contribution to the pre-World Congress discussion

13 December 2009

We begin by stating our general agreement with a report authored by Comrade Sabado for the February 2009 meeting of the International Committee entitled, *"The Crisis Overdetermines all of World Politics."* This document is in general accord with and strikingly parallels the resolutions approved on the worldwide economic crisis by recent Socialist Action plenums and by our National Convention (See socialistaction.org). [We are also in general agreement with the texts on ecology and women's liberation.]

The long period of relative capitalist

prosperity that emerged in the post WW II era, based on the slaughter of 80 million people in the second imperialist conflagration and the associated destruction of the infrastructure of both the "enemies" and "allies" of U.S. imperialism, has come to an end. We have traced this evolution for several decades, regularly noting the repeated boom and bust cycles - all in the context of what Ernest Mandel accurately described as "oscillations around a declining curve." Today's crisis has had devastating effects on the world's people as never before in our time.

Yet we have also noted that with few exceptions there exists a giant gap between the repeated blows struck by world capitalism and a concerted response on the part of the working masses. The unprecedented layoffs, foreclosures, union-busting, social cutbacks, environmental destruction, degradation of poor nations, seemingly endless imperialist wars and more, have largely been unanswered. There have been important struggles, partial victories and massive mobilizations, none which have yet opened the door to the emergence of formations capable of

changing the present relationship of forces. This, in our view, is the music of the future, the near future, we estimate. While we do not agree with the general line of The Role and Tasks of the FI text, we appreciate its being alert to the importance and inevitable emergence of such forces.

It has been world capitalism's long-term relative prosperity, accompanied by the steady atrophying of the traditional mass parties of the working class - now followed by a ferocious capitalist offensive - that explains in large part why the FI and virtually every other current in the revolutionary socialist movement have often been disoriented in the search for effective strategies and tactics to rebuild the fighting social movements that are a prerequisite for increasing political clarification [testing ideas in practice] and FI growth. The pressure of difficult times has always weighed heavily on revolutionary movements. As we saw in the relatively submissive but angry years following the 1929 Great Depression, it took a while, some 4-5 years, until the U.S. working class began to shake off the blows delivered against it. But when it did the new organizations it discovered proved capable of shaking the foundations of the American capitalist order. The same can be said of many other nations.

Today a central focus of the deliberations of the World Congress is the nature and purpose of the International itself as well as its associated national sections.

The strategic orientation of the FI from its founding in 1938 has been the construction of mass revolutionary socialist, that is, Leninist parties - internationalist to the core - armed with the method embodied in the Transitional Program, deeply integrated into the struggles of masses, programmatically based on the achievements of the first four congresses of the Communist International and the Trotskyist Left Opposition and aimed at the organization of the working class and its allies among the oppressed for the seizure of power. We have always understood that capitalism will never yield to a blunt instrument - to a loose association of disparate and

undisciplined forces lacking the perspective of the independent mobilization of the vast majority to abolish the system once and for all and embark on the socialist reconstruction of society.

Our movement has often reviewed the basic elements that constitute the periodic revolutionary crises that are inevitable in the evolution of capitalism. The Russian model still largely embodies what we can expect and what kind of party is required for success.

There are no magic party-building formulas. Each country presents its peculiarities as the Tasks draft properly notes. There will be splits, fusions, regroupments, united front fightbacks, principled joint electoral campaigns, parliamentary maneuvers, "new anti-capitalist parties," new mass reformist workers' parties, centrist formations moving to the left and right as well as more advanced formations like soviets and armed defense bodies. All of these can present opportunities for revolutionaries to build Leninist parties for the conquest of power, provided only that this is their reason for being.

By definition, Marxists seek to learn from their mistakes and benefit from their successes. We appreciate the reference in the Role and Tasks draft to "... the lessons drawn from the evolution of the Brazilian PT and of Communist Refoundation in Italy." Unfortunately, the text neglects to explain what these lessons are. This is always helpful not from the vantage point of self-criticism but rather, in the spirit of scientific socialism - to learn from our experiences and pass on the knowledge gained to the next generation.

Comrades participating in the present discussion have noted "disasters" we suffered in Mexico and Brazil. In Brazil comrades subordinated Leninist party building to participation in a rapidly degenerating workers' party that, in alliance with bourgeois forces, became the austerity-imposing government of Brazil. A DS (Socialist Democracy) comrade was rewarded with a key ministerial position in a coalition capitalist government.

In Mexico, the FI's largest section of 5,000, has almost disappeared, in part due to its electoral illusions that it's parliamentary gains were matched by real influence in the class struggle and later to the PRT's support to the presidential campaign of Cuauhtemoc Cardenez and his capitalist PRD. In Italy our participation in Communist Refoundation (RC) has been a demonstrated failure, with RC's continued rightward and unprincipled direction essentially compelling our comrades to leave. The RC experience included a major error of political principle when a leading FI comrade cast the decisive vote (in a formal vote of confidence) in the Italian Parliament that kept the coalition capitalist government in power. We do not intend to dwell on these negative experiences other than to observe that the reference to them, as such, in the majority text is a modest but important step forward.

We do not object to the construction of "anti-capitalist parties" provided only that our objective is the simultaneous construction of our own revolutionary socialist party. How this is to be accomplished is a tactical question. We are not ones for imposing tactics from on high or from afar. The latter are subordinate to our strategic orientation. If the majority comrades believe that a "new anti-capitalist party" is a substitute for a Leninist party, however, we are talking about a horse of a different color.

Comrades appear to appreciate the "trilogy:" "New epoch, new program, new party." We can certainly agree that we are entering a new epoch. World capitalism faces a crisis from which it can find no way out except at the expense of the earth's people, not to mention at the expense of an environment capable of sustaining human life itself. The present crisis goes to the core of the system and exhibits virtually all the elements that Marx described. But recover it will, over time, in grotesque forms and at humanity's expense, provided only that it is not challenged by mass Leninist parties organized internationally and armed with our historic revolutionary socialist program.

We are concerned that while a number

of pages of the Tasks draft are devoted to the concept of the new-anti-capitalist party, the term remains vague or subjected to multiple and counterposed explanations.

The text states in Point 7:

"In the new anti-capitalist parties which may be formed in the years to come, and which express the current stage of combativeness, experience and consciousness of the sectors that are the most committed to the search for an anti-capitalist alternative, the question of a new International is and will be posed. We act and we will continue to act so that it is *not posed* in terms of ideological or historical choices, which are likely to lead to divisions and splits. It must be posed on a double level, on the one hand real political convergence on tasks of international intervention, on the other pluralism of the new formations, which must bring together currents of various origins: Trotskyists of different kinds, libertarians, revolutionary syndicalists, revolutionary nationalists, left reformists. So in general, when there have been concrete steps toward new parties, we have proposed that the new broad anti-capitalist party function with the right of tendency or currents, and that the supporters of the Fourth International in these new parties organize themselves in ways to be decided, according to the specific situation of each party." [Emphasis added].

It appears that the new International, proposed along with new anti-capitalist parties, will be a political reversion wherein "ideological and historical choices... will not be posed." Since "anarchists, revolutionary nationalists, left reformists and revolutionary syndicalists" will be welcome, one can only guess whether the "ideological issues" of class independence, or building a working class party or fighting for a working class government and/or socialism will be a pre-requisite for membership since such issues, according to the draft, "will not be posed."

However, this contradictory text appears to have an answer to our question. Point 4 states, "We want to get involved in this reorganization to

create a new left that is capable of meeting the challenge of this century and rebuilding the workers' movement, its structures, its class consciousness, its independence from the bourgeoisies at the political and cultural level." Minus the fact that the term "socialism" is absent from descriptions of what the new International and new anti-capitalist parties are to be based on, this sounds more like the FI's historical and ideological wellspring and quite different from the lengthy formulation from Point 7 that we quote above. We can only wonder which description is to be operative.

We are informed that a "convergence on tasks of international intervention" will be a central criteria for membership. It is necessary to ask if these "tasks" are more in the realm of the tactics of a mass action united front than a political framework of a "new anti-capitalist party."

We want to learn how the inclusion of "left reformists," not to mention other enumerated categories, squares with "anti-capitalism" and class independence. Is the term employed to designate radicalizing and politically independent individuals or important reformist currents whose tradition and history center on the search for a "kinder gentler capitalism?"

We are informed that posing ideological and historical questions is "... likely to lead to divisions and splits." But it is fair to note that most of the FI's past regroupments that ignored critical ideological and historical differences led to debilitating splits and major loses.

We are informed in the *Role and Tasks* draft that there are to be divergent ideological components of the new anti-capitalist parties that necessitate the "right of tendencies or currents" to be established as an acceptable form of internal organization. We see this as an assurance that FI comrades would retain some form of identity, perhaps a current, tendency or faction, that functions to promote the FI's perspectives. Are we participating in these new formations to promote membership in a Leninist party and socialist revolution? This appears to

be key, and especially so since questions of ideology and history *are not to be posed*.

We are to build these parties, according to the text, not on the basis of ideology or the lessons of history but based on agreement on tasks, on actions! Of course, such agreements are always an essential part of a healthy and principled unification process. But in a party that has been consciously constructed to be based on diffuse and disparate currents, immediate tasks or actions have a strong tendency to become subordinated to the larger questions of class independence and the very purpose of the party in the first place.

Finally, we must express our concern regarding the repeated references to parliamentary activity - ranging from pledges to never support in parliamentary elections Social Democrats who are the now designated as "social liberals in power to manage the capitalist state..." to the improved electoral results of our comrades who are participants in anti-capitalist parties of one variety or another in other countries (Portugal, Denmark, etc.).

Here again, we are assured that the FI majority seeks to promote the independent organization and mobilization of the masses through the vehicle of a "new left" party. But we can't help but hear, at least faintly, another side of this new venture, that is, that we seek to become the new electoral alternative, perhaps a mass electoral alternative, to a disintegrating Stalinism and Social Democracy. This objective is certainly not without merit. But like our FI comrades in Mexico, Brazil, and perhaps Italy and elsewhere, preferencing the tactic of electoral activity can become the proverbial spoonful of tar that destroys the barrel of honey. Parliamentary activity has always been subordinate to the construction of a mass Leninist party for socialist revolution.

The survey conducted by the European Bureau indicates that in those countries where our comrades have participated in some form of new anti-capitalist party, some measure of electoral "success" has been achieved.

To our knowledge, however, this not been associated with a growth of our section's cadre. We should add that the great "electoral successes" of our

comrades in Mexico, and Brazil led to their undoing as revolutionary socialist parties.

We are hopeful that the World Congress debates will clarify our questions and observations.

Call from Brown et al : Reject the draft "Role and Tasks of the FI"

13 December 2009

[Introductory note: The authors of this call are asking all delegates at the 2010 world congress, no matter what position they might take on the document titled "Role and Tasks of the Fourth International," to vote in favor of the specific motion below. Developing the discussion projected in that motion should be a common task for our entire world movement. And it should be accepted as such by supporters of the RTFI document as well as those of us who disagree with this text. We are also, however, hoping that others who, like ourselves, consider the resolution presented by the IC to be irreparably flawed will join us in voting against it. Ordinarily, under such circumstances, a minority current would submit a counter-draft. We choose not to do so. We do not believe that a counterposed text, drafted by a small minority representing comrades in only a handful of countries, can possibly treat this subject adequately. For that we need a much greater base of experience and collaboration. In addition, we need a counterposed framework within which a new RTFI text can be constructed. We submit the following text to the International Discussion Bulletin, therefore, in an attempt to explain what that alternative framework might be and why it is needed. We hope that a vote rejecting the present draft will then lay the basis for moving forward in order to develop an alternative document that can meet our collective needs.]

* Draft Motion (for the agenda item "Role and Tasks of the Fourth International"): "The World Congress

establishes a commission to draft a document outlining the "shared strategic vision" of the Fourth International, plus the impact of this vision on any broader process of building revolutionary organizations on a national and international level today. The IC meeting in 2011 will hold an initial discussion, putting in place a process that encourages section leaderships to contribute comments based on circulation of the relevant texts plus discussions within their organizations."

* * * * *

We will vote against the text "Role and Tasks of the Fourth International" and urge others to reject it as well. The document fails to pose the critical questions facing the FI today in a manner that will allow us to really resolve them. It reflects an incorrect understanding of what the FI is and what it ought to be, thereby opening the door to building a second-and-a-half international instead of the revolutionary world movement we so desperately need. In this way, the text before us calls into question the very existence of the FI itself.

The motion we have submitted (see above) attempts to address what is, perhaps, the most glaring flaw in this document which declares: "We expressed it in our own way, from 1992 onwards, in other words in the last two world congresses, with the triptych "new period, new program, new party.'" There is, however, no discussion in the text, nor in the general discourse of the FI and its

leadership in recent years, about what the limits and contradictions are of this "new" process. Nor is there any consideration about what the implications might be, for all that is new, of that which is not so new, what is described in point 6 of the document as our "shared strategic vision." What is that vision? How do we work toward and apply it today?

If we cannot formulate a set of ideas, and put them down on paper, explaining what we mean by "our shared strategic vision," then any reference to such a vision in a document like RTFI is meaningless. In our judgment, serious reference to our "shared strategic vision" requires that we collectively affirm a set of core principles, including at least:

1) We stand for the continued possibility of world socialist revolution and the centrality of the working class in that revolutionary process, along with the need for active alliances between the working class, the specially oppressed, and other groups that are victimized by capitalist society.

2) We affirm the need for the working class and oppressed to maintain their political independence from the exploiting classes.

3) We advocate and organize to bring about a revolutionary government in which the self-organization of the oppressed can exercise hegemony, with a goal of breaking definitively with the old bourgeois state and constructing a new state based on working-class power. This is

counterposed to the idea of a "broad front" of "progressive" forces in which other class interests are allowed to dominate, leaning on the old bourgeois state rather than breaking with it (what the term "Popular Front" correctly refers to).

4) We recognize the absolute necessity of cohering a revolutionary cadre with sufficient understanding of the essential programmatic elements (using this as part of an active political toolbox) and with a sufficient social weight so that when revolution does become an objective possibility the mass energy that is unleashed in society at large can break out of safe channels, leading to the necessary overthrow of the old state power.

5) We attempt to work out an anti-capitalist strategy based on transitional demands and the transitional method.

In addition to these essential programmatic elements that are not discussed in the RTFI document (what is their relationship to the "new program"?), other points need to be included in any text which attempts to develop a serious appreciation of the FI's role and tasks today:

* There is no discussion in the IC draft of the difference between revolutionary organizations and "anti-capitalist" formations understood more broadly, not to mention blocs or parties that we might characterize as "centrist" or "left-reformist." All these quite different kinds of parties or fronts are treated as if the problems posed for revolutionaries are essentially the same when working within them.

* Even if this resolution developed an orientation toward involvement in some kind of regroupment or recomposition process that was appropriately nuanced, taking into account the programmatic elements posed above and other problems that we note here, such an orientation remains an active possibility for only a minority of FI sections today. Most organizations affiliated to the FI are engaged in building independent organizations, and this is, in the overwhelming majority of cases, the appropriate orientation for

revolutionary Marxists in these specific countries. RTFI has nothing to say, however, about the importance of this task or how we orient to it.

* Even in cases where we are actually participating in a broader formation of some kind, or have the potential to do so, the uniform evolution of such an organization toward a genuinely revolutionary perspective is hardly guaranteed (and that is an understatement). The political independence of our cadre—and, to the extent required in order to maintain that political independence, some kind of separate organizational formation as well—must be maintained. How else do we prepare for the possibility, even the likelihood judging from recent experiences in Italy and Brazil, of a crisis that results from reformist or centrist elements choosing to support, join, or form a capitalist government? Even in the event of a crisis that is less severe, the existence of a programmatic/organizational pole within the broader anti-capitalist formation, actively organizing around the "shared strategic vision" of the FI is likely to prove decisive. FI sections in country after country have stumbled in recent decades because of a lack of attention to this question. And yet the RTFI text has nothing whatsoever to say about it. We recognize that the answers are rarely simple or easy in such situations, but precisely for that reason the question must be posed and alternative possibilities seriously considered.

* Today we confront the problem of how to maintain our political/organizational independence once again as a result of the formation of the NPA in France. As in other cases, we do not pretend that the answer is simple or easy here. But some answer has to be consciously developed. The authors of these lines are open to hearing a discussion where a range of perspectives might be considered. But we find ourselves unable to conceive of an alternative that fails to include some kind of current or structure, actively seeking to maintain and develop that cadre, within the NPA, that is committed to the politics of the Fourth international and therefore to the political identity of the French section.

* Generally speaking, then, whether engaged in building our own sections as independent organizations or in some kind of broader formation, the first and most important duty of the FI and its sections is to maintain and expand a revolutionary cadre based on our "shared strategic vision." This means paying attention to building actual sections of the FI. We are in favor of participating in broader anti-capitalist poles, parties and/or alliances. But this is not a goal in and of itself. It has to be understood as a means toward a far more fundamental goal: building genuinely revolutionary mass parties that can, in turn, be part of a revolutionary mass international. There is no substitute for this as our broad strategic objective. We will never ride the coattails of other forces to the kind of influence within the movements of the oppressed that we hope to achieve. We must work toward that goal based on our own political strength, as a specific current of revolutionaries with our own unique, and essential, contribution to make.

* The same kinds of problems that we note above in terms of national parties also haunts this text in relation to its vision of a "new International," presumably to replace the FI. Here, too, the distinction between revolutionary, anti-capitalist, centrist, and reformist formations is ignored, as are question related to building a revolutionary-Marxist programmatic pole in the context of such a formation. We are in favor of a vision that is broader than simply the FI as it now stands. We are not, however, in favor of a vision that negates the FI as it now stands, or the programmatic continuity which the FI represents. RTFI is simply open to too many diverse possibilities from this point of view. It is, therefore, totally inadequate as a guide for action.

* There is, finally, no consideration of the role FI groups can and should play in helping to resolve the acute crisis of leadership that confronts partial struggles today—in the labor movement, around questions of racism and national oppression, gender oppression, equality for women, and/or the rise of overtly fascist movements—as well as in building the cadres of the FI and the critical mass of its sections. No other political

tendency has given any indication that it can become a substitute for the crucial programmatic role revolutionary Marxism has consistently attempted to play, working thereby to solve the crisis of leadership that has plagued the working class and its allies over the last eight decades. This crisis continues to be a key obstacle in the struggles for social change, up to and including the struggle for socialist revolution in today's world.

All of these deficiencies, taken together, compel us to cast a vote against this text and call on the incoming leadership of the FI to launch a broad discussion that can involve our entire world movement in order to generate a better document. Such a conversation on the real role and tasks of the Fourth International will have to take into account the multiple errors and mistakes that have

occurred since 1985 and led, for example, to the disasters of the Mexican section in the 1990s and the Brazilian after 2000. On the basis of such a broad conversation within our ranks, a new document should be developed over the next several years which can chart a road forward for our international and its sections.

Submitted to the IIDB by Brown (USA), Jette (Denmark), Andreas (Greece), Konstantin (Germany)

Contribution on "Role and Tasks" from Argentina

13 December 2009

We share these characterizations, and we add that Latin America has been the center of resistances to neoliberalism, but we believe it appropriate to take into account in the final version of the documents that, under the pressure of the systematic world crisis, if there were to be an advance in anticapitalism in some region of the world, it would probably be in Latin America, and more precisely in the countries of the South.

So, for this reason we think it is necessary that the documents dedicate more space to Latin America, that they reflect a little more the situation in the region, not only because of the high level of conflict that exists, but also because of the orientation which it is taking.

Resolution Project Role and Tasks

Amendments and additions that we propose:

Point 1. paragraph "In conclusion..." replace with:

"In conclusion the crisis expresses the failure of the neoliberal phase of capital to reactivate the development

of the productive forces at a world level, nor has it been able to impose a relationship of forces favorable to capital. As an ideology, it shows itself incapable of offering a solution, which is why the G-20 proposals are a return to the past that blew up with the crisis, wrote an end to the Washington Consensus, but placed the IMF in the decision-making center with its clearly neoliberal priorities." "All of the contradictions inherent in this social system are going to explode" should be replaced with "are going to come under stress."

Point 2: paragraph "Latin America" replace with:

"Latin America has been the center of resistances to neoliberalism and continues being the continent with the most explosive social situations, even though among the countries these are uneven. There is a bloc of countries that brings together processes of greater radicalization and patrial reputures with imperialism, which in their development can advance to decidedly anti-capitalist positions, such as Venezuela, Bolivia and Ecuador, and others still hard to predict such as Paraguay and El Salvador, all of which find a reference point in Cuba. Other countries maintain post-neoliberal politics such

as Chile, or the neo-developmental variant such as Argentina, or the social-liberals such as Uruguay and Brasil. This latter, despite its strong differences with the United States—above all in its defense policies, in its membership in UNASUR and in its agreements with Venezuela—still collaborates in fundamental policies of Washington and hopes to achieve regional leadership with its help. While Colombia, Peru and Mexico remain decidedly neoliberal.

"The declaration of the Assembly of Social Movements which took place in the FSM-Belem and the recent Assembly of ALBA-TCP, which in its final declaration condemned capitalism calling for going beyond it, as well as the First Multinational Summit of Social Movements, are a sample of the radical potential of the southern region of Latin America."

"The new situation presented by the renewed imperialist aggressivity in the region—Fourth Fleet, coup in Honduras, new military bases in Colombia, direct intervention of the American embassy in the most important union conflict in years in Argentina—indicate an intention to break with the current policies of equilibrium and [show] the necessity

of elaborating an international response."

"The activity of the sections and group of the Fourth International in Latin America should take these tendencies into account and define a tactic of intervention in a process which is characterized by the sometimes converging and sometimes contradictory interrelations between the governments that make up ALBA and the social movements with important experiences of self-organization and self-management."

Continuing: "In a series of emerging capitalist countries..." It may be that in Europe this characterization has been assimilated and forms part of common usage, but in Latin America it is closely linked to neoliberalism, we propose that it be replaced with "...dependent capitalist countries of greater industrial development" as the expression that best characterizes the situation but do not use terminology quite linked to the neoliberal ideology.

Point 4.

Subpoint 4: "A left which is conscious.....and that therefore cannot govern..." add "with the political representations" of that with which it desires to break.

Subpoint 7 "A left that integrates new social movements.....and above all new generations." This may be a translation problem but it would be good to eliminate "...because they cannot do new things with old material." Take into account that this is referring to people.

Add a subpoint: "A left that promotes all forms of empowerment by workers and by the popular classes that encourages thinking, deciding, and doing things for itself and on the basis of its own decisions."

Point 5. then the paragraph that ends "...in Africa and Asia things are heading in the same direction" add "Nevertheless in the countries of the South of Latin America the construction of broad anti-capitalist parties should integrate from its beginnings a clear stand for socialism." It is by way of this process, add "...complex and diverse..." that we

can make new advances. This is the question...

Punto 10. at the end of the first paragraph and before "The Youth Camp" add:

"The Fourth International should make efforts to have a greater presence in Latin America. To look for the forms and means to help groups which in various countries sympathize with our positions but for the moment don't have the organizational capacity, nor the finance nor the training and whose weakness is clear when compared to other organized left forces that exist in the different countries."

Buenos Aires, November 12, 2009.

Eduardo Lucita / Guillermo Almeyra

Sergio M y Pablo(Coordinadora Barrial Moreno) / Sergio, Damian y Gustavo (Puma Merlo) / Santiago y Mirian (Univ Lujan) / Carlos (CPSRC) (on behalf of the sections).

Amendments to the resolution "Role and Tasks of the Fourth International" from Davies

30 November 2009

The first text (below) is my motivation for my amendments to sections 5 and 6 of the Role and Tasks of the FI text. The detailed amendments are in a separate section at the end. Davies (Socialist Resistance, Britain)

The Role and Tasks text has been under discussion for a year in the Bureau, at an expanded meeting of the Bureau and then at the IC. I have been critical of it at each stage and it was very contentious amongst a number of the European sections at the expanded Bureau meeting. When it

came to the IC I was one of only two votes against. There were modifications made to the text in the course of this which took out some of worst examples of the problems I was raising, but in my view this did not change the overall character of the text.

My problem is not with the general political framework of the text on world politics and the crisis. It does do a good job in integrating the twin crises of ecology and economy.

I have a problem with the call it makes for a new international and what it implies as to the character of such an international.

The EC text presents two possible ways in which the new international it advocates could emerge. One is that it could emerge out of a coming together of the various broad parties which have emerged to the left of Social Democracy in recent years "at least from those which are anti-capitalist in character. This would be an anti-capitalist international comprised of

anti-capitalist parties, presumable with the sections of the existing FI inside them.

This perspective is expressed in section 5 as follows:

"The Fourth International is confronted, in an overall way, with a new phase. Revolutionary Marxist militants, nuclei, currents and organizations must pose the problem of the construction of anti-capitalist, revolutionary political formations, with the perspective of establishing a new independent political representation of the working class. That is true on the level of each country scale *and at an international level.*" (My emphasis)

This is also reflected in the following quotation from section 7:

"In the new anti-capitalist parties which may be formed in the years to come, and which express the current stage of combativeness, experience and consciousness of the sectors that are the most committed to the search for an anti-capitalist alternative, *the question of a new International is and will be posed.*" (My emphasis)

It is true that this is contradicted in other parts of the text but this sentence is absolutely clear "that the existence of these broad and diverse parties objectively poses the question that they should come together at some stage and form a new international organisation.

Of course we all want a bigger stronger and more effective Fourth International with bigger stronger and more effective national sections. And we want an international which is politically broader than the current FI and politically broader than Trotskyist tradition itself "although the Trotskyist tradition has a very important role to play. In fact this process has already started to happen and we need to ensure that it continues.

The point of principle, however, is that it continues to be a programmatically based revolutionary international as spelled out in the statutes of the FI. Even if an international comprising of anti-capitalist organisations was possible "which seems very unlikely given the diversity and

instability of most such organisations "it would not be a revolutionary international as outlined above and would not be an alternative to the existing FI.

If it happened against the odds it would be an important development and one to which the FI would have to relate, but not by dissolving into it or using it to replace our own international.

It is important, therefore, that we recognise the difference between revolutionary organisations/internationals and anti-capitalist formations, and avoid conflating the two. Revolutionary formations are those which reject capitalism and put forward both a socialist alternative and a revolutionary means of making the transition between the two. Anti-capitalist organisations are those which see capitalism as the problem and socialism as the answer but have no agreed programme for transition.

The second possibility posed by the text is that a new international could emerge out of the various European far left organisations via the process initiated by the NPA last year with the Conferences of the Radical Left held in Paris. This proposition is contained in section 6:

"We must discuss how to strengthen and transform the Fourth International in order to make it an effective tool in the perspective of a new international grouping. We already have started, with limited results it has to be admitted, conferences of the anti-capitalist left and other international conferences." But this is equally unlikely. The Paris meetings were a collection of actively rival far left and revolutionary organisations competing with each other at both the national and international with no detectable sign of a change in this which could bring about such a convergence. The conferences included the IST the CWI. There were 12 separate competing organisations from Greece. And whilst these meetings did have value in terms of an exchange of ideas amongst the far left the idea that they could initiate a process out of which could come a new united international was excluded. Neither the IST or the

CWI were there as a part of any convergence process. They were there because the emergence of the NPA was a very important development and they wanted to know what was going on. And even if a process of convergence was possible amongst the revolutionary left it would be a very different thing from the coming together of anti-capitalist forces, it would be a process of revolutionary unity.

In the same paragraph the document lists a number of other initiatives we have been involved in at an international level including meetings held around the world social forums and the European Anti-capitalist Left (EACL) as if these initiatives were all a part of a process towards a new anti-capitalist international. But they are not and never have been. Some have formed the radical left intervention into the global justice movement and others have been attempts to influence emerging organisations to the left of Social Democracy in a radical direction.

The EACL was certainly never seen that way. It was an important initiative but it was never more than a co-ordination aimed at strengthening the process of the emergence of broad parties through practical collaboration and the exchange of ideas. In any case the EACL has been overtaken by events and the last meeting of the Bureau proposed that it be closed down "so it is not useful to list it as one of the ways that a New International might emerge.

There is no difference here over the importance of building of broad parties. It is crucial that task of building broad parties to the left of Social Democracy should remain central to our response to the current stage of the crisis of capitalism and of Social Democracy. But the text talks almost exclusively about broad ANTICAPITALIST parties and some of the most important of these parties are not anti-capitalist but left reformist, or radical left reformist parties "the most important being Die Linke.

Remarkably Die Linke is not even mentioned in the text although it is amongst the most important of such

parties. In fact throughout the discussion around this text there has been a reluctance to recognise the importance of Die Linke and even scepticism about it.

Of course we can say that we prefer a radical left party to be anti-capitalist rather than left reformist but it is a meaningless observation. We are in favour of broad parties to the left of social democracy but we cannot determine, in most cases, what the character of those parties will be. Their character will be determined by the state of the class struggle and the political conditions in the country in which they emerge. The history and shape of the labour movement and whether there has been a mass CP will also be a factor.

When we set ourselves the task of building and working inside broad left formations at either the national or the international our own organisation needs to more defined better organised and more politically coherent in order to do so. Working through a broad organisation may be more effective than simply raising our own banner but it is also more complex and demands a lot more political resources.

In working inside broad organisations we need to have a twin objective. The first is to address the crisis of working class representation which becomes increasing acute in today's conditions. The second, which is generally a more long term perspective, is to win the broad organisation, when the conditions are right to our own revolutionary politics. This implies that when we work in such organisations we remain organised in our own right and ensure that our politics are a factor in its development.

This is also the case if we want to be a facilitator of convergences amongst other organisations as is outlined in section 9 or to generally play a role in the development of the radical left.

To this end section 10 of the text which deals with strengthening our own structure is very welcome. Whilst it is true that we are a small organisation it is also true that we are not meeting the potential which exists

as far as a revolutionary alternative is concerned.

Amendments to parts 5 and 6 of the Draft Resolution on the role and tasks of the Fourth International

Deletions are in italics and additions are in bold.

5. *This is the aspiration in which the problems of building the Fourth International and new anti-capitalist parties and new international currents are posed.* **This is the context in which the problems of building the Fourth International are posed.** We expressed it in our own way, from 1992 onwards, so in the last two world congresses, with the triptych "New period, new programme, new party", developed in documents of the International. We confirm the essential of our choices at the last World Congress in 2003 concerning the building of broad *anti-capitalist parties to the left of Social Democracy*. The Fourth International is confronted, in an overall way, with a new phase. Revolutionary Marxist militants, nuclei, currents and organizations must pose the problem of the construction of *anti-capitalist, revolutionary* such political formations, with the perspective of establishing a new independent political representation of the working class. *That is true on the level of each country scale and at an international level.* On the basis of the experience of the class struggle, the development of the global justice movement, defensive struggles and anti-war mobilizations over the last ten years, and in particular the lessons drawn from the evolution of the Brazilian PT and of Communist Refoundation in Italy and from the debates of the French anti-liberal left, revolutionary Marxists have engaged in recent years in the building of the PSOL in Brazil, of Sinistra Critica in Italy, of the new

anti-capitalist party in France, Respect in England **and Die Links in Germany**. In this perspective we have continued to build the experiences of the Bloco de Esquerda in Portugal and the Red Green Alliance in Denmark. The common goal, via different paths, is that of broad *anti-capitalist parties to the left of Social Democracy*. It is not a question of taking up the old formulas of regroupment or revolutionary currents alone. The ambition is to bring together forces beyond simply revolutionary ones. These can be a support in the process of brining forces together as long as they are clearly for building *anti-capitalist broad left* parties. Although there is no model, since each process of coming together takes account of national specificities and relationships of forces, our goal must thus be to seek to build broad **left anti-capitalist** political forces, independent of social democracy and the centre left, formations which reject any policy of participation or support to class-collaborationist governments, today government with social-democracy and the centre left. It is on the basis of such a perspective that we must be oriented. What we know of the experiences of differentiation and reorganization in Africa and Asia point in the same direction. It is through this process that we can make new advances. *It is this question which must form the framework of the next congress of the FI.* **On this level, we created bonds of solidarity with the Brazilian PSOL in its break with Lula's PT. We have supported the efforts of our Italian comrades to build an anti-capitalist alternative to the policies of Communist Refoundation in Italy.** (Moved from paragraph 6)

6. *This is the framework in which we must approach the question of the relationship between the building of the Fourth International and a policy of anti-capitalist coming together at the national, continental and international levels. We must discuss how to strengthen and transform the Fourth International in order to make it an effective tool in the perspective of a new international grouping.* **At the same time we have to work towards greater understanding and cooperation between both the**

revolutionary left and broad left organisations at the international level. We already have started, with limited results it has to be admitted, conferences of the anti-capitalist left and other international conferences. On the international level, we have initiated, on this political basis, many conferences and initiatives of international convergence and coming together: the constitution of the European Anti-capitalist Left (EACL), with the Portuguese Left Bloc, the Danish Red-Green Alliance and the

Scottish Socialist Party. We worked with organizations like the English SWP. Other parties - even left reformists of who had at one time or another a political evolution "to the left", like Communist Refoundation in Italy, tor Synaspismos, also took part in these conferences. We also held international conferences of revolutionary and anti-capitalist organizations, on the occasion of the World Social Forums at Mumbai in India and Porto Alegre in Brazil. These few elements show the type of

orientation that we want to implement. The different conferences this year such as those in Paris or Belem show the necessity and the possibility of joint action and discussion by a large number of organizations and currents of the anti-capitalist left in Europe. It is now necessary to continue a policy of open meetings and conferences on topics of strategic and programmatic thinking and joint action through campaigns and initiatives of international mobilization.

Three LGBT amendments and a motion on sexuality

30 November 2009

Amendments to the text on the role and tasks of the Fourth International

1. Add a new paragraph at the end of part 1, paragraph 2, as follows: "The crisis has a particularly harsh impact on women and on sexual minorities that are excluded from the family (or choose not to live in it) and are thus cut off from its resources. The crisis is driving many of the most marginalized people, such as transgenders, into even deeper poverty. This is true especially in dependent countries where a welfare state is weak or non-existent."

2. We support Hall and Philomena's proposed addition of the sentence, "Religious fundamentalism will be increasingly used as the ideological underpinning both for attacks on the popular classes, targeting notably women's control of their own bodies, and wars and conflicts between nations and ethnic groups", to part 1 of this document. We propose adding, immediately after that sentence, the

following: "A non-Eurocentric approach to sexual oppression and emancipation is important to opposing both Islamic fundamentalism in particular and the Islamophobic ideology of 'clash of civilizations' that helps fuel it."

We also support the other amendments submitted by comrades Hall and Philomena, notably the amendments to parts 5 and 7 that raise issues of sexual orientation.

3. In part 5, following the sentence "Although there is no model [...] government with social-democracy and the centre left", insert the following passage: "Where we are working inside such broad political forces, it is important to fight for the right of self-organization within these parties by women and LGBTs, and on this self-organization's being reflected in the parties' programmes and practice. This self-organization is a means of resisting pressures towards electoralism and institutionalization. In new radical political formations in several Latin American countries, the right to self-organization is important to fighting for a 21st-century socialism from below that rejects authoritarian tendencies and the temptation to repeat 20th-century errors. In general

within such broad forces, we start from an understanding, as an indissoluble part of our socialism, of the necessity for a collective and resolute response to all manifestations of prejudice including sexism, racism, islamophobia, anti-Semitism, homophobia and transphobia. We also fight for specific attention to organizing by youth; for the integration of black, immigrant, women's and LGBT issues into the party's public statements and daily interventions; and for representation of specially oppressed comrades in the party leadership and among its spokespeople and candidates for office."

Motion on attacks on transgender/intersexed people

As the document Women and the Crisis of Civilization recognizes, the growth of violence per se, and violence against the specifically oppressed, is an inevitable part of late capitalism and even more of its current systemic crisis. The Fourth

International and its sections will raise as part of their general propaganda the need to stop scapegoating of any section of the oppressed for the crisis of the capitalist system.

The 2003 World Congress resolution on lesbian/gay liberation said, "Thousands of transgendered people unable or unwilling to fit into socially recognized families, unable or unwilling to live as 'proper men' or 'proper women', are [...] faced with general contempt and even violent attacks." Recent investigation has shown the magnitude of this violence

against trans and intersexed people, which is tantamount to a global assault. The Trans Murder Monitoring Project has reported over 200 murders of trans people in 2008 and the first half of 2009 alone, in North America, Latin America, Europe, Africa, Asia, and Oceania. The Fourth International and its sections will support campaigns to stop this barbaric violence and will fight for these issues to be taken up by broader parties, trade unions and progressive campaigns. At the same time we will attempt to work more closely with trans and LGBTQ organizations and win militants from those organizations

to the fight against the capitalist system as a whole.

In keeping with the support expressed in the 2003 resolution for "campaigns against psychiatric definitions of homosexuality and transgenderism as pathologies", we will also support the current campaign initiated by the International Trans Depathologization Network to remove "gender identity disorders" from the international diagnostic catalogues.

Submitted by Peter (Netherlands) and Hall (Appeals Commission)

Contribution to the debate on climate change

30 October 2009, by **Michael Löwy**

The notes which follow are divided into two parts: 1) some criticisms and reservations on certain points, conceived as a kind of amendment to the document; 2) some remarks on ecosocialism, starting from questions that are suggested but not developed in the report (which could not, obviously, cover everything without becoming too long). So this is simply a contribution to the debate.

I. Critical comments

1. It seems to me that the formula "2100" or "the end of the century" [1] must be replaced by "over the next few decades". The most recent forecasts of scientists - not yet taken on board by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) which, as the report indicates, always gets there late - envisage large-scale disasters over the next few decades if we continue with "business as usual". That has obvious political consequences: who is going to worry about what will happen in 2100? Admittedly, certain philosophers - such as Hans Jonas - have raised the question of "our duties towards the

generations not yet born", but that does not interest many people. The question is very different when it concerns our own generation... That also applies to the formula "quasi-total abandonment of the use of fossil fuels, to be effected in less than a century": to be replaced by "over the next few decades".

2. Carbon capture: the report mentions the limited character of storage capacities, but it seems to consider it as an "acceptable transitional measure" [2]. I think that it is necessary to be more reserved on this subject. The process is far from being developed, there are very few convincing examples, we do not yet have real security guarantees (the assurance that CO₂ will not escape again into the atmosphere). Moreover, on the pretext of a future "clean coal", we continue to use coal-fired power stations and to build new ones, which is, according to James Hansen, the recipe for a disaster in the near future. I think that we must associate ourselves with what Hansen proposes: while waiting for the technique of carbon capture to be really established - in ten years? - it is necessary to stop building coal-fired power stations and gradually abolish

the existing ones.

3. The movement against climate change must demand that governments respect "the most careful conclusions of the IPCC" [3]. This formula is too vague: what does "careful" mean? It is better to speak about the higher range of the proposals of the IPCC, i.e. 40 per cent between now and 2020 and 85 per cent between now and 2050. It is necessary to avoid the formula, which appears sometimes in the report, "reduction of between 25 and 40 per cent" between now and 2020. An appeal of ecological NGOs (Greenpeace, etc.) to Sarkozy speaks of a minimum of 40 per cent between now and 2020. We cannot demand less! Personally, I think that 40 per cent is too little and that it should be strongly suggested that it is a minimum, in reality very insufficient... The same thing applies to 2050: we should no longer write "reduction of between 50 and 85 per cent", but immediately insist on the higher level: 85 per cent.

4. Marx's error: according to the report, he "did not understand that the transition from wood to coal meant the abandonment of a renewable

energy of flux in favour of an exhaustible energy of stock". First of all, I have some reservations about the term "renewable" being applied to wood used as a source of energy: that could quickly lead to the destruction of the last forests! As for fossil energies: admittedly, they are "exhaustible", but this argument seems to me to be out of date. There is still coal for 200 years and well before that, global warming will have caused a catastrophe without precedent. The error of Marx and especially of Engels (cf. Antiduhring) was to believe that the revolution must simply "suppress the relations of production which have become obstacles (or chains) preventing the free development of the productive forces created by capitalism", as if these forces were neutral. It seems to me that we could take as a starting point the observations made by Marx about the Paris Commune: the workers cannot take possession of the capitalist state apparatus and put it at their service. They are forced "to smash it" and to replace it by a form of political power that is radically different, democratic and non-state. The same idea applies, mutatis-mutandis, to the productive apparatus, which far from being "neutral" carries in its structure the stamp of a development which favours the accumulation of capital and the unlimited expansion of the market, thus leading to ecological catastrophe.

5. According to the report, we will be able to really begin the enormous changes necessary "only after the victory of the socialist revolution on a world level". It seems to me that, according to the logic of the permanent revolution, it is necessary to begin the changes that are necessary on the level of one or several countries, knowing that we will be able to complete the process only on the scale of the entire planet.

6. The draft says this about the rise in ocean levels: "the vast majority of the hundreds of millions of human beings threatened by the rise in the level of the oceans live in China (30 million), India (30 million), Bangladesh (15-20 million)..." etc. I do not question these figures, but I ask myself the following question: won't the sea level also go up in the seaboard cities of the West, i.e. in Amsterdam, Venice, Antwerp,

Copenhagen, New York, etc? This is a question which has a political dimension: it is fine to ask for solidarity from the inhabitants of the countries of the North with the suffering of Bangladesh, but we should show them that they are threatened with the same dangers.

II. On ecosocialism: a contribution to the debate

The ecosocialist project implies the establishment of democratic planning of the economy which takes into account the preservation of the environment and, in particular, prevents a catastrophic disruption of the climate. It is thanks to such planning that we will be able to make a revolution in the energy system, leading to the replacement of the current resources (especially fossil energy), which are responsible for climate change and the poisoning of the environment, by renewable energy resources: water, wind and sun.

The necessary prerequisite for this democratic and ecological planning is public control of the means of production: decision-making on matters of public interest concerning technological investment and change must be removed from the banks and the capitalist companies, if we want these decisions to serve the common good of society and the safeguarding of the environment. The whole of society will be free to democratically choose what kinds of production should be prioritised - according to social and ecological criteria - and the level of the resources which must be invested in alternative energies, in education, health and culture. The prices of the goods themselves would no longer be determined by the laws of supply and demand, but would as far as possible be fixed according to social, political and ecological criteria. This planning will have among its objectives the guarantee of full employment, thanks to the reduction of the working day. This condition is essential not only to fulfil the requirements of social justice, but also

to make sure of the support of the working class, without which the process of structural ecological transformation of the productive forces cannot be carried out.

Far from being "despotic" as such, democratic planning is the exercise of the freedom of decision of the whole of society. This is a necessary exercise for society to free itself from the alienating and reifying "economic laws" and "iron cages" within capitalist and bureaucratic structures. Democratic planning, associated with the reduction of working time, would be a considerable progress of humanity towards what Marx called "the realm of freedom": the increase in free time is in fact a condition for the participation of workers in democratic discussion and the running of the economy and society.

The kind of system of democratic planning that is envisaged by ecosocialists relates to the principal economic choices - in particular those concerning the dangers of global warming - and not the administration of local restaurants, grocery shops, bakeries, small stores and artisanal enterprises and services. In the same way, it is important to stress that planning is not in contradiction with the self-management of workers in their units of production. Whereas the decision to transform, for example, a car factory into a unit for the production of engines for wind farms would be taken by the whole of society, the organization and the internal functioning of the factory would be managed democratically by the workers themselves.

We have had lengthy discussions about the "centralized" or "decentralized" character of planning, but the important thing remains the democratic control of the plan on all levels, local, regional, national, continental and, let us hope, planetary, since ecological themes such as global warming are issues that concern the whole world and can only be dealt with on this level. This proposal could be called "global democratic planning". It has nothing to do with what is generally designated as "central planning", because the economic and social decisions are not made by an

unspecified "centre" but democratically decided by the populations concerned.

Ecosocialist planning must be based on democratic and pluralist debate, at every level of decision. Organized in the form of parties, platforms or any other kind of political movement, the delegates of the planning organizations would be elected and the various proposals would be presented to all those whom they concern. In other words, representative democracy must be enriched - and improved - by the direct democracy which makes it possible for people to directly choose - at the local, national and, finally, international level - between various proposals. The whole population would then discuss questions such as free public transport, a special tax paid by car owners to subsidize public transport, the subsidizing of solar energy, the reduction of working time to 30, 25 or even fewer hours a week, even if that involves a reduction of production. The democratic character of planning does not make it incompatible with the participation of experts whose role is not to decide, but to present their arguments - often different, even opposing - during the democratic process of decision-making.

A question arises: what guarantee do we have that people will make the right choices, those which protect the environment, even if the price to be paid is to change some of their consumption habits? Such a "guarantee" does not exist, only the reasonable prospect that the rationality of democratic decisions will triumph once the fetishism of consumer goods has been abolished. It is certain that people will make mistakes by making bad choices, but don't the experts themselves make mistakes? It is impossible to conceive of the construction of a new society without the majority of people attaining a high level of socialist and ecological consciousness as a result of their struggles, their self-education and their social experience. Some ecologists consider that the only alternative to productivism is to stop growth as a whole, or to replace it by negative growth - called in France "decreasing". To do this, it would be

necessary to drastically reduce the excessive level of consumption of the population and to give up individual houses, central heating and washing machines, among other things, in order to lower the consumption of energy by half.

The "decreasers" have the merit of having put forward a radical critique of productivism and consumerism. But the concept of "decreasing" is related to a purely quantitative conception of "growth" and of the development the productive forces. It would be better to think about a qualitative transformation of development. That means two different but complementary approaches:

1. Not only the reduction but the suppression of entire economic sectors, in order to put a stop to the monstrous waste of resources which is caused by capitalism - a system based on the large-scale production of useless and/or harmful products. The arms industry is a good example, as are all these "products" manufactured in the capitalist system (with their programmed obsolescence) which have no other use than to create profits for the big companies. The question is not "excessive consumption" in the abstract, but rather the type of consumption which is dominant at present, and whose principal characteristics are: conspicuous consumption, massive waste, obsessive accumulation of goods and the compulsive acquisition of pseudo innovations imposed by "fashion". A new society would direct production towards the satisfaction of genuine needs, starting with those that we could describe as "biblical" - water, food, clothing and housing - but including essential services: health, education, culture and transport. We could thus speak about "selective decreasing".

2. In addition, it would be necessary to ensure the "selective growth" of certain branches of production or services that are neglected by capitalism: solar energy, organic farming (family or co-operative), public transport, etc. It is obvious that the countries where essential needs are far from being satisfied, i.e. the countries of the southern hemisphere, will have to

"develop" much more - to build railways, hospitals, sewers and other infrastructures - than the industrialized countries, but that should be compatible with a system of production based on renewable energies and thus not harmful to the environment. These countries will need to produce large quantities of food for their populations, which are already affected by famine. But, as the peasant movements organized on the international level by the Via Campesina network have been arguing for years, this is an objective that it is much easier to attain via peasant organic farming organized through family units, co-operatives or collective farms, than by the destructive and antisocial methods of the agribusiness industry whose the principle is the intensive use of pesticides, chemical substances and genetically modified organisms. The odious present system of debt and imperialist exploitation of the resources of the South by the industrialized capitalist countries would give way to an upsurge in the technical and economic support of the North to the South.

There would be no need at all - as certain puritan and ascetic ecologists seem to believe - to reduce, in absolute terms, the standard of living of the European and North American populations. It would simply be necessary for these populations to get rid of useless products, those which do not satisfy any real need and whose obsessive consumption is supported by the capitalist system. While reducing their consumption, they would redefine the concept of standard of living to make way for a lifestyle which would actually be much richer.

How to distinguish genuine needs from artificial, false or simulated needs? The advertising industry - which exerts its influence on needs by mental manipulation - has penetrated every sphere of human life in modern capitalist societies. Everything is fashioned according to its rules, not only food and clothing, but also fields as varied as sport, culture, religion and politics. Advertising has invaded our streets, our letter-boxes, our television screens, our newspapers and our landscapes in an insidious, permanent and aggressive way. This

sector contributes directly to conspicuous and compulsive spending habits. Moreover, it involves a phenomenal waste of oil, electricity, working time, paper and chemical substances, among other raw materials – all of this paid for by the consumers. It is a branch of “production” which is not only useless from the human point of view, but which is also in contradiction with real social needs. Whereas advertising is an essential dimension of a capitalist market economy, there would be no place for it in a society of transition towards socialism. It would be replaced by information on products and services, provided by consumers’ associations. The criterion for distinguishing a genuine need from an artificial need would be its permanence after the suppression of advertising. It is clear that for a certain time old spending patterns will persist, because nobody has the right to tell people what they need. The change in models of consumption is a historical process and an educational challenge.

Certain products, such as the individual car, raise more complex problems. Individual cars are a public nuisance. On a world scale, they kill or mutilate hundreds of thousands of people every year. They pollute the air of the big cities – with very harmful consequences for the health of

children and the elderly – and they contribute considerably to climate change. However, the car satisfies real needs under the present conditions of capitalism. In a process of transition towards ecosocialism, public transport would be readily available and free – above ground and underground –, while there would be protected lanes for pedestrians and cyclists. Consequently, the individual car would play a much less important role than it does in bourgeois society, where it has become a fetish product promoted by insistent and aggressive advertising. In this transition towards a new society, it will be much easier to reduce in a Draconian fashion the transport of goods by road – which is responsible for tragic accidents and the too high level of pollution – and to replace it by transporting goods by rail or by transporting lorries by rail: only the absurd logic of capitalist “competitiveness” explains the development of road transport.

To these proposals, the pessimists will answer: yes, but individuals are motivated by infinite aspirations and desires which must be controlled, analyzed, driven back and even repressed if necessary. Democracy could then undergo certain restrictions. However, ecosocialism is founded on a reasonable assumption, already supported by Marx: the

predominance of “being” over “having” in a society without social classes or capitalist alienation, i.e. the primacy of free time over the desire to have innumerable objects: personal fulfilment by means of real activities – cultural, sporting, playful, scientific, erotic, artistic and political. Commodity fetishism encourages compulsive buying through the ideology and the advertising that are proper to the capitalist system. Nothing proves that this is part of “eternal human nature”.

That does not mean, especially for the transitional period, that conflicts will be non-existent: between the needs of environmental protection and social needs, between the obligations concerning ecology and the need to develop basic infrastructures, in particular in the poor countries, between popular consumption habits and the lack of resources. A society without social classes is not a society without contradictions or conflicts. These are inevitable: it will be the role of democratic planning, in an ecosocialist perspective freed from the constraints of capital and profit, to resolve them thanks to open and pluralist discussions leading society itself to make the decisions. Such a democracy, common and participatory, is the only means, not to avoid making errors, but to correct them by the social community itself.

Three minority amendments to the resolution on role and tasks of the Fourth International

11 October 2009, by **Alain Mathieu, Patrick Tamerlan**

First amendment

Presented by comrades Mathieu and Patrick (France), this amendment was not integrated into the draft resolution during the plenary session of the International Committee of the Fourth International of February 2009 (the votes concerning its integration were: 8.825% for, 76.47% against, 8.825% abstentions and 5.88 % NV).

1] At the end of paragraph 3, add:

That situation not only “frees new spaces for the radical left”, but it also entails contradictions within the labour movement and trade unions, as well as in and around the traditional parties of the left, the social democrats or the CPs. A new phenomenon of fractures or divisions which, without immediately producing

clearly anti-capitalist parties, create groupings or political forces which occupy a part of the space to the left of social democracy. Whatever our analyses of these processes, we should not deny that what took place in Germany with Die Linke indicates a state of crisis of the traditional parties which we find in other forms in Greece, France, Italy and elsewhere, which has changed the political scene

on the left in recent years.

These regroupments in Europe reflect a first stage of partial break with social liberalism, without immediately creating "anti-capitalist parties "around "revolutionary Marxist" currents; they produce forms of intermediate party-type formations forces in which militants of the anti-capitalist left can sometimes participate by exploiting the initial dynamics of a break. The political contradictions are live in these groupings, notably around the two key questions which provide a line of clarification within them

- governmental participation or support for coalitions based on social-liberal management
- involvement in the social movements to politically reflect their aspirations.

The Italian experience was decisive, and concerns not only the Italian left, but also all the European left. Rifondazione's participation in a government of the centre left is a question which is debated in Die Linke, Syriza, the S.P. in Netherlands, the left of the left of the PS in France, and others.

Such emergent forces are the sign of a period of regroupment and reconstruction within the labour movement, which is going to become more marked with the effects of the economic crisis of autumn 2008, also accelerating the crisis of social liberalism. This period will, for a while, leave open several possibilities of regroupments of a party form to the left of social democracy, without necessarily immediately strengthening an "anti-capitalist regroupment " based essentially on far- left organizations.

Second amendment

Presented by comrades Mathieu and Patrick (France), this amendment was not integrated into the draft resolution during the plenary session of the International Committee of the Fourth International of February 2009. (The votes concerning its integration were: 5.88% for, 76.47% against, 14.71% abstentions and 2.94% NV).

2] after the two first sentences in point 5, replace by

EACL, a perspective to be maintained

For several years, we have engaged, with several European sections in the process of the EACL. Its history and its development have not been linear, it has experienced progress and setbacks.

In several countries, the perspective of wide groupings moved backwards. The failures in the Scotland and in Great Britain, notably, weakened it. In this last case, the choice of the SWP to turn in on its own organization by leaving Respect, which could have begun a wider anti-capitalist regroupment, had a negative effect.

A debate is imperative with the SWP, as with the other forces of the far-left in Europe, a critical debate which is absent in the document proposed for the world congress.

We must persevere in the strengthening of an EACL which would group true pluralistic anti-capitalist parties, beyond the "revolutionary" currents alone, to weigh in the political "reconstruction" of the labour movement.

By trying to strengthen the dynamics of a regroupment of the European anti-capitalist forces, starting from a coordination willed and organised by the pluralist parties existing in the EACL, our objective is not at first to "split ", or separate the "revolutionaries "from the "semi reformist" or "hesitant". In Europe, the working class really needs true mass anti-capitalist parties to defend itself in the current situation. It is ever more urgent, given the speed of the effects of the economic crisis and the incapacity of social democracy to answer it; in the absence of political solutions and of political organisation on the left, the ground could be occupied by xenophobic and protectionist forces.

We have to count on a dynamic of radicalisation in the struggles in the face of the crisis, and faced with the neoliberal policies of the European Union. It is on this basis that the revolutionary Marxist current may be in a position to influence the evolution of these forces or these unitary anti-

capitalist parties, which have not settled everything but which can evolve towards the left.

Broad unitary grouping, in the social struggles or in electoral coalitions, based on the defence of urgent measures in favour of the working class faced with the capitalist crisis, are means to engage processes of action and political clarification.

Die Linke in Germany was an example of the beginning of a break and gathering to the left of social democracy. Syriza in Greece is another one, where groups of the radical left become allied with a significant organization stemming from the crisis of the Greek CP, confirming on the electoral terrain as in recent social movements that a wide anti-capitalist party can form, without looking for a governmental alliance with social democracy, and can weigh on the political situation. These are not the only examples, and moreover no example is to be literally followed. In every country, according to the situation, the configurations will be specific.

But what is common, it is that everywhere, on the basis of the double crisis of the social democracy and the CPs, a space arises for possible groupings, ground for debate and action, in which the "revolutionary Marxists" have to act to build broad anti-capitalist parties, disputing the hegemony of social democracy over the left.

We continue what we have begun to build with the EACL, to regroup and clarify the debate among the forces existing to the left of social democracy, on the basis of two key points: that the parties which make it up are open to and active in the development of the social movements, and remain independent of social liberalism and the governments it leads.

Third amendment

Presented by comrades Mathieu and Patrick (France), this amendment was not integrated into the draft resolution during the plenary session of the International Committee of the Fourth International of February 2009. (The

votes concerning its integration were: 5.88% for, 73.53% against, 17.65% abstentions and 2.94% NV).

3) Add at end of point 8

We should invite as observers the forces with whom we work. But we must be clear on the fact that the Congress of the FI is not in itself a congress of broad anti-capitalist parties, nor a "stage" towards this purpose.

We have to reaffirm the perspective already acquired by the Fourth International: a new mass anti-capitalist international, and not simply an "enlarged" Fourth International. We have to discuss the way to succeed

in building mass pluralistic anti-capitalist parties in every country.

The Fourth International is a political current which defends this prospect, but this prospect is not that of gathering "around" the Fourth International, where the acceptable pluralism would be reduced to various variants of Trotskyism and the far left groups.

A new international will be the result of a much wider political convergence, after a series of working experiences and common debates, of true broad parties which decide to form a new

international grouping. The Fourth International will be one current of this new international, doubtless without dominating it, given the relatively weak forces which we have on an international scale.

But its political, ideological role, its existence in this stage as the only actually existing international framework lead us to believe that in new broad anti-capitalist parties with rights of tendency or current, the partisans of the Fourth International in these new parties will organize under forms to be determined, according to the specific situations in every party .

Women and the crisis of civilisation

26 September 2009

In this paper we indicate some of the ways in which this crisis particularly affects women.

Women were already at the bottom of the pile before the crises started, so it is no surprise that we feel the effects of these disasters most acutely. Women's subordinate place within the labour market, notwithstanding the limited gains made as a result of women's self organisation, remain a reflection of the sexual division of labour and inferior status of women within the patriarchal capitalist family. The family, together with the education system, continues to reproduce notions that women are inherently inferior to men "or at best have different destinies as primary care givers to children and the elderly" a particularly important notion for the state to fall back on as it slashes public services. The family continues to be the main site of violence (and repression) against women.

And make no mistake: what is tested out on women today in terms of the capitalists' attempts to make sure they do not pay for the crisis will be imposed on the whole of the working class tomorrow, as we have already

seen in many other instances, for example with part-time work.

In response to all these issues, we need to make sure that the demands we raise as parties and campaigns take into account the specific oppression of women. Sometimes this will mean raising specific demands that affect women (e.g., abortion or equal pension rights), but it always means looking at what we say from women's point of view.

So, for example, the demand for a shorter working day/week is in the interests of the whole working class, but has particular importance for women while we also carry out the double burden of domestic labour. Another example: nationalisation of the banks has come to the forefront of our propaganda as a result of the credit crunch, though of course we understand that the economic crisis did not start and will not end with the banking crisis. But women, as one of the poorest sections of the working class, are particularly affected by rises in interest rates and limitations in the availability of credit.

Of course, the context in which these demands are formulated will be

different in each national situation and need to be adapted to meet the concrete realities in which we are working. The programme developed by the Belgian comrades for the 2009 European elections, "An ecosocialist Europe will be feminist or it will not exist," is a good example of how this can be done.

Women are also an integral part of the resistance to the onslaught and the fight we see taking place to create the other ecosocialist and feminist world that is daily ever more necessary. Women's self-organisation is essential to achieving this. The steps forward that women have made in terms of the constituent assembly and the campaign against public debt in Ecuador, for example, are not because Correa decided to grant women favours but because women's self-organisation helped create the balance of forces that won these gains.

Women and Climate Change

Poverty and inequality is the lot of the majority of women in the south, and

they are the first to be hit by the climate crisis, caused by emissions produced mainly in the countries of the north. Eighty percent of the 1.3 billion people in the world living under the poverty line are women.

Women produce 80% of food in the south, so desertification, the loss of water resources, etc., have a huge impact on their daily lives. When people are forced to move because the place they live can no longer provide any food because of climate change, women and children are and will be the majority of those displaced.

A report published by Oxfam in June 2009, *The Winds of Change: Climate change, poverty and the environment in Malawi*, argues that women are affected most by climate change because they have multiple roles as farmers, providers of food, water and firewood, and child carers. It also points out that women in Malawian society have no say in decision making and that climate change exacerbates existing inequalities. It further argues that there is a danger that deepening poverty will pressure women to sell sex for food and that this will further exacerbate the spread of HIV/AIDS. The spread of HIV/AIDS will further weaken the ability of the population to resist climate chaos.

In 2008 the level of global malnutrition grew by 800,000 to reach more than 1 billion people and, at the same time, diseases such as cholera that we have long known how to eliminate are now re-occurring as part of this crisis of civilisation.

The fight for women's access to decent free public education and health care, including access to abortion, contraception, and sex education, is an essential element of combating the climate crisis especially in the south. Women are often at the forefront of campaigns to defend and extend these essentials.

The neo-Malthusian answer to the climate crisis arguing that there are too many people on the planet seeks to further limit women's right to control our own bodies and is racist in that the rate of population growth is greater in the countries of the south. Our first response is to fight for the

extension of women's fertility control, as well as for the eradication of poverty which means that there is less pressure on communities to provide more people. We also fight against capitalist consumerism which means that so much of what is produced has no use value and is deeply environmentally wasteful.

The growing impact of agribusiness, production of biofuels and the continuing sell-off of land to multinationals for the continued extraction of oil and other resources has resulted and will continue to result in the loss of land and of autonomy for small producers, the majority of whom are women, many from indigenous communities. Pesticides destroy organic crops of small producers.

Indigenous women and women landless farmers play a central role in defending forest ecosystems from governments who want to sell them to the highest bidder and multinationals who want use them for the production of biofuels and to extract other resources including water, tropical hardwoods (which take hundreds of years to grow a few inches) as well as oil and other minerals. The action by Via Campesina women in Brazil, who destroyed the Aracruz Celulosa substitution for eucalyptus, was a victorious example of women playing a leading role in defending the biosphere. Women of many indigenous communities are also central to the defence of ancestral lands.

* Diminishing energy consumption by ending wasteful production including the arms industry, nuclear industry, advertising and the explosion of air transport

* For localisation of production, including agriculture

* End the use of harmful energy sources and expand sustainable energy

* Free and adequate public transport

Women and the Economic Crisis

Neoliberal globalisation has resulted

in a vast expansion of insecure jobs with short-term contracts and the massive extension of part-time work. At the same time, the informal economy has spread from the countries of the south to parts of the north and to sectors that were previously part of the formal economy.

The majority of those who work in the informal economy are women and children. For example, 1-2% of the urban populations of the world make some sort of living from collecting and reselling waste on landfill sites. The majority of these are women and children. The demand from industry for recycled paper, especially from China, has already begun to fall as a result of the recession, which means the price for these products is falling significantly, and therefore so is the ability of those sectors of the population who live by collecting and reselling them to survive.

In a recession, informal sector jobs are lost at the same time that some previously in the formal sector move into the informal sector. In the south some export-oriented industries like textiles where large numbers of women have been employed have grown rapidly: in Africa for example 100,000 new jobs were created over the last 7 years. But demand has reduced as a result of the economic crisis. In the Philippines, 42,000 jobs in textiles, semiconductor and conductor industries, where a majority of workers are women, were lost in one day (Oxfam report, *Paying the Price for the Economic Crisis*, March 2009).

Export manufacturing is, of course, an area where workers have virtually no rights, so most of the women who have lost their jobs in this sector have received no redundancy pay or social security benefits. Even where there is supposedly a legal right to them, where there is no worker's organisation to ensure that this happens, the bosses ignore their legal obligations.

The growth of microcredit has been important in allowing some economic independence for growing numbers of women in the south. But the recession means that its availability is severely reduced, which will have a negative

impact on women's economic and therefore social and political independence.

In terms of job losses in the formal sector, the crisis has so far impacted differently on women in different countries. The motor industry "where it exists, one of the hardest hit sectors" is generally male-dominated. In some places, generally those countries of the advanced capitalist world where the recession has already hit deeply, we have already seen big job losses in the service sector where a majority of workers are women. In countries where this has not yet happened, the service sector will be next.

Though statistics on global rates of unemployment for women and men are difficult to find, it seems that so far the differential rate of unemployment has not increased; it will, however, as the crisis has more impact on the service sector. Oxfam says the majority of jobs lost in the south are women's, while in the US, female unemployment rose faster than male in May 2009 (5.6% for women, 4.1% for men - Womenstake.org)

Despite legal protection in most advanced capitalist countries, women workers have continued to suffer particular discrimination when they become pregnant. Indeed the assumed possibility that they will get pregnant lies behind much discrimination against women of child-bearing age. But there is evidence in Britain at least that this is getting worse in the recession. The Alliance against Pregnancy Discrimination in Britain, a coalition of different groups who have come together to campaign on this issue, says:

"There has been an alarming increase in the number of pregnant women and new mothers who are being made redundant. It appears that some employers are using the recession as an excuse to break the law on discrimination. With the economic downturn has come a rise in the number of calls to our organisations from women facing maternity or pregnancy discrimination. We have examples of pregnant women being singled out for redundancy and of women returning from maternity leave

to find their jobs have gone.

"Even before the recession, the Equal Opportunities Commission had already estimated that 30,000 women lose their jobs each year as a result of being pregnant, and this figure looks set to rise. This shocking impact of the recession is not only morally wrong and deeply damaging to workplace gender equality - it is illegal" (<http://www.fawcettsociety.org.uk/documents/AllianceAgainstPregnancyDiscrimination.pdf>).

The sub-prime crisis in the US, the first visible sign of today's crisis, has taken a higher toll on women - especially women of colour. Thirty-two percent of women mortgage holders have sub-prime mortgages vs. 24% of men; and African American and Latino homeowners were 30% more likely to have received sub-prime loans (Ms Foundation for Women).

And of course poverty rates increase during economic downturns; with the increasing costs of even basic necessities like food, transportation, and energy, the number of poor families is growing. And once a family has fallen into it, poverty is difficult to escape. An estimated 60% of families in the bottom fifth of income levels remain there a decade later (Ms Foundation for Women).

And, as is historically the case, when women are faced with no current or future prospects for job opportunities, even in the informal sector, already strained by its swelling ranks, they often turn to considering marriage and child-rearing as their only "acceptable" alternative. Still others try to keep a roof over their and their children's heads by selling their bodies for sex.

* Nationalise the banks under popular control, extend provision of microcredits, and increase government aid especially to women

* For shorter working week/day with no loss of pay

* For the ending of temporary contracts. Full rights for all workers

* Against discrimination including at work on the basis of gender, marital status, age or sexual orientation

* For the creation of new jobs open to women and men

* No discrimination in pensions or state benefits

Women and Public Services

The defence of basic services "most fundamentally water, but also electricity, housing and transport" as publicly controlled and affordable "preferably free" is essential. Women have very often played a leading role in the campaigns to defend and extend these basic services, from the successful battle against the privatisation of water wars in Cochabamba, Bolivia in 2000, to the struggle against privatisation of railways and cotton and rice cultivation in Mali.

The economic crisis we face now will not see any let-up in the neo-liberal policies that privatise and starve public services of resources, affecting women both as the majority of workers in this sector and as those most dependent on the services provided. In many European countries, cuts in health services are a constant example. In France the drive to privatise pre-school care in private kindergartens rather than in nursery schools in the public school system will reduce public sector jobs and make childcare more expensive. In Mexico, state outsourcing of an increasing number of childcare centres to private manager-owners has led to a severe decline in the quality of service; the cruellest result of this so far has been the death of 48 children in a June 2009 flash fire at a childcare centre in Hermosillo, Sonora, owned by relatives of high-level government officials, operating under the same roof as a warehouse. Public horror at the corruption and impunity for those responsible distilled into a movement that cost the ruling party the governorship, but the guilty parties have yet to be brought to trial.

In countries where abortion is legal (within limited conditions), cuts in public health services are already impacting on women's access to

abortion and contraception. Rape crisis centres and other services for women who have been on the receiving end of violence have also lost funding. These services will be seen by many providers as optional extras, while others will be happy to cut projects that they never supported in the first place under the guise of economic necessity.

Personal social services are increasingly being privatised in different European countries: France, Sweden, Belgium, and Britain at least. Primarily women workers are employed to do house work (cleaning of house and clothes, cooking, childcare and in some cases care of elderly or disabled people) in the homes of professional families (sometimes by the state, sometimes by private companies). They work maybe 5 or more jobs a week with a small number of hours spent at each and almost as much time travelling between jobs as working. The status of these jobs is very low and unprotected, and the extension of these services is used as an argument for reducing public services, in the retirement home sector for example.

Together with very low hourly wage rates, this means poverty for the women working there. And given that "reform" of social security systems mean that in many countries people are forced to take any job or lose benefits, it is harder for workers to refuse to take these jobs, while the bosses are provided with a pool of cheap labour. These types of developments also result in deepening divisions between women where those with more social and economic power become the employers of those "mainly black and migrant women" who do not.

* For the defence and expansion of public services under workers' and users' control

* For the extension of high quality childcare services

Migration

Over the past four decades, total numbers of international migrants have more than doubled, but the

percentage of the world population migrating has remained fairly constant. There are now 175 million international migrants worldwide or approximately 3.5 per cent of the global population. About half this number is women, despite the common misconception that migrants are men. Most migration takes place to adjacent countries, and some takes place within countries as well as across continental borders.

In many countries of the south, remittances sent back by migrant workers play a crucial role in the economy. For the Philippines in 2008, annual remittances amounted to US\$16.4 billion and in March 2009 alone, total remittances were US\$1.47 billion. In seven Latin American and Caribbean countries, remittances even account for more than 10% of GDP and exceed the dollar flows for the largest export product.

As the crisis deepens, women's migration will increase further for a number of reasons: women moving to work abroad because they cannot sell their labour power at home, or if they can, they cannot sustain their families on the income offered. For example, 4.5 million families in the Philippines cannot meet the minimum requirement for food.

In some situations, in fact, the majority of migrants are women: for example, from the Philippines 70% are women, employed mainly as undocumented domestic workers. The RMPP (Philippines section of the Fourth International) works in Europe to organise Filipina migrants and to try to win rights for undocumented workers.

Filipina women, like other women from Asia, Africa, Latin America and Eastern Europe, working as domestic workers are part of the global domestic care chain, where women in first world countries who want to be liberated from their domestic functions and pursue fulfilment in the public space by working have to find someone to replace them in their domestic functions. So, migration of domestic workers is a form of demand-based migration founded on the gender division of labour in receiving countries. This demand is met by

Filipina women, many of whom have children of their own in the Philippines. Given the gendered division of labour in Philippine households, they cannot expect their husbands to take on their domestic workload in their absence. Furthermore, the husbands might themselves be migrant workers elsewhere (mainly in construction).

For migrant women, the solution to this problem is to in turn employ live-in domestic workers to care for their family while they are gone. In the non-migrant family, the absence of the mother creates a demand for care for her own children. Since they cannot afford to pay a domestic worker, this work is taken on by an elder daughter while the mother is at work.

At the end of the global care chain, this daughter assumes the role of mothering for her younger siblings, giving her less time to play, study, or work outside the home. Alternatively, the migrant's mother cares for her children. Such grandparent fostering is a common constellation in societies of emigration. It takes pressure off the eldest children, but means that grandmothers can experience forty or fifty years of continuous child-rearing responsibility. While every woman in the chain feels she is doing the right thing for her family, hidden costs are passed along and eventually end up with the older daughter in the non-migrant household. As childcare work is passed down the chain, it diminishes in value and becomes unpaid at the end.

Migrant families are deprived of their mothers' personal affection and care since they are already commoditized in the global market and traded internationally. This "new commodity" in the global market is well promoted and supported by the state. For example, the two women presidents of the Philippines (Aquino and Arroyo) made these migrant women "heroines" because they sacrifice their families in order for the Philippine nation to progress through remittances. President Arroyo promised the Middle East countries to send efficient and reliable domestic workers. They both called the migrant women workers the "new heroes" to pacify them in the face of the

emotional distress of separation and exploitation.

The migrant women and their families are the sacrificial lambs of this neoliberal globalization. During global financial crisis, women migrants working in the domestic households are directly affected and cannot even claim severance pay when they lose their jobs because they are mostly undocumented.

Governments like that of the Philippines ignore their own legal obligations to protect migrant workers from their country (Republic Act 8042 (Migrant Workers and Overseas Filipino Act of 1995)). For example, since 2002, six Filipino migrant workers have been executed in Saudi Arabia including one woman, and a number of others have been held on death row for crimes they clearly did not commit. The violence (beatings, rapes, forced detention) meted out to women migrant domestic workers from Asia, Africa, and Latin America in the receiving countries has been well-documented.

Of course not all those who migrate become migrant workers. Men, women, and children are displaced in huge numbers as a result of wars “including civil wars” and by climate change, which makes the places they were living uninhabitable. People try to escape political persecution by leaving their country of origin. Women may run from violence within the family or from forced marriages. Many of these flee as refugees, hoping for a place of safety in the country to which they run. Unfortunately the lot of the majority is to be treated as outcasts and scroungers.

Trafficking in women has also increased. The most publicised form has been trafficking for sexual exploitation of women, particularly from Eastern Europe, Latin America, and Asia to Western Europe, creating a huge network of forced sex workers. But there is also an increase in women being sold within their own countries as domestic slaves: recently, Peruvian feminists’ research showed that the largest number of women in their country subjected to trafficking were actually indigenous women kidnapped

and sent to work as servants in other towns inside Peru. This is a sign of deepening inequality within countries.

Women who are refugees and/or subject to trafficking have even fewer rights than migrant women workers. The majority of refugees remain within other countries of the south. The conditions of refugees in the advanced capitalist countries has become worse over recent years with the “development” of more repressive measures in North America, Europe, and Australasia to keep out refugees as much as possible. This has taken a number of different forms, from making it harder for people to cross borders in the first place, imprisoning many of those “including pregnant women and children of all ages” who do so in barbaric conditions, and making access to what welfare provision still exists in the “host” countries more and more difficult.

Not only the far right, but increasingly mainstream politicians scapegoat refugees for the economic crisis. In Italy, the passage of an emergency law on rape in February 2009 was a cynical attempt by Berlusconi to scapegoat refugees, particularly Roma, for violence against women, while at the same time giving the state more power in general.

* Against the informal economy. For the regularisation of migrant workers’ status

Ideology

The crisis of civilisation is also the motor for the growth of reactionary ideas. Berlusconi’s policy of blaming immigrants for all the effects of the crisis and using this as an excuse to introduce strong “security” “that is, anti-immigrant” laws is just an extreme example.

Religion has an increasing hold on greater sections of the population, and fundamentalism within all major religions continues to be a threat. Women’s bodies are seen as a key terrain of struggle for all fundamentalists.

A striking example is the way in which the reactionary elements of the

Catholic Church in Ireland used the threat that the Lisbon Treaty of the European Union would force Ireland to legalise abortion to build support for their reactionary opposition to the Treaty, despite the fact that it contains no such provision. This forced the EU to give a formal guarantee that adoption of the treaty would not mandate Ireland to legalise abortion, as it had also been forced to do on the question of preserving Irish neutrality.

The collusion between right-wing governments and religious hierarchies continues from Italy to Iran, even if there has been a change in the US, where this is no longer the case. One important consequence of the latter is the overturning of the Bush government ban on funding for projects that gave even contraceptive advice “let alone abortion services” to women. This opening will potentially have a positive impact on women’s rights, especially in Africa. However, the murder of Dr. Tiller, one of the few physicians in the US openly prepared to perform late-term abortions, reminds us that fundamentalism is still alive and well in the US itself.

Further, the Bush regime’s fundamentalist doctrine had a profoundly negative impact on the fight against HIV/AIDs, especially in Africa, that has destroyed the lives of so many women. Sixty-one percent of those with the disease in sub-Saharan Africa are women. But in some countries there, infection rates among young women far surpass those of their male peers. For example, in Swaziland, four times as many females aged 15-24 are infected as males. Lack of access to accurate information about how the disease spreads, as well as pharmaceutical companies’ greed, which has severely limited the availability of anti-retrovirals in the communities that most need them, have been the most important causes of this devastation.

In Nicaragua, the Sandinistas ditched their political principles on the question of abortion in 2008, apparently in order to win the election, although there was no real indication that in fact this would increase their vote. But they not only abandoned their own position, they

also decided to actively attack the women's movement, bringing criminal charges against nine prominent feminists in the case of a therapeutic abortion given to a nine-year-old rape victim. It just so happened that most of these nine women had also been involved in supporting President Ortega's step-daughter in her case against him for sexual abuse.

In Mexico we have seen collusion between the right wing PAN government and the PRI to introduce "right to life" legislation in 13 states - making the extension of the right to abortion up to 12 weeks which the PRD introduced in Mexico City more difficult. Such developments were possible because the gains in Mexico City, while positive, took place at the level of the superstructure and were not achieved through mass mobilisations, with the resulting change in mass consciousness that this would have involved.

In Brazil, the Lula government has continued to compromise with the Vatican to the point of considering the possibility of putting religious education on the school curriculum. At the end of 2008, Congress chairman MP Arlindo Chinaglia created a Parliamentary Commission of Inquiry into abortion with as a mandate for no less than the institutionalisation of criminalisation of women who defend legalisation of abortion and those who are obliged to carry it out. Moreover, the Judiciary of the State of Mato Grosso do Sul, in the town of Campo Grande, which cited more than 10,000 women for practising abortion, using as proof the medical records requisitioned in a clandestine clinic. Out of these women, some 1,200 are facing trial.

In Afghanistan, one of only three countries in the world where women die earlier than men, we have had the grotesque spectacle of the passage of a law legalising rape within marriage and debate of a clause that would allow a man to legally starve his wife if she refused to have sex with him. This is the country where those who have waged war against it since 9/11 have cynically claimed to do so in defence of women's rights, but where the government they installed is just as reactionary and as in hock to Islamic

fundamentalists as their predecessors (who, anyway, were a creation of US imperialism).

The new Afghan constitution allows a separate "family code" for the Shia population and it is under this provision that the current debates are taking place "in the run up to a general election. In this context, as in many others, women's lives and bodies are instrumentalised. Afghan women have organised against this "with at least moral support from feminists elsewhere" however their protests have been viciously attacked by fundamentalists.

As feminists we also face an ideological attack from a different direction: post feminism and masculinist ideas. Starting from the idea that feminism has "gone too far," these currents use differentialist theory to attack women's individual rights to abortion, divorce and protection against violence.

* For full separation of religion from state, an end to religious influence in the framing of laws and the operation of the legal, health or education services.

* For the right to free abortion, contraception and sex education

Violence

The crisis of civilisation is marked by an increase in violence at all levels of society as alienation deepens.

Whether in the private or public spheres, women are victims of violence: in France one woman dies every three days from conjugal violence. At work masculine domination leads to widespread physical/psychological/sexual violence and the increasing tension in workplaces as the crisis deepens can only deepen this phenomenon.

War is of course the most obvious and brutal (and brutalising) example of violence. War in the late 20th and 21st century has become a phenomenon in which it is routine for massive casualties to take place amongst civilian populations, therefore affecting huge numbers of women and

children.

From the time of the wars in the Balkans and then again in the wars in the Great Lakes in Africa, we have seen the increasing use of rape as a weapon of war.

Evidence of the extent of rape in Bosnia between 1992 and 1995 by Serb forces in particular forced the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) to deal openly with these abuses, and in 1996, for the first time, rape was recognised as a war crime. According to the Women's Group Tresnjevka, more than 35,000 women and children were held in Serb-run "rape camps" in which Muslim and Croatian women were held captive, raped and deliberately made pregnant. This occurred in the context of a patrilineal society, in which children inherit their father's ethnicity, hence the "rape camps" aimed at the birth of a new generation of Serb children "and the continuation of ethnic cleansing by another means.

Similar horrors have also been experienced by women in the Great Lakes region of Africa. Their bodies have become battlegrounds because women are seen only as vehicles through which new generations are produced; and, in ethnic warfare, preventing the enemy from reproducing equates to the ultimate prize. Against this background, sexual violence has become a deliberate and effective war-time strategy in the region.

Violent sexual acts directed toward women to brutalise and instil fear in them and the general population do not discriminate by age, with girls as young as four months and women as old as 84 suffering the same fate. UN agencies working in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) estimate that approximately 50,000 women were raped in the region between 1996 and 2002, and close to 55% of women have experienced sexual violence during the conflict in South Kivu. An estimated 250,000 women were raped during the Rwandan genocide.

In Haiti, an Amnesty International report (November 2008) said a trend

has emerged involving groups of armed men assaulting girls, the legacy of rape as a political weapon that emerged during the armed rebellion that ousted Aristide in 2004. Rape became a political weapon by armed insurgents to spread fear and to punish women believed to have supported the democratic government. "Rape has now become a common practice among criminal gangs," said the report. Of 105 rape cases reported by November 2008, 55 percent involved girls under age 18. In 2007, 238 rapes were recorded; 140 of these involved girls between 19 months and 18 years of age. All this is taking place despite the fact that UN troops have been in Haiti since 2004.

Women in Palestine and particularly in Gaza continue to suffer brutally as a result of the Israeli occupation. Pregnant women beginning labour or needing medical attention at earlier stages of their pregnancies are routinely refused passage through the check points into the Israeli state, at the same time that hospitals in Gaza are denied medical supplies, even when they are brought by aid convoys. Countless women have miscarried or died themselves as a result of this barbarity. 192 women died in the Israeli bombardment of Gaza at the beginning of 2009. And the siege of the area continues to impact extremely negatively on the whole

society including on the physical and mental health of women and children.

In other places we have seen the impact of increasing militarisation of societies usually resulting in the criminalisation of civil society and violent repression by the state apparatus. Sexual violence including rape has been increasingly used as a tool. In Atenco, Mexico in 2006 the police launched a brutal attack on the social movements resulting in two dead and 26 women being sexually assaulted. The war on drugs, especially in Latin America, and the war on terror are two sides of the same coin here.

We have also seen the use of horrendous forms of sexual torture by US forces "including women" in Abu Graib and in Guantanamo. These abuses, used mainly against male detainees who are presumed to be religious, are clearly intended as much to humiliate the victims as to physically assault them.

We further see that prejudices "racism, anti-semitism, homophobia and sexism where these had been rolled back by the gains of the movement" are again on the increase, together with the spread of Islamophobia. At the same time these prejudices are expressed more violently so we see a marked increase in murders as a result of

these brutal beliefs.

In the case of women, we have the grotesque phenomena of feminicide, which first came to light around the case of Juárez City in the state of Chihuahua in Mexico from the early 1990s and continues to this day. What became clear as women organised and fought back around this issue however, is that the murder of hundreds of women just because they are women is not unique to this one Mexican city. Rather the phenomenon is pervasive throughout the national territory of Mexico and in other Latin American countries including Guatemala, Salvador, Honduras, Costa Rica, Chile, Argentina and also in Spain. Feminicide has to be understood as the (il)logical extension and normalization of other forms of violence against women, and like other such crimes is carried out by men in a number of different relationships to the women involved.

* For full and free support systems for women victims or potential victims of violence, such as women's centres, the independent right to benefits and housing, adequate training of social work, police and justice departments.

submitted after the international women's seminar by Hall (Appeals Commission, Britain) and Philomena (IC, France)

Amendment on the youth camp to the resolution "Role and tasks of the Fourth International"

26 September 2009

The amendment is in **bold**.

Point 10

The youth camp which is held every year with around 500 comrades must have a central place for the youth work of our European sections, **in the**

perspective of forming young internationalist cadres. As more and more of our organisations in Europe are within broader anti-capitalist formations we continue to encourage our comrades to invite youth from the broader organisations to the camp, and to

participate in the preparatory seminar held in Amsterdam every Easter. The camp is also an important occasion for young comrades from Europe to meet comrades from other continents and the efforts made by organisations outside Europe to

send comrades to participate in the camp is very important. As the only regular public initiative of the FI, the camp also plays a role as a place to which younger people

from organisations with which we are building relations can be invited, as was the case with camp in Greece in 2009 with the presence of small delegations from

Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, Poland and Croatia.

Submitted by Thomas (IC, Denmark) and Philomena (IC, France)

Amendments on women to the resolution on Role and Tasks of the Fourth International

25 September 2009

The amendments are indicated in bold.

Part 1

...The social and economic attacks and neoliberal counter reforms against the popular classes are going to increase. There will be more wars and conflicts. **Religious fundamentalism will be increasingly used as the ideological underpinning both for attacks on the popular classes, targeting notably women's control of their own bodies, and wars and conflicts between nations and ethnic groups.** Ecological catastrophes will hit millions of people, **notably in the poorest regions disproportionately worsening the situation of women as those responsible for sustaining families.**

A new historical period is on the horizon

Part 2

(1st para)

...The Belem WSF shows, nevertheless, the need and possibility for international convergences, but in a framework where struggles are more fragmented and dispersed. **In Europe the success of the mobilisations against the G20 and NATO give an indication of a renewal of the global justice movement. The Istanbul ESF could be another important occasion.**

The World March of Women proposes a new occasion of common initiative in 2010 which could become a step in rebuilding and strengthening this international feminist movement.

(last para)

... and a greater convergence of social fightback movement existing in different fields : anti-war and anti-nuclear, against the debt and for food sovereignty, **in defence of social and ecological rights, in defence of women's rights notably to control their own bodies, as well as the women's movements playing a significant role in other social fightback movements, ...**

Part 3

All the forces politically or institutionally linked to social-liberalism or to the centre left - **including the women's movement, notably in the institutionalised forms of NGOs, women's aid associations, etc** - are, to varying degrees, being dragged into these qualitative changes in the workers' movement and are incapable of formulating a plan for getting out of the crisis.

Part 5

Revolutionary Marxist militants, nuclei, currents and organisations must pose the problem of the construction of anti-capitalist, revolutionary political formations,

with the perspective of establishing a new independent political representation of the working class **that takes into account the diversity of the working class - in gender, race, residence status, age, sexual orientation - in defending a resolutely programme class-based programme.**

our goal must be to seek to build broad anti-capitalist political forces, independent of social democracy and the centre left, formations which reject any policy of support to the class collaboratorist governments, today government with social democracy and the centre left, **forces which understand that winning victories on women's rights, like in the abortion referendum in Portugal, strengthen the radical anti-capitalist forces.**

Part 7

(end of 1st para)

... opposition to any participation in governments **(in the advanced capitalist countries)** that merely manage the State and the capitalist economy having abandoned all **internationalism or fight for an end to inequality and discrimination on gender, racial, ethnic, religious or sexual orientation grounds.**

Part 10

As a result, in order to strengthen ourselves and play this role all the bodies of the FI must be reinforced : regular **Bureau** meetings, International Committees, **specific working commissions**, travel, exchanges between the sections. **It is necessary to reinforce the activity that the International has deployed over the last few years in regularising and strengthening EPBs meetings and the efforts of coordination between the Latin American sections.** The meetings of the International Committee (IC) which are held every year representing about 30 organisations must ensure the organisational continuity of our international current.

Lack of resources as well as the decline in the presence of women, notably in our leading bodies, in the last period (result of the decline in activity of a strong autonomous women's movement which has had an impact on our national organisations and thus the International), have meant that we have not sustained an active women's commission and a corresponding network of regional meetings and international schools. Three women's seminars have been held since 2000 as well as meetings of the women

comrades present at each IC. These have maintained a limited and fragile but nevertheless real feminist internationalist perspective. In the next period, given the centrality of our understanding of women's oppression and the strategic nature of the fight against it and the struggle to build the autonomous women's movement in an anti-capitalist perspective, we must find the necessary resources to ensure that this question is developed as a central element of the anti-capitalist perspective we propose. In this framework we must at the same time strengthen our internal commission and be on the offensive in proposing discussions to our partners, including participation in seminars and schools in our Institute. This process must also find a reflection at national level.

At the same time we must ensure that the women in our organisations - and in the new parties we are building - find their full place and that the simple adoption of parity or quotas for leadership bodies or electoral lists is not considered a sufficient answer to the obstacles to women's full participation in the political process. The range of measures constituting a positive action plan were presented in the [1991 World Congress resolution on positive action](#).

The educational institute has taken on a fresh impetus. We now have to ensure that the schools and seminars are held and ensure the equilibrium of its management and its organisation. The FI must also open up its meeting and its Institute. The Institute occupies a central place, not only to educate the cadres of the section but also to contribute to the exchanges between currents and to various international experiences. The seminar on climate change open to a series of international experts is a good example. Like other meetings it indicates the necessity and the possibility that we are a crucible for programmatic elaboration of essential questions that anti-capitalist and revolutionary currents are tackling. **Our schools have always been an occasion for inviting participation from organisations with which we are building relations. This role must be strengthened and broadened in the coming period.**

To sum up, in the coming period, and on an orientation aimed at building a new international force or a new International, the FI as an internal framework, represents an essential asset for revolutionary Marxists.

Submitted following the international women's seminar by Hall (Appeals Commission, Britain) and Philomena (IC, France)