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Break with the logic of austerity

29 March 2010, by **Leo de Kleijn**

This moderator's lead-in shows how effective [Christian Democratic Prime Minister Jan Peter] Balkenende and [former Labour Party leader Wouter] Bos have been this past year in making everyone resigned to their classic response to a recession: there's a crisis, everyone has to sacrifice, so local government has to sacrifice too. But in fact that's not at all a logical response.

I was in fact the only one of the eight to protest at the question. I said, 'The government has fallen. Nothing's been decided yet about the €35 billion in cuts. The national elections on 9 June are about who's going to pay for this crisis caused by the bankers and swindlers. Why should we in Rotterdam resign ourselves already to €300 million in cuts? If the parties here say that we can cut €300 million without pain and suffering for the people of Rotterdam, they're messing with people's minds. As it is we don't have enough money to make the city better and more social and fix up the neighbourhoods that are in bad shape. We can say goodbye to the wonderful neighbourhoods we promised in the last elections if now, less than three years later, we're forced to cut the budget by almost 10 per cent. Rotterdam has to defend its people. We have to say loud and clear that whatever government we get has to look elsewhere for its €300 million. If necessary we should call out the

people of Rotterdam to go to the Malieveld [traditional site of national demonstrations in the Hague] for a massive protest against this attempt to make our city pay for the crisis.'

Long before the elections, the Rotterdam SP took a stand against the plan for cutbacks in the Municipal Fund and the municipality's other sources of revenue. At first we got support from local Labour Party leader Dominic Schreijer. In response to my proposal to go to bat against the Hague, he said that the Labour Party should bring down the coalition government if it persisted with sharp cuts at the expense of Rotterdam's neighbourhoods. Later he backed down - but the government fell anyway [over Afghanistan].

Local government in the Netherlands is responsible for vital public services: street and park maintenance and cleaning, affordable housing, welfare facilities, support for schools, public safety, anti-poverty measures, provision of welfare benefits, nursing care, youth services and much more. In the debate on the 2010 municipal budget, the Rotterdam SP introduced an alternative budget with €150 million in savings to improve all these services and distribute the tax burden more fairly. We proposed cuts in bureaucracy, in 'red carpets and trinkets' for big companies, in expensive outside consultants, in prestige projects, and in municipal

funding for real estate developers putting up more office towers and luxury housing. That €150 million in fact that we wanted to carve off the bones of local government is badly needed to fight poverty in this city, help people with heavy debts, and invest in quality, affordable housing for the people of Rotterdam. Why should we give up all those millions to the Hague without a fight?

The SP is headed into the national parliamentary election campaign with the message that the rich, the swindlers, the bankers and the mansion owners have to pay for the crisis. They're the ones who caused it. Our battle over state pensions [against raising the retirement age from 65 to 67] didn't really get off the ground, because the [social democratic-led trade union federation] FNV had accepted in advance the logic of [Christian Democratic Minister of Social Affairs Piet Hein] Donner: 'We have a problem paying for the pensions.' We mustn't walk into that same trap with this €35 million in cuts. For local government this means challenging the logic for 'more money this year, less money next year'. Cutbacks of €300 million mean a poorer, less social, less safe Rotterdam - even if we implement austerity in the most social possible way. The SP will not shrink from the task of dividing the cuts as fairly as possible if there's really no other way. But first it's time to fight.

Report on the international situation

28 March 2010, by **Laurent Carasso**



During the international discussion

Photo: Raoul

(I) The world situation is marked by crisis.

For the first time in history, this crisis is located is explained by capitalist globalization. No territory is immune. All the economic, social and political factors are interrelated worldwide. The economic crisis is not a conjunctural crisis. This is a systemic, structural crisis: this is the most serious crisis since 1929. The United States has lost 35% of its financial wealth and the Euro zone 25 %. And, when Governments speak of "emerging from crisis" we do not agree. There may be short-term recoveries, related to policies in support of activity in this or that country, but the countries of the centre - the USA and Europe - are not emerging from crisis. The explosion of public debt in southern Europe, - in Greece, Spain - and the banking and financial uncertainty demonstrate the instability of the situation and a new phase of the crisis, at least in Europe.

"The crisis is not over!"

The current crisis is not a simple cyclical conjunctural crisis. It is part of a long-term structural crisis, a crisis of the "productive order" put in place by the neo-liberal counter-revolution at the end of the 1970s. The phases of "recovery" and "recession" have alternated for several decades but crises are increasingly deeper, they

tend to follow an increasingly accelerated pace, they now strike the heart of the system, their overall cost is increasingly high.

The current crisis shows a deepening of the contradictions and "historic limits" of the system.

This crisis began in the financial sphere, but it cannot be reduced to a banking and financial crisis. It results from the combination of a crisis of over-production of commodities, over accumulation of capital and under-consumption :

- At the end of the 1970s, when the phase of growth of the previous three decades came to an end, the dominant classes launched an offensive to restore the rate of profit, by lowering wages, privatising massively, developing mass unemployment, and deregulating social relations.

- This pressure on wages, employment, and social expenditure resulted in a reduction in demand which, in turn, caused a surplus production capacity and therefore a problem of profitability for industrial production. There was, therefore, lower investment, because it was less profitable to invest in industry and more cost-effective to do it on the financial markets.

- To offset this dual crisis, that of the production of surplus value with the decline of industrial profitability, and that of the realisation of surplus value with the fall in consumption, a dual crisis already analysed by Ernest Mandel, at the end of the 1980s and early 1990s, the system engaged in a headlong rush forward: the increasing search for profits on the financial markets through financialisation and debt, both private - that of households

- and public - that of states -

This is what cracked in 2008. Banks and financial markets were first in line. One of the dimensions of the crisis is banking and financial, through the devaluation of what some called "fictitious capital", but what has informed this spiral is the logic of capitalism itself: the quest for profit, searching for the best rate of profitability for invested capital, competition between capitals, private ownership of the key economic sectors.

These mechanisms have resulted in a long-term crisis marked by the following characteristics :

(a) growth limited to around 3-4% on a world scale with significant inequalities between only 1-2% in Europe, 2-3% in the USA and 8-10% for BRIC, although we cannot put on the same level the growth of India, of China and that for example of Brazil. Without China and India, world growth is very low.

(b) maintenance of unemployment: 50 million and more unemployed in the OECD countries; over 217 million unemployed worldwide according to the ILO. 20% unemployment in a country like Spain. Irreversible loss of jobs in the USA and Europe, between 3 and 5% of jobs.

(c) reduced and limited consumption related to pressure on wages. Net increase in all emergency food aid services in the USA and capitalist Europe. More than 26% and more on food aid in the 27 major cities of the USA.

(d) huge public deficits to contain the crisis (between 8 and 13%), deficits and public debt between 70 and 80%

of GDP.

(e) explosion of liquidity and new speculative bubbles: flows of capital to emerging countries to the detriment of investment in the centre, stock markets up, speculation in raw materials

(f) the accounts are far from being cleaned of toxic assets. New bank failures are not to be ruled out.

This leads the employers and the dominant classes to redouble attacks against workers and peoples. This time of crisis is a time of a new offensive by capital

(a) there is now a global market of the labour force, which requires more competition between capitals and between workers. The crisis of 2008 has accelerated the restructuring of enterprises, with plans often already envisaged for the reorganization of production in the main branches of activity, with layoffs, more flexibility and precariousness. This exerts downwards pressure on wages and workers' rights. These attacks will continue and further degrade the living conditions of hundreds of millions of workers.

(b) attacks on public services are growing. The goal is to sharpen attacks on social protection, health, pensions, throughout Europe.

(c) the corollary of these social attacks is worsening security policies, police control and social control over populations with an increase in state violence, as evidenced in Brazil or Mexico, military and police violence of which the poor, children and women are the first victims.

Greece and Spain are a laboratory. They announce a wave of austerity policies throughout Europe. To offset the debt and deficits, the dominant classes, the financial markets and the European Central Bank require the dismantling of public services, reducing the number of public employees, wages and social protection. In Greece, the government uses "debt terrorism" to impose these social setbacks, the challenging of a service structure and public sector which remained significant.

After a moment of panic and beyond ideological gestures "on the return of State" [as if it had disappeared!] and the moralisation of financial markets and capitalism" neoliberal policies have been confirmed.

This settles a debate on the possibilities of a Keynesian turn. This is not about returning to a historic debate but understanding the dynamics of the crisis. There was, in contrast to 1929, massive intervention by states to contain the crisis - of neoliberal statism - but at this stage, neither the relationship of social forces nor the choices of the dominant classes are moving, as was the case after 1945, towards new public policies, a new social security, a revival of demand, the creation of new sectors of production and massive job creation. There is no perspective of the equivalent of a new phase of "mass production" and "mass consumption" as at that time, with the socio-political reports which were constructed at the period.

(II) It is in this context that the climate crisis will worsen

As the failure of the Copenhagen Conference showed we knew that capitalism could not solve the environmental crisis. Where we need to think "social needs", capitalism thinks "profit". Where coordination, planning, long-term choices are necessary, capitalism thinks "competition of capitals and private property".

But what Copenhagen, shows is that the capitalist system cannot be transformed into "green capitalism". States and governments don't want or cannot fix objectives for greenhouse gas reduction targets which meet the needs of the crisis. The objectives of the IPCC are not respected. What matters are capitalist interests, finding new markets, particularly on rights to pollute, but not "green" reorganisations of energy, urban planning and transportation. Green capitalism is not emerging as the

"New Deal" for the 2010s. Beyond the competition between capitals that prevent a balanced ecological crisis response, green business accounts barely more than 2% of jobs in 10 years. There is not on the horizon a "green production and mass consumption", a revival of the system by a green capitalism. Although governments and the major groups manipulate the ecological question for imposing nuclear energy or justifying the expulsion of the indigenous peoples of entire regions in Asia or Latin America.

(III) One of the specific characteristics of the current crisis, is the combination of a "world collapse" in the framework of capitalist globalisation.

This is neither a complete nor irreversible process but the centres of gravity of the world situation are moving.

The USA is in relative decline. The two terms are significant. For the following reasons:

? The share of the US economy in the world economy is falling. As in Europe, it is undergoing a process of de-industrialisation. Its debt has reached dizzying proportions. Its positions in the world have worsened notably in their bogging down in Iraq and Afghanistan. The choice of Obama, for the dominant classes, was precisely to retake the initiative but the depth of the economic crisis in the USA, the difficulties met in Iraq, in Afghanistan, the need to accept certain forms of multilateralism illustrate well the limits of his policy. There is clearly a challenge to the US hegemony of the 1980-2000 period, and Obama has not succeeded in

reversing the tendency: But “relative decline” because the USA remains the biggest world power. The US market is immense. The dollar, supported by the Chinese and Japanese investment, remains the currency of reference. And above all its military hegemony is indisputable. In this situation of economic decline, military intervention and attempted geostrategic control, in terms of territory, natural resources, raw materials, like oil, are of capital importance. The Middle East, Asia Minor or Latin America are its targets. The military choices in Afghanistan, Honduras or Haiti witness to the US military aggressiveness. It is, also, a means of aligning the other imperialist powers, notably through NATO. The zones of political and military confrontation with US imperialism should concentrate all our attention.

- This puts on the agenda the importance of our movement's intervention against the war, a unitary mobilization for the withdrawal of US troops from these countries, the defence of the sovereignty of those countries, the defence of democratic freedoms. With the endorsement of the USA, the state of Israel serves as relay for this policy of aggressive war: in three years, two wars of aggression in Lebanon and in the Gaza Strip with more than two thousand victims, and the ongoing development of new threats against Lebanon. These wars are part of this whole “war on terror”, and require continuing our solidarity with the struggle of the Palestinian people and the recognition of its legitimate rights. In countries like Iraq, Palestine, Afghanistan, we combine the demand for the withdrawal of troops, the central task, with support for progressive groups and activists, and the battle in the face of domination by the Islamic fundamentalist currents. We reject the threats against Iran, at a time when a similar media campaign to that which preceded the invasion of Iraq is being constructed, and we support the masses against the Ahmadinejad regime and their fight for democracy.

But one of the central questions of the world situation concerns the new relations being established between China, India, the USA and the rest of the world. Whereas the growth of the

USA and Europe is around 1-2%, China's was 9% in 2009 and it should record a rate of around 10% for 2010. In commercial terms, China has become the world's biggest exporter and the third biggest importer of commodities, the seventh and the fifth for services. China is now responsible for 8.7% of world exports of commodities (or the equivalent of the US) and 6.7% of world imports (as against 14.1% for the US). Already it is elbow to elbow with Japan as the second world economy and the biggest world exporter. Chinese giants compete with transnationals in key sectors like aeronautics or transport. Millions of hectares in Latin America and Africa are exploited by Chinese companies and the Chinese state. China has become a world economic power. Now “the workshop of the world”, Chinese growth is export oriented. But it is also experiencing a massive rapid process of industrialisation and enlargement of its internal market which has considerably developed in recent years. At the political level, China is undoubtedly the leading Asian power. This region is marked by the interventions of US and Japanese imperialism and powers with global ambitions such as China and India. In recent years, it is China which has most extended its domination over the region (freezing or resolution of a large number of its territorial conflicts with its neighbours, strengthening of relations with South Korea, normalisation of relations with Japan, strengthening of Taiwan's economic dependency on continental China, free trade agreement with ASEAN, increased Chinese power in Pakistan and Sri Lanka and so on). For a decade or so, China has increased its partnerships all around the world, in Africa especially, so as to reduce its energy dependency. Millions of hectares in Latin America and Africa are exploited by Chinese companies and the Chinese state. Long term contracts on raw materials are accompanied by undertakings from China to develop the infrastructures of suppliers at advantageous conditions. China also offers loans at very low interest rates without political conditions. Nonetheless, China is faced with structural weaknesses:

- Its growth is highly dependent on

exports

- It has to import raw materials and components in large quantities.

- Its internal demand is very unbalanced, being essentially based on investment while household consumption is very low. To better escape crisis, it would be necessary to rebalance growth favouring household consumption, and for that it would be necessary to massively increase purchasing power, reduce inequality and create genuine social protection

Immediately, strong inequalities are reflected in growing social tensions and inter-ethnic conflicts. China's GDP is perhaps the second biggest in the world but its income per inhabitant remains that of a third world country. The rapid aging of the population coupled with a virtually non-existent pensions system will pose a serious problem in the coming decades. Every Chinese youth will have to maintain their two parents and four grandparents.

The recovery policy rests on a massive development of credit which is reflected by a notable recovery of the real estate market and investments on the stock exchange. There is a danger of this degenerating into speculative bubbles.

It is also necessary to point out the weaknesses of its military apparatus in relation to that of the USA. Nonetheless, China has become a major regional military power with a nuclear strike capacity. The Chinese government wishes to develop its military power to accompany the development of its economic power. For several years, the Chinese government has been significantly increasing its military expenditure. Its land forces are already among the world's biggest. But significant weaknesses remain in the navy and air force which the government is seeking to remedy. This modernisation of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) raises concerns, in particular in the US and Japan.

The two powers - the USA and China - enjoy a mutual and conflictual dependence. The exchange rate problem between the dollar and the

yuan is an example. The US wants the Chinese government to revalue the yuan so as to reduce its trade deficit in relation to China and revive its economy. But the Chinese trade surplus allows it to accumulate huge dollar reserves which it invests in US treasury bonds, allowing the US to finance the salvaging of its economy.

These modifications in the relations of forces between the USA and China now allow the Chinese economy to pull world growth. It is a new and fundamental factor in the world situation, whose limits should be grasped: the Chinese economy is still very far from being able to offer sufficient outlets to bring the world economy as a whole out of crisis. It is still far from replacing the USA in this role.

(IV) The global crisis also hits Latin America

This is the case, albeit unevenly with some countries experiencing growth, but also in special forms, such as a "crisis of civilization" in terms of ecological crisis or relations between social, national and ethnic struggles.

South America is one of the highlights of the social and political confrontation against US imperialism.

We would like to emphasise three points, which witness to three projects at work today in the region. :

- The striking trait is the offensive of US imperialism and the Latin American right against the peoples. After the failure of the FTAA, a direct and indirect offensive has resumed: diplomatic as in the "Summit of the Americas" in Trinidad and military as in Honduras and in Haiti.

- This can go as far as forms of recolonization as in Haiti, with a demonstration of force of American troops a few hundred kilometres from Venezuela. Colombia has a central role in this scheme.

- This offensive is also reflected by electoral victories as in Chile and the political attacks from the right as in

Argentina, Venezuela or Paraguay.

The second factor to stress is Brazil's place in international politics and the economy. In terms of infrastructure, exploitation of natural resources, and agro-exports, Brazil plays a major role. Brazilian multinational companies supported by the government, like Petrobras, clearly play an imperialist role in the neighbouring countries. Brazil maintains traits of a dependent capitalist country, thus exports of industrial products decrease and those of raw materials increase relatively. But the new relationship of forces between the USA and Brazil must also be noted. This gives Brazil new capacities of political initiative. The position of Brazil on Honduras shows this well. The place of Brazil in the imperialist coalition for Haiti alongside the USA also illustrates Brazil's new place.

In the 1960s, there was already talk of "sub-imperialism", some use the notion of "peripheral imperialism". This concept can be discussed, and it is up to the Latin American comrades to enlighten us on this point, but there is undoubtedly a new role for Brazil.

The main countries of the ALBA constitute a third group of countries, Ecuador, Bolivia, Venezuela and Cuba. These are countries which at various levels have made partial breaks with US imperialism in terms of political confrontations, progressive social measures and constitutional reform processes. But each country has a specific situation. Ecuador has seen some important indigenous social mobilizations that have won new democratic rights from the Government Correa. This was, moreover, by a series of confrontations. The Bolivian experience, with the creation of the MAS by the social movements, combines social, indigenous, and national mobilizations and progressive measures. Evo Morales has won the elections. The popular classes and social movements expect much from this victory. Venezuela is also at the crossroads.

Either there is a breakthrough of the revolution in the Bolivarian process, replying to the attacks of the right but also addressing the fundamental

structures of the economy in terms of social conquests, nationalisation, and workers' control. This involves stimulating democracy and the mobilization of the masses. Either the project of state capitalism and the "Bonapartist" traits of the regime consolidate with an internal bureaucracy of the regime which will smother the process. There may be positive measures like nationalisation or social aid interventions, but the general pace of the process shows a series of worrying signs.

As for Cuba, which occupies a special place and which should merit a more thorough treatment in our discussions, it is still the target of the USA and requires from us an active defence against imperialism.

But beyond these political classifications there is in Latin America a dynamic of polarization between the popular struggles and imperialism. Social and political tension take on an ever more acute character. It is the continent where there has been in the last period the highest accumulation of social resistance and revolutionary experience. Its uneven and combined development may create the conditions of an alliance of workers, peasants, and indigenous peoples, for their fundamental rights, of an alliance of anti-capitalism and radical or revolutionary nationalism against imperialism.

V) Asia is one of the parts of the world where the implosion of the USSR has had especially deep consequences "unfreezing" the alliances created during the Cold

War.

Beijing displays its ambitions, while New Delhi plays a growing political and military role from Sri Lanka to Afghanistan, destabilising Pakistan still further. The whole region has entered a phase of geopolitical instability favourable to the rise of militarist nationalism, as in Japan, interethnic tensions and religious fundamentalism. The relationship of forces between regional and world powers (USA, Japan, China, India and so on) becomes undecided. A new arc of crisis appears stretching from the Korean peninsula to Afghanistan and central Asia, passing by Mindanao or Sri Lanka, multiplying potential sites of war while several of the countries concerned possess nuclear weapons (USA, China, India, Pakistan, North Korea to a certain extent, Japan tomorrow?). In this context, US imperialism is trying to strengthen its bases, from Diego Garcia to Okinawa, thus more generally its presence and possibilities for action, as in the Philippines (in particular Mindanao).

Globally Asia has been more resistant to the current economic crisis than other regions, with average growth rates remaining higher. But that should not conceal strong disparities between countries or sharp social tensions underpinned by the enrichment of the capitalist class and some middle layers contrasted to the overexploitation of millions of workers and peasants. Since the financial crisis of 1997, the popular layers have suffered a series of attacks on their social and environmental rights with cumulative effects. Some countries are undergoing acute institutional and social crises, such as Thailand or the Philippines.

The capacities of popular resistance and response are very unequal according to the case. In some countries left forces, initially weak, have recently undergone significant and encouraging development (Pakistan, Malaysia and so on). But bigger forces remain divided in other countries, like India or the Philippines. In some cases, they have not been able to overcome a state of fragmentation (Indonesia) whereas elsewhere it is necessary to

reconstruct a political and trade union movement on a basis of class independence (Thailand, China). However, beyond this diversity of situations, the regional links between political, associative and social movements have been significantly strengthened in the region: affirmation of solidarity, anti-imperialist and anti-war struggle, resistance to neoliberal policies by peasants and other toilers, calls for the cancellation of the debt and respect for food sovereignty, struggles combining social demands, democratic rights and responses to the ecological crisis. The reinforcement of these regional networks and their integration in the world movements constitute a point of support for the coming struggles.

(VI) Africa, meanwhile, remains a continent devastated by capitalist globalization and the effects of the global crisis.

The climate crisis and the food crisis are of a particular severity. After decades of structural adjustment policies (privatization of the state economic sector, liberalization of markets, priority to exports and debt repayment) imposed by imperialism through international institutions such as the WTO and the IMF, Africa remains dependent on the export of agricultural, energy and mining raw materials, to the countries of the centre. That is why it is hit by the decline of demand in those countries. Despite significant Chinese demand, growth fell from 9% in 2007 to 5.1% in 2008 and 1% in 2009

This fall in the rate of growth is accompanied by the particular gravity on this continent of the food crisis resulting from the increase in the prices of foodstuffs. Excluded from

sharing the fruits of growth by the imperialist capitalists and local bourgeoisies, the popular layers see their situation deteriorate further: lower real wages, difficulties of access to fertile land, tens of thousands of victims of neocolonial wars described as “tribal” or “religious”, youth unemployment, violence against women, natural disasters related to climate warming. The violence of neoliberalisation has produced a dynamic of popular mobilization in various countries. Struggles against the high cost of living, and for access to drinking water, electricity, health, for the right to education mark African social and political life. In this process, it is urgent that supporters of a socialist alternative among activists and organizations undertake joint work beyond the different traditions. In North Africa, recent years have seen a multiplication of significant social struggles, caused by the EU’s desire that these countries play the role of its backyard.

(VII) Europe is the “weakest link” in the imperialist chain

Crisis is weakening the European Union. It shows the structural inability of European “governance”: the extreme weakness of the European budget - less than 1% - no European industrial policies, no debt agency, no European social policy. “Divergent dynamics’ are fully evident according to each country’s place in the global economy and in the division of labour. The United Kingdom with its financial power, Germany with its industrial equipment goods, France with its specialties based on state industry such as nuclear power, weapons, aerospace and transportation. As a result, far from “creating major European groups for a European capitalism”, the big companies mix their capital and techniques with other global groups and competition between countries exacerbates. Europe is particularly struck by the explosion of debt as shown by the Greek crisis and Spanish and Portuguese weakness. Eastern

European countries are also affected by the crisis, deepening their inequalities in development, their deficit and dependence in particular towards Germany.

To compensate for this weakness in a context of increasingly strong global competition, European bourgeoisies must "break what remains of the European social model". Hence they attack democratic freedoms, in particular the rights of immigrants. But these attacks do not mechanically, automatically, lead to a development of social resistance, and a growth of the labour and anti-capitalist movements.

There is social resistance but not at the level of the attacks. In the 1930s, there was a time gap between the crisis and the social and political reactions. We can say: "wait" but at this stage, there have not been generalised social struggles.

But on the right, the economic crisis poses a representation problem of the dominant classes. That also saps the social base of the classic bourgeois parties and provokes internal tensions and contradictions, favouring the emergence of populist or fascist parties; the crisis has weakened the traditional right.

But it has also weakened the traditional left which fundamentally has no different policies from the right in response to the crisis. The crisis has not resulted in a turn to the left by the social democratic parties. It has deepened their social-liberal adaptation process. Social democracy maintains social and political relations with the history and reality of the labour movement, but it is ever more integrated with the highest levels of the state and capitalism. There can be this or that particular tactical positioning or "left" inflection, but more than ever, social democracy is located on the ground of crisis management in the service of the capitalists. This process is also marked on the trade union side, including within the framework of the ETUC. This leads to a weakening of social democracy, confirmed in Germany, Portugal and France at the 2009 European elections. It will probably benefit from a new swing of

the electoral pendulum, but it is experiencing an organic weakening and a neoliberal social transformation accentuated by the crisis. In Eastern Europe, the workers' movement has not yet recovered after the Stalinist destruction. The restoration of capitalism in these countries has worsened the living conditions of millions of people. The role of major European trusts, subcontracting sources of production struck head on in 2008. Here and there new forms of organization of the labour movement independent of the old apparatuses originating from Stalinism arise, but they are taking their first steps. This is also the case for small anti-capitalist groups or organizations.

Thus the margins of manoeuvre for the dominant classes do not reside in the strength of the parties of the right but rather in the weakening of the left and its policy of support for capitalist regimes.

This vision of the situation also leads us to a sober assessment of the process underway of reorganization of the workers' movement. This dual crisis of leadership - right and traditional left - opens spaces for new left political formations. But these spaces are more the product of a rightwards evolution in the old traditional political formations of the left than a new rise of class struggle. This must lead us to seize the opportunities but also to understand that there is in these spaces a need for a political struggle between anti-capitalists and left reformists, post-Stalinists, left ecologists. Hence the importance of our own intervention and our political responses.

(VIII) Therefore a political struggle is required around anti-capitalist and eco-socialist responses

(a) through an emergency programme of immediate and anti-capitalist demands: rejection of redundancies, reduction of working time, wage

increases, defence, extension or creation of public services and systems of social protection and education.

The working class has never been so large in the world, but it is fragmented, divided, socially and politically. It is necessary to reorganise the social struggles against the crisis around basic demands, trade union organisations, social movements, notably by a politics of unity of action and a united front.

(b) it is necessary to impose a distribution of wealth that challenges the logic of profit, by taking back the shares of added value that capital has removed from employees in recent decades, giving priority to social employment needs, health, education, a decent income, leisure - and making incursions into capitalist property.. Thus the budget funding of these social needs must radically question the policies of structural adjustment imposed by imperialism, which means taxing capital and public appropriation of the banking sector under workers' control. In a series of sectors affected by the crisis, there has been, as in Argentina or Venezuela experiences of control, relaunch of production, management of companies. These experiences should be popularised. Collective ownership of natural resources is a fundamental requirement in Asia, Latin America and Africa

This anti-capitalist programme is also ecosocialist. It implies, notably faced with climate change, a new policy centered on a new town planning a transport policy, a reorganisation of the energy sector favouring renewable energies, a reorganisation of entire branches of the economy. These choices over the medium and long term are not compatible with the profit motive and capitalist competition. They involve democratic debates and decisions in the context of a planned coordinated economy under workers' and popular control which poses the problems of public and social appropriation, of choices of production corresponding to the needs of local populations.

This is the dynamic at work in the mobilisations of indigenous peoples. In

this context the questions of control by the people and of democracy are central.

(c) we are well aware that, faced with the crisis, all the more since this crisis is a combination of economic and ecological crisis, our responses cannot be reduced to a revival of demand and a reform of the functioning of financial markets, in short to a Keynesian program. A complete remoulding is necessary.

(d) finally these programmatic dimensions must also be considered as tasks of a workers' government. We do not face this question in all countries, but where it is the case, the defence of this program is incompatible with support or participation in governments of management of the capitalist economy and institutions.

This is a key strategic issue. In the dominated countries the question of national and popular sovereignty and the fight for a constituent assembly must be combined with the demand for popular anti-capitalist governments.

To conclude, this crisis recalls "the historical limits of system". More, it is necessary, beyond the cycles of struggles, to build on the consequences of the political and ideological crisis of the system to build anti-capitalist forces. But this does not mean a fall into catastrophism. There is no situation without a way out for capitalism. The system can survive and operate with crisis but the ecological, social and human costs will be high. It is this which should be denounced, its structural inability to

meet social needs, and it is this failure that puts on the agenda the need for a change of socio-economic system and a break with capitalism.

The debate which arises on the socialist perspective is of primary importance. There is no way out without the overthrow of the capitalist system of exploitation and oppression, without collective ownership of the means of production. But this movement will not result simply from the contradictions of the system - to overthrow the system we need, at the national, regional, international scale an exceptional, revolutionary mobilisation and above all, an alternative that is credible in terms of consciousness, organisation and leadership. It is the historic and practical which is to be fulfilled and in which we will play our full role.

Hugo Gonzales Moscoso (1922-2010)

28 March 2010, by Michael Löwy



Hugo Gonzalez Moscoso

Few people in the continent have embodied with such consistency the struggle for socialism, the uncompromising struggle against oligarchy, imperialism and capital. Without sectarianism or dogmatism, always willing for unity with other fighters, with other anti-imperialists, he never renounced the revolutionary programme, and never accepted making the slightest concession to the dominant classes. Neither defeat, prison, nor the setbacks of the movement could affect his obstinate commitment to the cause of the oppressed. As Guillermo Almeyra (editor of the Mexican newspaper "La Jornada"), who had known him since the 1950s, puts it: "Hugo González Moscoso was throughout his life an unshakable militant, consistent, honest, who always tried to convert into action his youthful anti-capitalist,

anti-bureaucratic and libertarian ideas."

I met Hugo Gonzales for the first time in 1969, at the 9th World Congress of the Fourth international. Very big, with thick glasses, economical in his words, he could be also very warm. I had the opportunity to see him again a few years later, during the short time he spent in exile in Europe and to hear him speak a little about his life as a militant: an impressive succession of struggles, clandestine work, prisons, torture and exile - always ready to start again, to take up the thread of struggle interrupted by dictatorships and permanent coups.

He was still a high school student when he joined the POR; after studying law and establishing himself in La Paz as an employment lawyer, he soon became one of the main leaders, alongside Guillermo Lora, author of the famous "Pulacayo Theses" (1946) of the Bolivian miners' union in a perspective of permanent revolution. His baptism of fire came in 1949: a

general strike, supported by the POR, crushed in blood by the oligarchic regime - known in Bolivia as the "Rosca", the alliance of tin mine owners and latifundistas. The main leaders of the strike - including Hugo Gonzales - were arrested, tortured, interned in a camp, but finally, thanks to a collective hunger strike, expelled to Chile. After having participated in the Third World Congress of the Fourth International in 1951, he returned illegally to Bolivia, to reorganize the POR.

Bolivian revolution exploded

In April 1952 the Bolivian revolution exploded, putting an end to the power of the "Rosca": Hugo Gonzalez was in the front line of the uprising and took part, with his comrades, in the seizure of the military arsenal and street fighting. A few days later, elected to the leadership of the COB, the Bolivian Workers' Trade Union

Federation, he wrote its programme, which called for the formation of a workers and peasants' government and a socialist revolution: one of the most important documents in the history of the workers' movement in Latin America! Unfortunately, the revolution was confiscated by the MNR (Revolutionary Nationalist Movement) of Paz Estenssoro, which was nonetheless obliged, under the pressure of peasants and miners - armed with sticks of dynamite - to start an agrarian reform and nationalise the mines.

In the years that followed (1953-56) the POR experienced a serious crisis, leading to a split and a serious weakening. In June 1953, its Tenth Congress approved the Theses proposed by Guillermo Lora, with the following orientation: "Far from calling for the overthrow of the Paz Estenssoro regime, we support it insofar as it resists the offensive of the Rosca, and we call on the international proletariat to defend unconditionally the Bolivian revolution and its transitional government. (...) The immediate task is not to cry "Down with the government", but to demand that it carry out the basic demands of the revolution". In addition, this document envisages a predominance of the left wing in the MNR as a possibility: "It is only in these conditions that the possibility of a coalition government of the POR and MNR which would be a form of realisation of the "workers and peasants government" formula could be raised, which, in turn, would constitute the transitional stage towards the dictatorship of the proletariat" (On this crisis, see the book by the left wing British historian, James Dunkerley, "Rebellion in the Veins - Political Struggle in Bolivia 1952-1982", Verso, London 1984).

Following these Theses, two factions were established in the POR: the Leninist Workers Faction (FOL) led by Lora and the trades unionist Erwin Moller, which defended this line and the Internationalist Proletarian Faction, led by Hugo Gonzales and Fernando Bravo, which rejected this orientation and proposed a break with the MNR and the formation of dual power on the basis of the COB. In 1954, a part of the FOL (without Lora)

led by Erwin Moller decided to break with the POR to join the MNR. The tendency led by Gonzales became the majority and won support from the International Secretariat, but Lora did not accept his defeat and after some hesitation, provoked a split and set up his own POR around the newspaper "Masas". Weakened by these departures and by factional struggle, the POR only won 2,239 votes at the 1956 elections. To these internal problems we should add government repression, arrests and persecutions: along with other leaders, Hugo was imprisoned in the San Pedro jail in La Paz.

However, the POR-Combate - its new name - managed to survive, and attempted to organize resistance to the military dictatorship of Barrientos, which came to power in 1964. In May 1967, when the guerrilla forces led by Che Guevara conducted their first actions, Hugo Gonzales wrote a proclamation in support of this movement, to be adopted by the POR-Combate: "the cause of the guerrillas is the cause of all Bolivians". "The guerrillas are the armed wing of the people who must oppose those who oppress the masses, the assassins (...), those who sell and deliver the homeland to imperialist greed". At the same time, it called for the extension of the struggle to mass front: "It is necessary to organize and coordinate the support of the people. The best help is to develop the struggle of the urban masses, miners, workers, peasants, students for their own demands (...) "All revolutionaries must unite to strengthen a powerful left front".

After the death of Che, an alliance was constituted between the POR and the ELN (Army de National Liberation), led by one of the survivors of the guerrilla force, Inti Peredo. Gonzales travelled to Cuba early 1968 to seal this agreement, and organized military training for a contingent of POR militants; however, from 1968 to 1970, the military dictatorship succeeded in overcoming this new initiative. In 1970 -71, under the more progressive military government of Juan José Torres, Gonzales was actively involved in setting up a Popular Assembly, creating a situation of dual power, which ended with the

bloody military coup of General Banzer in August 1971.

Exile in Chile

Exiled to Chile, Hugo Gonzales Moscoso and his Bolivian comrades received political asylum from the government of Salvador Allende, and organised a Revolutionary Anti-imperialist Front to return to the country and overthrow the dictatorship. Pinochet's military coup ended this attempt, forcing Hugo into exile, this time in Belgium, where he participated for a few years (1973-76) in the leadership of the Fourth International. Impatient to return to Latin America, he went to Peru 1976 in Peru and entered Bolivia illegally in 1978 to contribute to the reorganization of the POR. The new dictatorship of General Garcia Meza, based on the mafia and drugs, imprisoned him in Cochabamba and took him to La Paz, where he was subjected to torture. His health deteriorated dramatically. Thanks to an international campaign, the regime was obliged to expel him and he received asylum in Sweden.

Once a minimum of democracy was restored in Bolivia, Hugo Gonzales returned to his country. Based in Cochabamba in the 1990s, he helped the peasant movement in the region to organize and support the initiatives of a young local peasant leader, Evo Morales. After the latter's election victory in 2005, Gonzales gave him critical support, while calling for a deepening of the process of change in Bolivia. In an interview with Ernesto J Hidalgo in April 2009, he said: "I define the Evo Morales government as an expression of the indigenous peoples and social movements; a nationalist, democratic, anti-neoliberal and anti-imperialist government." Calling for a "Yes" vote in the referendum on the new constitution, Hugo he stressed the need for the unity of the oppressed of the cities and the countryside to impose transitional measures towards the revolution and socialism.

Despite his age and declining health, Hugo never stopped fighting, thinking, writing, always with a view to the self-emancipation of the workers. His

articles were still appearing in the most recent issues of the POR

newspaper, "Combate". Only death has stilled his lucid and vigorous pen.

Compañero Hugo Gonzales Moscoso, hasta la victoria, siempre!

On the Israeli offensive against Gaza and in solidarity with the Palestinian People

28 March 2010

The offensive, planned long ahead, was not intended to "stop the rocket firings" or "impose respect of the cease fire". The rocket firings caused fewer than 20 victims in 10 years while the cease fire signed between Israel and Hamas in June 2008 was never respected by Israel, which has maintained the blockade against Gaza and continued to kill militants of the resistance in Gaza and abroad. In these conditions, the Palestinians have the right to defend themselves and to resist the occupation, including by armed force.

Israel's objectives are, once more, to show the Palestinian population and the resistance movements that Israel is the only master of the game: the only "peace" possible will be the one imposed on the conditions fixed by the Zionist State, which means denial of the Palestinians' national rights, and anyone who tries to oppose to this logic will be subjected unlimited repression by the Israeli army.

Recent events confirm it: the Zionist state will not tolerate Palestinians unless they renounce their national rights and accept living in isolated parts of Palestine or in refugee camps outside. Israel only wants to negotiate with Palestinian representatives if they are prepared to surrender to "peace" conditions that do not contradict Zionist objectives and interests.

Under the Obama Administration as before, the US remains the main imperialist backer of the state of the Zionist state. The countries of the European Union too continue to openly or implicitly support Israel. The Arab League States, divided and for

the most part submissive to imperialism, are unable to adopt a common position, while Egypt continues to play its role as a collaborator of Israel and of the imperialist powers—illustrated once more by its sabotage of the Gaza Freedom March last December and by the building of a new wall of shame in Rafah.

There have nevertheless been many reactions condemning Israel and supporting the Palestinian people. All over the world, demonstrations rallied tens and even hundreds of thousands of people. Some states, such as Venezuela and Bolivia, expelled the Israeli ambassador. Everywhere, even at the General Assembly of the United Nations, appeals for a boycott and sanctions against Israel have been put forward.

The Fourth International reaffirms its unconditional support for the struggle in all its forms of the Palestinian people for the attainment of their rights: the right to self-determination without any external interference; the right of return for the refugees or compensation for those who demand it; equal rights for the Palestinians of 1948. Furthermore, we reaffirm the necessity of the emancipation of the Arab peoples, of the dismantling of the Zionist state, which represents a racist and colonialist project at the service of imperialism, in favour of a political solution in which all the peoples of Palestine (Palestinian and Israeli Jewish) can live together in full equality of rights.

In order to achieve this objective, we must urgently reinforce the solidarity movement with the Palestinian people,

concentrating on five central and unifying demands on which everyone agrees also within the Palestinian national movement—unconditional, immediate and total retreat by the Israeli army from the territories occupied since 1967, including East Jerusalem; the dismantling of all colonies built since 1967; destruction of the separation wall; liberation of the 11,000 political prisoners held by Israel; immediate and unconditional lifting of the blockade of Gaza—as initial steps towards a political solution based on equal rights.

We should also be especially concerned for the demands by the Palestinians from 1948; they demand full equal rights and free access to land and water. The recent Israeli elections and the high score obtained by Lieberman, an open advocate of the expulsion of the Palestinians from 1948, constitute a major risk for this population, to which the solidarity movement has the duty to respond. We must also support the Israelis who are fighting against the occupation, war and Zionist policies in general.

Finally, it seems essential for us to step up the Boycott-Divestment-Sanction (BDS) campaign, initiated in 2003 by more than 170 NGOs, associations and Palestinian parties. The demand for BDS provides the opportunity to develop the solidarity movement with the aim to denounce the complicity of the governments and the major capitalist groups. The recent and coming successes of the BDS campaign can play a part in weakening the Zionist State and create the conditions to strengthen the Palestinian and anti-imperialist camp. In this struggle, it is necessary

Anti-capitalism and climate justice

28 March 2010, by **Esther Vivas**



The interpreters worked hard

Photo:Raoul

In this context, a movement able to challenge the dominant discourse of green capitalism, recognising the impact and the responsibility of the current model of capitalist production, distribution and consumption and linking the global climate threat with everyday social problems is urgent. Copenhagen saw the increased expression of the movement for climate justice, precisely to coincide with the tenth anniversary of the mobilizations against the WTO in Seattle. A protest which, under the slogan "Change the system, not the climate" expresses this diffuse relationship between climate and social justice, between social crisis and ecological crisis. But the success of the protests in Copenhagen contrasts with the weakness of demonstrations around the world, with some exceptions such as London.

The current crisis raises the urgent need to change the world from below and do so from an anti-capitalist and radical eco-socialist perspective. Anti-capitalism and climate justice are two struggles which must be closely linked. Any prospect of rupture with the current economic model that does not take account of the centrality of the ecological crisis is doomed to failure and any environmental perspective without an anti-capitalist orientation of a break with the current system will deal with the surface of the problem and end up being an instrument at the service of green marketing policies.

Slowing down climate change involves modifying the current model of

production, distribution and consumption. A superficial and cosmetic retouching is of no point. Solutions to the ecological crisis mean taking up the foundations of the current capitalist system. If we want climate change we need to change the system. Hence, the need for a true eco-socialist perspective, or eco-communist perspective as Daniel BensaÃd said in one of his last articles.

Also, we must combat the thesis of green neo-Malthusianism blaming the countries of the South for their high rates of population growth and seeking to control the bodies of women, undermining our right to decide on our bodies. To fight against climate change means to fight poverty: the greater social inequality, the more climate vulnerability. It is necessary to convert productive sectors with a serious social and environmental impact (military, cars, extractive industries and so on), creating employment in ecologically just and social sectors such as organic farming, public services (health, education, transport), among others.

Putting an end to climate change means asserting the right of peoples to food sovereignty. The current agro-industrial model (delocalised, intensive, mileage intensive, oil-dependent) is one of the maximum greenhouse gas generators. An ecological, local peasant agriculture with short marketing circuits allow, as La Via Campesina say, the cooling of the planet. It should also incorporate the demands of native peoples, control of their lands and natural goods and their worldview and respect for the "pachamama", "mother earth", and defence of the "good life". Enhancing these contributions posing a new type

of relationship between humanity and nature is key to addressing climate change and the commodification of life and the planet.

From a North-South perspective, climate justice involves unconditional cancellation of the debt of the countries of the South, an illegal and illegitimate debt and demanding recognition of a social, historical and ecological debt from North to South, the result of centuries of pillaging and exploitation. In cases of disaster, it is necessary to promote mechanisms of "popular relief". We have seen as climate change increases the vulnerability of the popular sectors, especially in the countries of the South. The earthquakes in Haiti and in Chile are two of the most recent cases. These threats necessitate networks of international solidarity of rank and file social movements allowing a channelling of immediate and effective aid to local populations. The initiative cannot be in the hands of an international "humanitarianism" empty of political content.

The fight against climate change is a fight against the current model of industrial production delocalised, "just in time", massive, dependent on fossil resources and so on. Union bureaucracies tail and legitimize policies of "green capitalism" with the farce of "green technology" to create employment and generate increased prosperity. It is necessary to remove this myth. The trade union left must call into question the current model of growth without limits by another "development" model in accordance with the finite resources of the planet. Climate change and environmental demands must be a central axis of combative trade unionism. Trade unionists cannot see ecologists as

enemies and vice versa. All suffer the consequences of climate change and we need to act collectively.

It is wrong to think that we can combat climate change only by individual attitudes changing, and when more when half of the world's population lives in conditions of "chronic underconsumption", and is

also wrong to think that we can combat climate change only with scientific and technological responses. Structural changes are necessary to the models of production of goods, energy and so on. In this respect, local-based initiatives pose practical alternatives to the dominant model of consumption, production, energy... they have a demonstrative character and raise awareness which is

fundamental as a basis.

By its nature, talk of how to confront climate change implies discussing strategy, self-organization, planning and the tasks that lie ahead for those of us who consider ourselves anti-capitalists.

Mobilization for the climate and anti-capitalist strategy

28 March 2010, by **Daniel Tanuro**

However, we can no longer permit ourselves to unbalance the climate. We are probably no longer very far from a "tipping point" beyond which phenomena which are uncontrollable and irreversible on a human timescale are likely to be set in motion, which could lead to a situation that humanity has never experienced and which the planet has not experienced for 65 million years: a world without ice. A world in which the sea level would rise by approximately 80 metres compared to its level today.

The total disappearance of ice is certainly not for tomorrow: the process could take up to a thousand years. But it could be set in motion in twenty, thirty or forty years and involve a rise in the sea level of several metres before the end of the century. To prevent this happening, it is necessary to radically reduce greenhouse gas emissions, therefore to completely do without fossil fuels within two or three generations.

Do without coal, oil, natural gas? It is possible: the technical potential of renewable energies is sufficient to take over. But in practice, in the very short period of time we dispose of, the energy transition is possible only if it goes hand in hand with an important reduction in energy consumption. A reduction so great that it cannot be only attained by an increase in energy

efficiency: a reduction of material production and of transport of goods is necessary.

This is enough to understand and to make people understand that humanity is facing a gigantic challenge. A challenge of a completely new nature, which will dominate the twenty-first century. A challenge which contributes to determining the conditions of intervention of revolutionary Marxists and of the workers' movement in general.

Capitalism cannot rise to this double challenge. Neither on the social level, nor on the environmental level. More exactly: it cannot rise to it in a way that is acceptable for humanity (I will come back later on this). The reason for this incapacity is the same on the two levels: the purpose of capitalism is not the production of use values for the satisfaction of finite human needs, but the potentially infinite production of value by many and competing capitals, organised around rival states.

A capitalism without growth is a contradiction in terms, says Schumpeter. The relative dematerialization of production is certainly a reality, but it is more than compensated for by the increase in the mass of goods produced.

This accumulation dynamic constitutes the fundamental reason for which

"green capitalism" is an illusion, in the same way as is "social capitalism". There are green capitals, without any doubt, there are even more and more, and they generate considerable surplus value. But they do not replace dirty capitals: they are added to them, and the latter, because they dominate, determine the rhythms, the technological choices and the modalities of introduction of the former.

The recent past does not leave any doubt on this subject. Look at Barack Obama: at the time of the presidential campaign, he promised to make the polluters pay, in order to massively support green energies (150 billion dollars in 10 years) and to help the most underprivileged layers in society to handle the increase in the price of energy. This policy was supposed to create five million jobs. But along came the subprime crisis and of all these intentions, there remains nothing. In the USA as in the EU, the polluters will receive rights to pollute for nothing, sell them at a profit and pass on the price to the consumers.

Capitalist climate policy reinforces the capitalists who are destroying the climate. Thus we can see in action the power of the fossil energy lobbies and the sectors which are linked to them, such as cars, shipbuilding, aeronautics, petrochemicals and

others. This confirms the Marxist analysis according to which monopolies have the power to slow down the equalization of rates of profit. In the case of fossil fuels, this power is all the stronger in that it is anchored in the ownership of deposits, mines etc, therefore in ground rent.

The result is laid out before our eyes: in all countries, climate plans do not represent even half of what would be necessary in terms of reduction of greenhouse gases emissions. Moreover, these plans are deepening social inequality and are accompanied by a headlong flight into dangerous technologies: nuclear energy, the massive production of biofuels and the capture and geological sequestration of CO₂ (supposed to make coal "clean").

It is within this general framework that we have to look at the farce of Copenhagen: the ultra-mediatised conference supposed to lead to a new constraining and ambitious international treaty to take over from the Kyoto Protocol ended in a rout: without targets in hard figures, without deadlines, without even a reference year from which to measure reductions in emissions.

Moreover, Copenhagen could well mark a turn towards a policy even more dangerous than that of the Protocol. By the agreement they concluded, in fact, the 25 big polluting countries were largely freed from the scientific pressure of the IPCC and the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities. It was a horse-traders' agreement between imperialism and the new rising capitalist powers, who shared out the atmosphere on the backs of the peoples, the workers and the poor of the entire world.

It is very much to be feared that the Cancun Conference in December will confirm this turn. In that case, on the basis of current national climate plans, we can project a rise in the average surface temperature between 3.2 and 4.9°C in 2100 (compared to the eighteenth century).

We should be wary of falling into a catastrophism with eschatological undertones. Some apocalyptic discourses, indeed, only invoke urgency in order to argue for

sacrifices and to conjure away the responsibility of capitalism. But there is no doubt that a rise in temperature of 4°C would lead to real social and ecological catastrophes.

It is a question here of taking the exact measure of the threat. It is not the future of the planet which is at stake, nor life on Earth, nor even the survival of mankind. Apart from an asteroid dropping on us, a large-scale nuclear accident is probably the only thing that can threaten the survival of our species. Climate change, in any case, does not threaten it. But it threatens to seriously worsen the conditions of existence of the 3 billion men and women who already lack the essentials of life. And it threatens the physical survival of a few hundred millions of them, those who are the least responsible for global warming.

Mike Davis, in *Late Victorian Holocausts*, described in detail the horrible famines which caused tens of millions of victims at the end of the nineteenth century. These famines were the combined result of an exceptional sequence of El Nino and of the formation of the world market in agricultural produce. It is the repetition of such tragedies that we must expect. With the difference that this time the drama will be due entirely to the thirst for profit of big capital, in particular of the monopolistic sectors based on fossil fuels.

This enables us to define precisely the reasons for the inability of capitalism to meet the challenge. "There is no situation without a way out for capitalism", said Lenin. Indeed. But this time the way out is likely to be particularly barbarous.

The ecological crisis and the social crisis are one and the same

It is obvious that the ecological crisis and the social crisis are one and the same crisis: the crisis of the capitalist system. The expression "ecological crisis" is misleading: it is not nature which is in crisis, but the relationship

between society and nature. It is not the climate which is in crisis, and its disturbance is not due to "human activity" in general: it is due to a certain type of this activity, historically determined, based on fossil fuels. The ecological crisis, in other words, is nothing but a manifestation of the deep systemic crisis of capitalism.

It is absolutely obvious that satisfying the right to development and to social needs in general at the same time as carrying out the gigantic reductions in emissions which are necessary in the coming forty years is possible only if you adopt a radical anti-capitalist perspective. Esther Vivas will come back to our political tasks in the second part of this report. I will confine myself here to listing the principal measures which are necessary: to remove useless or harmful production; to plan the transition towards another energy system; to establish renewable sources and to develop energy efficiency, independently of the costs (according to thermodynamic rationality, not profit); to transfer, massively and free of charge, clean technologies to the peoples of the South, via the public sectors of the countries concerned; to set up a world fund for adaptation to the effects of global warming in poor countries; to support peasant agriculture against agribusiness; to relocate a substantial part of production, in particular agricultural production; to redistribute wealth by making inroads into the revenues of capital; to radically reduce working time and work rhythms, without loss of wages, with hiring of extra workers; to expropriate the credit and energy sectors....

People say: "it is easier said than done". No doubt, but the first thing to do... is to say it. And that is what we must do initially, as an International: say it. That will not isolate us, on the contrary. The fight against climate change gives really considerable credibility to the anti-capitalist alternative. The very scale of the problem, its global character, its urgency, the monstrous injustice of the foreseeable consequences: all that makes it possible to introduce directly and in very simple terms the need for

a radical rupture with the generalized production of commodities.

Considering the enormity of what is at stake, it is much more than a policy option that is posed: it is a choice of civilization. Through the climatic danger, capitalism makes it possible for us to rehabilitate communism for what it really is: a project of civilization worthy of the name. The project of a human community self-managing common natural resources in a rational and careful way, in order to allow everyone to live well. Faced with vaguely anti-liberal projects, the fight against climate change reinforces our choice of a clearly anti-capitalist line, as it does our refusal of any participation in governments which manage capitalism.

Strategically, the fight for the climate is not distinguished for us from the general struggle of the exploited and oppressed. It can only be carried out effectively by them: the working class, young people, women, the poor, small farmers, indigenous people. The working class has to play an important role there, because only it can provide the foundations of another mode of production in which it will decide what is produced, how, why, for whom and in what quantity.

At the same time, it is an understatement to say that the environmental question in general, and the fight for the climate in particular, is difficult to introduce into the workers' movement. This difficulty results from the situation of the workers as the most exploited class, divorced from its means of production, divorced in particular from nature as a means of production, and which sees these means of production appropriated by capital confronting it as hostile forces.

The conclusion which results from this is that the possibility of integrating ecology into the class struggle depends on the class struggle itself. The more the workers are beaten, atomized, demoralized, the more they will see the defence of the climate as a threat, and the more the capitalist class will be able to really use the protection of the climate as a pretext to attack them even more. In such a context, ecological consciousness can

progress only in the alienated form of an inner conflict between the consumer convinced of the necessity to behave in a sober and responsible fashion and the producer preoccupied by the loss of his employment.

On the other hand, the more the workers are successful in their struggles, the more they will gain confidence in their own strength, the more they will be able to deal with the ecological question by bringing to it collectively, as producers and as consumers of their own production, the anti-capitalist solutions that are essential.

A better relationship of forces between in favour of the exploited and oppressed is the necessary prerequisite for an anti-capitalist solution to the climatic crisis, in other words of any acceptable solution. But this prerequisite is by no means sufficient, and does not allow us to put off until later the fight for the environment. Indeed, in addition to its urgency, the ecological question has a certain number of specific characteristics such that the formation of an anti-capitalist class consciousness comes up against even greater obstacles here than in other fields.

Three conclusions flow from this:

- Firstly, the importance of building a political instrument, an anti-capitalist political party capable of presenting analyses of the double crisis, social and ecological. Seldom has the need for a revolutionary party and a revolutionary International, acting as a collective intellectual, been so obvious;
- Secondly, the importance of a programme of demands making it possible to link concretely the social and ecological dimensions of the capitalist crisis. The key point here is that the climatic crisis, by giving a new topicality to the idea of a completely different kind of society, rehabilitates at the same time the concept of the transitional programme, capable of establishing a bridge between the current situation and this global alternative;
- Thirdly, the importance of social

dialectics to help the working-class vanguard to play its role. It is no accident that peasants, indigenous peoples and youth are on the front lines in the social mobilization for the climate. Young people are fighting for their future, against a monstrous society in which those in authority know what is happening, but let it happen. As for the peasants and indigenous peoples, unlike the workers, they are not divorced from their means of production, in particular the land. Faced with a capitalist system which has condemned them to death, they have understood that the fight for the climate is part and parcel of their overall struggle and confers upon it a formidable additional dimension of legitimacy. "The peasants can cool down the planet that agribusiness is heating up" said an official statement of Via Campesina a little before Copenhagen. The workers can also cool down the planet. By producing for needs, not for profit, by radically reducing working time, etc. The convergence of the social movements can help them to become aware of the enormous force that they represent. There lies in particular the importance of the Cochabamba conference convened by Evo Morales.

The Fourth International will call itself ecosocialist

By adopting this Draft Resolution, the Fourth International will call itself ecosocialist. Some people refuse this label, saying: "what use is it, socialism is enough". Among the adversaries of ecosocialism, there are those for whom nothing has changed, who refuse that the pure schema of the October Revolution should be polluted by the ecological question. They are not, as far as I know, present in our ranks. Moreover, there are comrades who, while accepting the radical innovation of the combined social and ecological crisis, regard ecosocialism as an unnecessary concession to political ecology. That is not what it is about.

We can discuss at length whether or not there was such a thing as an ecology of Marx. Personally, I believe Marx was much more of an ecologist that we have said he was. But that is not what is really important.

What is really important is that all the Marxist currents missed the ecological question, that some of them continue to miss it and that all of them still have difficulty in responding to it in a convincing way.

Calling ourselves ecosocialists is first of all a way of saying "we have understood" or, at the very least, "we know that we must understand something which we did not understand". It is a new label on the bottle, a little bit like the new shirt that Lenin said had to be put on. A new label can be useful.

But ecosocialism is much more than a label. Though the concept is still work in progress, we can indicate a series of points on which it is substantially different from socialism as generations of militants conceived of it, and as our own current conceived of it.

The starting point is that to stabilize the climate implies a different energy system. Not only other technologies to produce electrical power, heat or movement, but also a different kind of agriculture, a different rationality and a different organization of space. The building of this new system will inevitably be a long-term task, requiring the destruction of the capitalist productive apparatus. The

taking of political power is only the starting point of this upheaval.

The new energy system that must be built implies necessarily the decentralization of the production of electric power - which is in particular a prerequisite for the rational use of heat - and the relocation of a part of its production. Decentralization and relocation are perfectly compatible with the project of world socialism, and essential to its democratic self-management. However, it cannot really be disputed that these two concerns do not emerge spontaneously from our programmatic tradition, which rather puts the accent on world planning of production and exchanges.

Another new set of problems relates to the importance of living labour. Our programme allocates a major role to the need to invest living labour in services such as personal care, teaching, health, etc. So these problems are not foreign to us. But, for all the other sectors, we rely on the idea that machines and robots will make it possible to free, to the maximum degree, producers from the burden of physical work. This idea must be called into question, because taking care of the ecosystems requires an intelligence and a sensitivity which can be only be brought by human labour. This is particularly obvious in the case of agriculture: in order to "cool the Earth", as Via Campesina says, it is necessary to replace agribusiness by peasant or co-operative organic agriculture. That

inevitably implies greater investment in human labour (which means neither the return to primitive agriculture nor the end of progress, but another form of progress).

Lastly, the very conception of nature needs to be re-examined. In the context of the capitalist ecological crisis Marxism can really no longer be satisfied with looking at nature solely from the point of view of production, i.e. as a stock of resources, a platform for work and a dumping ground for waste. We must also learn how to look at nature from the point of view of nature itself, from the point of view of large-scale exchanges of matter and of the operating conditions of the ecosystems, which in the final instance determine the living conditions of humanity. There are invaluable indications on this subject in Marx, we have to take hold of them and develop them.

On all these points, the resolution only opens up a process of ongoing theoretical work to which the International will have to come back. But it is important as of now to send out a signal, to show we are moving. In Copenhagen, in December, a breach opened. For the first time, a mass mobilization on global environmental issues took on the character of a social struggle against the system in place: "Change the system, not the climate", "Planet not profit". This internationalist movement will develop. It offers us considerable potentialities. An anti-capitalist tendency did not wait for us to develop. We must reinforce it.

Role and Tasks of the Fourth International

17 March 2010



Young supporters of the Fourth International

The social and economic attacks and

neoliberal counter reforms against the popular classes are going to increase. These attacks will particularly affect women, given that their situation is worse to start with (much higher rates of poverty, unemployment and casualization than men) and they will

have to compensate for the cuts in public services and social allowances increasing their unpaid work within the family. 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. 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. Ecological catastrophes will hit millions of people particularly in the poorer regions, making the situation of women who are heads of family disproportionately worse.

A new historical period is on the horizon. New relationships of forces between imperialist powers in the world economy and politics are taking shape, with the emergence of new capitalist forces like China, Russia, India and Brazil. The combination of the weakening of US hegemony and the sharpening of inter-capitalist competition between Europe, Russia, Asia and the USA also has geo-strategic effects in new political and military configurations, with an increased role for NATO, and new international tensions. In recent years, American imperialism has compensated for its economic weakening by redeploying its military hegemony in the four corners of the world. The social and economic contradictions have led, even in the USA, to the discredit of the Republican team around G.W. Bush. The election of Obama is a response to this discrediting as an alternative solution for US imperialism, even if his election also responds to a desire for change on the part of a section of US society, which will be disappointed but is real.

In conclusion, the crisis makes obvious the failure of neoliberal ideology although the relationship of forces remains favourable to capital. As an ideology, it shows itself incapable of offering a solution, which is why the G20 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 centre with its clearly neoliberal priorities. All the contradictions inherent to this social system are going to come under stress, 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. In this way the gap between the discourse, the pretensions of the ruling class and the reality of the suffering and catastrophes which are inflicted on the peoples and workers, the building up of pressure on them, create the conditions for exacerbated social tensions and political crisis.

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. Social fightbacks are continuing to rise on a world scale but in a very unequal fashion and remain on the defensive. The global justice movement has lost the dynamism that it had had up to 2004. The Belem WSF shows, nevertheless, the need and the possibility for international convergences, but in a framework where struggles are more fragmented and dispersed. In Europe the success of the mobilizations 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 initiatives in 2010, which could become a step in rebuilding and strengthening this international feminist movement.

- In certain European countries - France, Greece, Germany, Poland, Italy - social struggles have a central impact on the political scene, but these struggles are not sufficient to block or turn around the underlying trends in the capitalist offensive and the effects of the crisis. They have not succeeded in overcoming the process of division and fragmentation of workers. These struggles remain defensive. They have not yet found an expression in terms of anti-capitalist consciousness. In this framework, in the absence of an anti-capitalist left,

reactionary, even xenophobic and racist, alternatives and trends can get stronger.

- In the Middle East, peoples are continuing to resist Western and Israeli occupation and aggression, in Palestine, in Iraq and in Lebanon. The murderous aggression waged by the Zionist government in Gaza, two years after that in Lebanon, has not been able to defeat the resistance. Although Hamas and Hezbollah are now the main political references in this resistance, outside these organizations there are left currents that act not only with a perspective for national liberation but also for social liberation, which reject human exploitation and which reject categorically the segregation of women. This is the position that we want to strengthen.

- Latin America continues to be the centre of resistance to neoliberalism and the continent with the most explosive situations, even though these are uneven from one country to another. Venezuela, Bolivia and Ecuador are experiencing the most radical processes, with partial breaks from imperialism that have meant some important advances at the levels of government and/or social movements. There are others where the prognosis is unclear, like Paraguay, and all these find in Cuba a point of reference. Some others maintain versions of neoliberal policies, with neodevelopmentalism in Argentina, or social liberalism in Uruguay and Brazil. The latter, in spite of its sharp contradictions with the US, especially over defence policy, its membership of UNASUR and its agreements with Venezuela, nonetheless collaborates with fundamental policies of Washington and aims to achieve regional leadership. For their part, Colombia, Peru, Chile and Mexico remain clearly neo-liberal.

Nonetheless, a new political situation is emerging, with the renewed imperialist threat in the region, with the presence of the Fourth US Fleet, the coup in Honduras, seven new US military bases in Colombia, the direct intervention of the US embassy in the most important trade union conflict in Argentina for years, the political and military interference in Haiti. All these

aim to roll back the political advances and develop an international response.

This means that the class struggle will intensify in Latin America in the coming period. The governments of Venezuela and Ecuador are moving back from their most radical proposals, showing two aspects in particular that cause concern: the orientation towards the extraction of natural resources and the limited democratic participation of social sectors. In Bolivia, there is a radicalization of the processes of change, which rests directly on the social movements.

Although these processes are in dispute, with advances and retreats, they run the risk, in the course of their evolution, of not advancing to anti-capitalist positions, unless there is a strengthening of the self-activity of wage earners, indigenous peoples and other oppressed social sectors, and greater pressure from these sectors on the governments of Venezuela, Bolivia and Ecuador.

At the same time, the radicalization of social movements, especially the struggle of indigenous and peasant movements, is putting pressure on these governments and at the same time posing a clear anti-capitalist perspective, in defence of natural resources – land, water, biodiversity, etc. – and a change in the development model, as was expressed in the Declaration of the Assembly of Social Movements at the Belem WSF, and the recent assembly of Alba TCP, which in its final statement denounced capitalism and called for its overthrow. The national, regional and international meetings of the social movements demonstrate the radical potential contained in the southern part of Latin America.

One urgent political task for the organizations is to stimulate the self-activity of the masses, generalising workers' control and the creation of bodies of popular power; otherwise, in Venezuela, Bolivia and Ecuador, there is a risk of a definitive reverse and a consolidation of capitalism in these countries, where it is currently challenged.

The activity of the sections and groups

of the Fourth International in Latin America needs to take into account these tendencies – the national question in the region and the connections between anti-imperialism and anti-capitalism – and define a tactic for intervention in a process characterized by the inter-relation between the states that make up the ALBA and social movements with strong histories of self-organization and self-management. These two forces sometimes converge and sometimes enter into contradiction. This implies promoting demands for unitary struggles in defence of the rights of indigenous peoples, against the criminalization of protest, privatizations, extractivism of natural resources, machismo and the economic and ecological crisis, thereby stimulating the strategic political debate about power and hegemony in our societies.

- In a series of what are usually called emerging capitalist countries or those resulting from capitalist restoration, – China, Russia or the former eastern bloc – the whirlwind of globalization is tending to proletarianize hundreds of millions of human beings. But this new social power, which can play a key role in the coming years, has not yet formed mass independent organizations – trade unions, associations, and political organizations capable of facing the challenge of this global reorganization.

- The pillaging of resources in Africa to the benefit of big capitalist multinationals is increasing with the complicity of the existing governments. The continued growth of GDP in recent years in sub-Saharan Africa does not benefit the population, only social inequality is increasing. Faced with the deterioration in living conditions, there have been major struggles, such as the general strikes in Guinea, the demonstrations in Togo, the general strike in the public sector in South Africa. The food crisis at the end of 2008 sparked many demonstrations. However, the absence of a political alternative is a heavy obstacle to the success of these struggles, such as in Guinea or in the Cameroons. They are either diverted towards bourgeois political formations as in Madagascar or they lose

themselves in religious dead-ends as in Nigeria or Congo (DRC), or worse in ethnic or racist ones like in Kenya or South Africa.

The building of democratic peoples' and workers' organizations remains an absolute necessity for the success of struggles.

- In Asia, the ongoing fast development of capitalism in China and in India and in most of South-Asian countries raises crucial political questions. Around half of the global working class lives in Asia and the necessity to create or strengthen revolutionary parties in this part of the world is critical. The situation is very different from one country to another:

â€¢ China is of the outmost importance. Decades of repression explain why the creation of a revolutionary party in China has to start from scratch. Bringing the experience and tradition of the international labour movement to China will be necessary to stimulate the creation of a revolutionary party as well as international solidarity. The Fourth International will have to pay special attention to the social and political developments that the present international crisis could bring about in the near future.

â€¢ In India, whose population will overtake China's by 2050, and where faster industrialization has increased the number of workers and the rural crisis is deepening, the political situation and our tasks are different. The labour movement is very well developed and organized but dominated by Stalinist or Maoist political parties. The construction of a revolutionary party defending our programme cannot just ignore them.

â€¢ In South-East Asia, the situation is very uneven. In some countries like Thailand and Burma, the labour movement is very weak. In these countries there is neither social democracy nor radical left parties. In these countries our task is to establish stronger links with the social movements that are active in the defence of farmers, women and workers when trade unions exist. Indonesia and Malaysia are in an intermediary situation. There are

some small revolutionary parties with whom we can engage a constructive political debate and collaboration.

â€¢ In the Philippines and Pakistan, the Fourth International has strong organizations that can be a basis of our political activity throughout Asia.

In these countries we are confronted with Islamic fundamentalism. We oppose the Taliban in Afghanistan and the Muslims extremists in the Philippines like the Abou Sayaf because they are reactionary forces. We cannot make any agreement with them in the name of anti-imperialism. In other countries like Indonesia or Malaysia, we could also be confronted with Islamic fundamentalism, and the FI has to strengthen its analysis.

â€¢ In Sri Lanka, after several decades of war, the government has defeated the LTTE militarily but the root cause of the Tamil question has not yet been addressed. Besides, the Rajapaksa government uses open and brutal repression to silence its opponents and the media. The FI should be part of the international campaign of solidarity with the Tamil people.

Throughout Asia, the FI defends the rights of ethnic groups and indigenous peoples and supports their struggle for self-determination.

â€¢ In Japan, the process of fusion of the two organizations linked to the FI is underway. Since September 2009, they have been jointly publishing a common newspaper.

In South Korea too, where the labour movement is strong, there is also a convergence of different forces toward the creation of a new anti-capitalist party. Because this country has a strong tradition in the working class struggle, the Fourth International has to follow this event closely. Besides, the FI should organize solidarity campaigns to support the militants of revolutionary parties who are now repressed by the State.

3. The dynamic of capitalist globalization and the current crisis have also changed the framework of evolution and development of the traditional left. Reformist

bureaucracies have seen their leeway considerably reduced. From reformism without reforms to reformism with counter-reforms, social democracy and equivalent forces in a series of dominated or developing countries are experiencing an evolution towards social-liberalism; that is these forces are directly underwriting neoliberal or neoconservative policies. All the forces politically or institutionally linked to social-liberalism or to the centre left – including the women’s movement, notably in the institutionalized 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. What is more, we are seeing policies – such as that of the Lula government in Brazil – which are making the ecological crisis worse. The clash with these parties is more difficult since they maintain their control, particularly electorally, of part of the workers movement, and it is therefore necessary to build a real, credible political alternative.

The traditional communist parties are continuing their long decline. They try to break this decline by grabbing onto the coat tails of the leading forces in the liberal left and the institutional apparatuses or falling back on their nostalgic and self-affirming positions. While there are sectors or currents who wish to build the social movements with anti-capitalist forces, such as Synaspismos in Greece, they are doomed to have contradictions and divisions because of their reformist nature. In effect, the decision to build anti-capitalist parties does not mean we are not aware of the existence of radical, anti-liberal, left reformist currents that play a role and have electoral credibility. Therefore, they continue to be competitors and/or political adversaries. Their position can be reinforced by occasional tactical shifts – generally electoralist – to the left, by social-liberalism, often to re-establish its consensus among the working class and popular sectors. This poses the challenge for us of implementing a united front offensive capable of responding to the needs of men and women wage-earners. At the same time, when on the basis of clear political conditions we decide to

intervene inside anti-liberal, reformist left parties (such as in the case of Die Linke), we do so with no illusions about the nature of these parties, and we build anti-capitalist tendencies linked to social movements, that fight electoralism, institutionalism, and any attempt to compromise with capitalism.

4. 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.

â€¢ An anti-capitalist, internationalist, ecologist and feminist left;

â€¢ a left that is clearly alternative to social democracy and its governments;

â€¢ a left which fights for a socialism of the 21st century, self-managed and democratic, and which has a coherent programme for getting there;

â€¢ a left that is conscious that for this goal it has to break with capitalism and its logic and thus that is cannot govern with the political representation with which it wants to break;

â€¢ a pluralistic left rooted in the social movements and the workplaces which integrates the combativity of the workers, the struggles for women’s and LGBT liberation and emancipation and ecologist struggles;

â€¢ a non-institutional left that bases its strategy on the self-organization of the proletariat and the oppressed, on the principle that emancipation of the workers is the task of the workers themselves;

â€¢ a left that promotes all forms of self-organization by workers and by the popular classes, that encourages thinking, deciding, and doing things for itself and on the basis of its own decisions;

â€¢ a left which integrates new social sectors, new themes such as those expressed by the World Social Forum in Belem, and above all the new generations because you cannot make new things with old material;

â€¢ an internationalist and anti-imperialist left which fights against domination and war and the self-determination of the people and which lays out the framework for a mass democratic International;

â€¢ a left able to link the precious heritage of critical and revolutionary Marxism with developments of feminism, ecosocialism and the indigenous movements of Latin America;

â€¢ an independent and class-struggle left which fights for the broadest united action against the crisis and for the rights, the gains and the aspirations of the workers and all the oppressed.

These are the criteria and the general content of our orientation for building new useful anti-capitalist instruments for fighting the current system.

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. 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. 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 takes into account the diversity of the working class - in gender, race, residence status, age, sexual orientation - in defending a resolutely class-based programme.

Building broad anti-capitalist parties is the current response we offer to the crisis in the workers' and left movement and the need for its reconstruction. This project is based on mass struggles, bringing mass movements to the forefront and the

emergence of a new generation. Of course, this does not eliminate our revolutionary Marxist, ecologist, feminist internationalist identity and our basic aim of defeating capitalism to create a new ruling order based on democracy and direct participation: that is, a real socialist democracy.

That is true at the level of each country 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. It is not a question of taking up the old formulas of regroupment of revolutionary currents alone. The ambition is to bring together forces beyond simply revolutionary ones. These latter can be a support in the process of bringing forces together as long as they are clearly for building anti-capitalist 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 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 in 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.

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. Nevertheless, in the countries of Latin America, the construction of broad anti-capitalist parties should integrate from its beginnings a clear stand for socialism. It is through this complex and diverse process that we can make new advances.

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.

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. 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. 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. These few elements show the type of orientation that we want to implement. The different conferences this year [2010] 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.

7. The Fourth International and its sections have played and still play a vital role in defending, promoting and implementing a programme 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 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.

The Fourth International has played

and still plays a functional role in keeping alive the history of the revolutionary Marxist current, “to understand the world”, to confront the analyses and the experiences of revolutionary militants, currents and organizations and to bring together organizations, currents and militants who share the same strategic vision and the same choice of broad convergences on revolutionary bases. The existence of an international framework that makes it possible “to think about politics” is an indispensable asset for the intervention of revolutionaries. Consistent internationalism must pose the question of an international framework. But for historical reasons that it has itself analysed, the Fourth International does not have the legitimacy to represent in and of itself the new mass International that we need. So when it is a question of taking a step forward in the bringing together of anti-capitalist forces, these new organizations, in particular in Europe and Latin America, cannot relate to and join this or that current identified with the Fourth International, and this is true whatever the reference point – the various Morenoites, the Lambertists, the SWP or other variants of Trotskyism.

Let us note, nevertheless, that a major difference between the FI and all these tendencies, over and above political positions, which is to 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, prevent us today from advancing in the crystallization of new international convergences. Chavez’s call to found a Fifth International poses other questions about its origins, its framework, that is to say, its viability. The Fourth International declares that it is willing to participate in the debates and preparatory meetings that may be organized. We will contribute our historic gains and our

vision about what a new International and its programmatic foundations could be. A genuine new International can only be born if its members share a programme, an ability to intervene in society, a democratic, pluralist form of functioning, as well as clear independence from governments in order to break with capitalism.

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. In this sense, the Fourth International is in favour of the proposals from revolutionary Marxist currents and/or groups who share with us a common understanding of the international situation and our aspirations for building new international frameworks.

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 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.

8. In this movement we are confronted with desynchronizations between the building of parties on a national level and the construction of new international groupings. There can be, in the present situation or in the next years, new anti-capitalist parties in a series of countries, but the emergence of a new international force, and all the more so, of a new International, is not, at this stage, foreseeable. A new International will only be the result of a prolonged period of joint action and common understanding of events and tasks for overthrowing capitalism. While we affirm a policy of international convergence, this confirms the particular responsibilities of the FI, and thus the need for its reinforcement. We can and we seek to represent an organizational framework that is attractive and, democratic, for revolutionary organizations that share the same political projects as ours. It is in this dynamic that the Filipino comrades are situated, the Pakistani comrades and the Russian comrades are situated, and that can be the case tomorrow of, for example, the Polish or Malian comrades.

9. We have, in fact, a particular role that is recognised by a series of political currents. We may be the only ones who can make political forces of various origins converge. This is for example, in Latin America, what the Venezuelan 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 organizational 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.

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 regularizing 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 organizations, must ensure the organizational 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 (a result of the decline in activity of a strong autonomous women's movement which has had an impact on our national organizations 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 organizations - 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 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 organizations in Europe are within broader anti-capitalist formations we continue to encourage our comrades to invite youth from the broader organizations 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 organizations 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 organizations 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

The Amsterdam 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 organization. The FI must also open up its meetings 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.

The existence of an international school in the Philippines is a tool of great importance to form new generations of revolutionary militants coming from all parts of Asia and to share their experiences. In the near future, there will be a new school in Islamabad in Pakistan, which will enlarge our capacity to form militants and organize political debates in

South Asia. The FI has to give full support to the IIRE in Manila and in Islamabad.

Our schools have always been an occasion for inviting participation from organizations with which we are building relations. This role must be strengthened and broadened in the coming period throughout the IIRE network.

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.

Motion on the Strategic Debate, Party Building and Socialism in the 21st Century

The IC is mandated to prepare with the IIRE a seminar, with its sections, about the construction of anti-capitalist parties and the sections of the FI: problems encountered, relationships with social movements, in particular the new generation, alliances, and relations with other currents.

The IC and the IIRE are also mandated to organize an international seminar on twenty-first century socialism, open to external guests, to develop a document expressing the FI contribution to this debate.

Farewell to a warm and beloved comrade

17 March 2010, by **LCR-SAP**



In Antwerp and far beyond, Jos Geudens was a known and respected political militant. He started his political life in the second half of the 60's, within the young socialists of Deurne, a red bastion. Around 1970, he chose -being impressed by the political ideas of Ernest Mandel- the Fourth International; a choice to which he would remain loyal until the end of his life. He was a convinced Marxist, but was never lost in dogmatism. During the long years that he was politically active, comradeship and solidarity always prevailed in his life.

ACOD Education

Jos has been active in various fields. As a teacher, he was primarily active as a militant within the trade union of education workers, ACOD in Antwerp. He was also involved in the movement for a new revolutionary critical pedagogy of the Education Action Group. He applied these new educational methods enthusiastically in his classes. He inspired generations of young people for a warm solidarity

and for independent and critical thinking. Within ACOD he was one of the holders of the strong left wing, which constituted the majority of the Board of ACOD after the strikes in September 1983. Within this administration, he was a militant with his relentless enthusiasm and bright, driven interventions, which made many teachers politically conscious and made them involved in the trade union movement.

International solidarity

Jos Geudens actively organized many international solidarity projects: solidarity with unions in Poland in '81, with the Nicaraguan revolution in '83, Workers Aid Project for Bosnia, the campaign for the abolition of the debt of the Third World (Kodewes) in the 90s, ... Jos also organized several solidarity campaigns with Palestine over the past decades. The fight against fascism and racism and the rise of Vlaams Blok was for him, of course, of great human and political importance. He was active in Hand in Hand, Charta 91, Antwerpen Helemaal Anders and also in his district and in the neighborhood committee

Borgerhout Beter Bekeken. His last school, in which he taught, was the primary Omni-Mundo, a school where mostly children of immigrants go in Antwerp-North. Through the school he came into contact with many undocumented children and their families. This led to a tremendous commitment to the fate of these people and especially those children. He was the driving force and spokesman of the movement of undocumented children and co-founder of UDEP (the Association of sans papiers) and Basta!, which struggles against social exclusion in Antwerp North.

Ernest Mandel

Jos Geudens was an admirer of Ernest Mandel. It was an honor for him when he could deal for several years, right after Mandel's death, with the full expansion of the Ernest Mandel Foundation. Jos was a passionate militant, but was also a very good reader. It is not an exaggeration to say that he devoured books. He was also a man with a rich cultural interest and a close follower of cinema. Yet he was no table jumper, let alone a political barker. On the contrary, it was endearing how modest he was despite

the large back bag with knowledge and experience.

Enjoying Africa

Jos also represented a type of militancy that not only commanded respect in his own ranks. His unwavering dedication, his infectious laughter, his continued daily struggle against all forms of exploitation and oppression, in his own street or elsewhere in the world, made him a widely respected political personality.

Jos died in Kenya. In 2006 he went to pre-pension and he chose to move to

Africa. "Enjoying my retirement and enjoying Africa", he was saying. But, he would not be himself if he lacked beautiful projects, projects including children. So, he set up a computer class in a district of Mombasa for the local kids with the computers he collected in Belgium and he opened Cinema Paradiso, which somewhat improvised cinema for the children of the neighborhood who often had at home neither television nor electricity. He had a website and newsletter with reports from Kenya, "Greetings from Mombasa", and he was very active on Facebook. In recent days he has built a small network behind his computer

against the violent, US-led, anti-abortion and anti-gay movement in Kenya.

Jos, in February 2010 made a visit to his beloved city, Antwerp. He was still present among others in a political debate about the climate summit in Copenhagen and solidarity demonstration with the Opel workers. His death comes unexpectedly. All the deaths are early, but it was too early for Jos. But when we look back we see a full and meaningful life.

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Capitalist climate change and our tasks

17 March 2010



The climate change that is underway is not the product of human activity in general but is mainly due to the fact that the capitalist system, guided by considerations of short-term profit and superprofit, has based and continues to base its development not only on the exploitation of labour power but also on the plundering of natural resources, in particular finite and non-renewable reserves of cheap fossil fuels.

i. In the last decades of the 19th century and at the beginning of the 20th century, coherent proposals for alternative energy systems based on the utilization of solar energy were swept aside by the laws of capitalist profitability or torpedoed under the pressure of the coal companies.

ii. After 1945, in order to perpetuate their superprofits, the oil monopolies and the sectors dependent on oil suppressed many technical alternatives and imposed means of transport, consumption and town and country planning dictated only by the desire to sell an ever-increasing

quantity of goods, in particular cars and other mass-produced individual consumer goods.

iii. In the course of the last 40 years, in spite of an accumulation of increasingly convincing evidence, scientists' warnings were ignored by bourgeois governments and the media. On the contrary, they backed up the disinformation campaigns of capitalist lobbies, while at the same time, neoliberal globalization of production and exchanges was leading to explosive growth of greenhouse gas emissions.

iv. Today, at the beginning of the 21st century, the causes of global warming are perfectly documented, the danger is known and recognized by the governments, the technical solutions exist and the gravity of the situation increases with each new report by the experts. Without a voluntarist policy, the experts project that the average rise in temperature could exceed 6C between now and 2100, in relation to the 18th century. However, for a +3.25C rise, (compared to the pre-industrial period), located approximately in the mid range of IPCC projection, coastal floods, according to some estimations, would

cause between 100 and 150 million victims by 2050, famines up to 600 million and malaria 300 million, while water shortages could affect up to 3.5 billion more people. But capitalism continues in spite of everything to use mainly fossil fuels, including non conventional sources (heavy oils, bituminous sands and shale) as well as the enormous low-price coal reserves. Since the logic of accumulation constitutes its foundation, the system has launched into productivist gambles which imply dangerous technologies: development of nuclear power, genetic engineering aimed at increasing the harmful production of biofuels, "clean coal" with capture and storage of gigatons of CO2 in deep geological layers. For capital, renewable energy sources are just one new field for the accumulation of value, which explains why their implementation can take particularly destructive forms and comes as a complement to being supplied by fossil fuels, not as a replacement for them.

The only limit to capital is capital itself (Marx). The insane race of this system which accumulates wealth and overconsumption at one pole, poverty and scarcity at the other, threatens to precipitate a human and ecological

catastrophe that is irreversible on a historical timescale, with irrevocable damage inflicted on ecosystems, in particular on biodiversity. Whereas the threshold of danger, considerably lower than +2°C compared to the preindustrial era, has already been crossed in many regions (island states, Andean countries, Arctic regions, semi-arid zones...) the plans that have been adopted or are being discussed at the level of the imperialist powers announce a warming between +3.2 and +4.9°C, corresponding to a rise of the sea level of between 60 cm and 2.9 metres at equilibrium (without counting the dislocation of the icecaps). Not only will the Millennium Development Objectives, which are insufficient, not be reached, but in addition hundreds of millions of human beings are exposed to serious degradation of their living conditions. For the poorest among them, their very existence is threatened, due in particular to the risks of coastal flooding, tension over fresh water resources and the expected fall in agricultural productivity in tropical regions.

2. It would be an illusion to believe that climate stabilization will occur spontaneously due to the depletion of fossil resources. These are amply sufficient to provoke a climate tipping point. The stabilization of the climate at the least dangerous level possible requires a drastic reduction in the consumption of energy and therefore of material production. At the same time, energy and other resources are necessary to ensure the right to development of the three billion men and women who live in conditions that are unworthy of their humanity and who are the first victims of global warming. The capitalist system is incapable of taking up these two challenges separately. To take them up simultaneously amounts for it to squaring the circle. Radical anti-capitalist measures are indispensable in order to implement, independently of the costs, a world plan of transition towards an economical and efficient energy system, based exclusively on renewable sources, capable of satisfying the

fundamental needs of humanity.

According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the stabilization of the climate at the least dangerous level possible requires world emissions of greenhouse gases to peak before 2015 and decrease by 50 to 85 per cent between now and 2050, compared to 2000. In name of the precaution principle, it is essential to adopt as a minimum the most drastic of these objectives. Indeed, climatic models do not incorporate, or do so very imperfectly, the phenomena known as "non-linear", in particular the dislocation of the Greenland and Antarctic icecaps and the release of methane from permanently frozen ground (permafrost). However, these phenomena, already perceptible, are likely to very strongly accelerate climate change and to considerably increase its negative effects in coming decades.

To these physical constraints must be added other constraints, of a social, political and technical nature:

i. In order to take into account the differentiated historical responsibilities of imperialist countries and other countries, the IPCC estimates that the first must reduce their emissions by between 25 and 40 per cent between now and 2020 and by between 80 and 95 per cent between now and 2050, compared to 1990, while the output curve of the second must drop by from 15 to 30 per cent compared to existing projections, in all regions in 2050 and in the majority of regions (except Africa) from 2020. Here too, the most drastic objectives must be adopted as a minimum, for the reasons indicated above.

ii. Considering their decisive responsibility for global warming, the share of these objectives which concerns the developed nations must be realized by them using domestic measures, i.e. by reductions of their own emissions. These reductions can be replaced neither by purchases of rights to pollute coming from supposedly "clean" investments in the developing countries or those in transition, nor by the planting of trees - which does not offer a structural solution, nor by the protection of

existing land and forests - the safeguarding of land and forests, necessary in itself, must not allow the polluters to continue to pollute. These so-called compensation measures and the emission rights market foreseen under the Kyoto Protocol have proven perfectly ineffective in environmental terms, even to achieve the utterly insufficient objective of these agreements (a 5.2% reduction in emissions over the 2008-2012 period).

iii. In the name of climate justice and in atonement for their ecological debt, imperialist countries must transfer to the countries dominated by imperialism the knowledge and the technologies that will enable them to develop while respecting the physical constraints of climate stabilization. They must also finance measures of adaptation to that part of climate change that is inevitable, of which the poor populations of poor countries, mainly women, are the main victims.

iv. From the technical point of view, renewable sources make it amply possible to face up to the future needs of humanity. However, because of the need to change the energy system, the success of the transition over the next 40 years is conditional on an important reduction in the consumption of energy (50 per cent and more in the developed countries). This implies in its turn a significant reduction of material production, so that the key question is the following: it is necessary to produce less overall, while answering the legitimate demands of three billion human beings for whom many fundamental needs remain unsatisfied.

It is a total illusion to believe that this range of conditions could be respected by allotting to carbon a price which takes into account the cost of the damage from climate change. Value is a purely quantitative indicator expressing the quantity of abstract human labour put into motion at a given moment by the development of capital: it is by definition incapable of taking account of natural wealth, of taking account of the needs of future generations, of making the difference between useful or useless concrete labour from the human point of view and of taking into consideration the many parameters, both quantitative

and qualitative, of climate stabilization. This inability is already expressed in practice in the fact that the capitalist monopolies are exerting all their weight, successfully, to prevent the bill for global warming from being laid at their door, so that in the final analysis they determine the rhythms and the forms of the policies pursued, according to their own interests. On the social level, finally, the imposition of a world price for carbon would make the workers and the poor pay the bill for global warming, thus aggravating inequalities, between the North and the South but also within the societies of the North and the South.

Capital is unable to resolve the key question because it is structurally incapable of reducing overall material production while producing more for non-solvent needs. To combine the legitimate right to human development and the planned, democratic and rational implementation of a world programme of transition towards an economical and efficient energy system, based exclusively on renewable sources, independently of the cost, is only possible by resorting to radical anti-capitalist measures. These measures include in particular the expropriation of the credit and energy sectors; a massive reduction of working time (towards a half-day of work) with reduction of work rhythms, without loss of wages and with hiring of extra workers; significant taxing of capitalist profits; the greatest extent possible of re-localisation of production, in particular agricultural production, via support for peasant agriculture; public initiatives in the field of housing and transport, essential in order to change modes of consumption; the constitution of a world fund for adaptation, financed from the profits of the monopolies; public refinancing of research, an end to its subordination to industry and the free transfer of clean technologies towards the countries of the South; as well as mechanisms of democratic participation and control by the populations and by local government bodies, at all these different levels.

3. The poisoned heritage of two hundred years of capitalist development based on fossil fuels,

climate change concentrates the crisis of civilization due to the fact that the potential of this system for social and ecological destruction now outweighs its ability to identify human needs and respond to them. The combination of the economic, climate and food crises in the framework of the capitalist law of population carries within it the threat of a major human catastrophe, and even of a descent into barbarism.

The poisoned heritage of two hundred years of capitalist development, climate change constitutes the clearest demonstration of the global crisis of a system whose potential for social and ecological destruction now outweighs its ability to identify human needs and respond to them. The growth of the productive forces has become the growth of destructive forces, not only because more and more socially and ecologically destructive technologies have been deployed, but also, overall, because capitalist logic, by ruining the climate, is leading humanity towards a whole range of acute difficulties. The capitalist mode of production implies a specific law of population, expressing the permanent need for an "industrial reserve army". In the framework of this law and in the context of the historical exhaustion of late capitalism, the combination of the economic, climate and food crises carries within it the profound threat of a wave of "creative destruction" (Schumpeter) of unprecedented scope, implying not only the massive elimination of material productive forces and irreplaceable natural wealth, but also a major risk of physical destruction for hundreds of millions of human beings. This infernal logic is already at work in the convergence between the fractions of big capital invested in agribusiness, energy, cars and petrochemicals which, by rushing to get their hands on land and on the industrial exploitation of the biomass as an energy resource, are accelerating the ruin of small farmers and the rural exodus, threatening indigenous communities and dramatically increasing the number of sub-proletarians who are victims of

chronic famine. For lack of a global alternative, the internal dynamics of the system will push ever more strongly down the slippery slope of a global crisis which could be on a level of brutality and barbarism without any historical precedent.

4. Climate change underlines the urgency of both a world socialist alternative and a radical break of the socialist project from productivism. The saturation of the carbon cycle and the exhaustion of non-renewable resources in fact mean that, unlike in the past, the emancipation of the workers is no longer conceivable without simultaneously taking into account the principal natural constraints.

Opposition to capitalist growth, in itself, constitutes neither a project of society nor a strategy for broad social mobilization in favour of another society. The reduction in material production and consumption is immediately necessary for the stabilization of the climate because capitalism has led humanity too far into a dead end. But that does not in any way prejudge the future possibilities of development, once the climate system has been stabilized, on the one hand, and on the other hand it constitutes only one quantitative criterion of the necessary transition towards an economy without fossil carbon. If we do not want to be led towards antisocial or even reactionary conclusions, this quantitative criterion must be combined with qualitative criteria: in particular, redistribution of wealth, reduction of working time without loss of wages, development of the public sector. If these criteria are satisfied, and on condition that it targets useless or harmful productions, the reduction in material production will actually be synonymous with an increase in the wellbeing, the wealth and the quality of life of the vast majority of humanity, through investments in social sectors, a different kind of town and country planning, free access to vital services and the re-conquest of the free time necessary for self-activity, self-organization and democratic self-management on all levels.

The capitalist system is inseparable

from the growth of material production and consumption, but this constitutes an effect, not a cause. It is the production of value, as an abstract form of exchange values, which leads to the permanent tendency to unlimited accumulation of wealth at one pole, and causes at the same time the accumulation of poverty and destitution at the other. A climate policy which did not take into account this double reality would be doomed to failure. The crucial point and the lever of the anti-capitalist alternative thus remain basically those which the socialist project has defined: the mobilization of the exploited and oppressed against a system based on the race for profit, private ownership of the means of production, the production of commodities, competition and the wages system. But this crucial point and this lever are no longer enough to define the alternative. The saturation of the carbon cycle constitutes actually the most obvious and most global demonstration of the fact that, unlike in the past, the emancipation of the workers is no longer conceivable without taking into account the principal natural constraints: the limits of the stocks of non-renewable resources on a historical scale, the speed of replenishment of renewable resources, the laws of conversion of energy, the conditions of the functioning of ecosystems and biological cycles and their rhythms.

It is not enough to affirm that socialism must take ecological questions on board. The real challenge consists rather of creating the conditions so that the socialist project is compatible with the global ecology of the terrestrial super-ecosystem. Development cannot only be conceived of with the aim of satisfying real democratically determined human needs, but also according to its sustainability by the environment, and by furthermore accepting that the complexity, the unknown factors and the evolutionary character of the biosphere confer on this undertaking a degree of irreducible uncertainty. The concept of "human control over nature" must be abandoned. The only really possible socialism from now on is one that satisfies real human needs (disentangled from commercial alienation), democratically determined

by the interested parties themselves, simultaneously taking care to carefully question ourselves as to the environmental impact of these needs and the way in which they are satisfied.

To think in terms of the interpenetration of the social and the ecological implies first of all to go beyond the partitioned, utilitarian and linear vision of nature as the physical platform from which humanity operates, as the store from which it draws the resources that are necessary for the production of its social existence and as the dumping ground where it deposits the waste matter of this activity. In reality, nature is simultaneously the platform, the store, the dumping ground and the whole range of living processes which, thanks to the external supply of solar energy, make matter circulate between these poles, while constantly reorganising it. Waste and the way of disposing of it must therefore be compatible, both in quality and in quantity, with the capacities and the rhythms of recycling by the ecosystems, in order not to ruin the proper functioning of the biosphere. However, this proper functioning depends on the number and the diversity of the biological operators, as well as on the quality and complexity of the multiple chains of relations which link them, the balance of flows determining in the final analysis the supplying of humanity with resources.

To think in terms of the interpenetration of the social and the ecological implies secondly to learn the lessons from the reality that a mode of production is not defined only by its relations of production and property but also by its technological structures, which are modelled by its energy choices. Climate change shows this clearly: the energy sources used by a mode of production and the methods employed to convert energy in order to satisfy human needs (for food, heat, and light) are not socially neutral but have a marked class character. The capitalist energy system is centralized, anarchic, wasteful, inefficient, dead-labour intensive, based on non-renewable sources and characterised by a tendency towards overproduction of

commodities. The socialist transformation of society requires its progressive destruction and its replacement by a decentralized system, planned, economical, and efficient, living-labour intensive, based exclusively on renewable sources and directed towards the production of durable practical values, which can be recycled and reused. This transformation does not only concern the "production" of energy in a narrow sense but the entire industrial apparatus, agriculture, transport, leisure and town and country planning. The energy/climate challenge forces us to conceive of the socialist revolution not only as the destruction of the power of the bourgeois state, the creation of a proletarian state which starts to wither away as soon as it is established and progressive phasing-in of self-management by the masses, but also as the beginning of a process of destruction of the old capitalist productive apparatus and its replacement by an alternative apparatus, utilising different energy sources, different technologies and different structures in the service of democratically decided objectives. This extremely profound historical upheaval can start in one country or in a group of countries, but it can only take on its full character and be completed after the victory of the socialist revolution on a world scale, once the abolition of the principal inequalities of development have made it possible to satisfy the basic right of each human being to an existence worthy of the name. It postulates in fact the preliminary realization of energy autonomy, in particular the food autonomy of different countries. Far from being synonymous with the end of human development, it implies an important progress of science and technique as well as of the social power to democratically apply them, with the active participation of everyone, within the framework of a culture of "prudently taking care" of the biosphere, for which the contribution of indigenous communities will be invaluable.

Revolutionary Marxism considers that, once fundamental human needs have been satisfied, the qualitative development of humanity will become

more important than the quantitative development. This conception is coherent with that of Marx, for whom real wealth lies in free time, social relations and the comprehension of the world. The perspective of a communism using exclusively renewable energy sources, mainly solar, is situated in the continuity of this non-productivist thought, deepening it and drawing new conclusions in terms of demands, tasks and programme. This deepening justifies the use of the new concept of ecosocialism. Representing the concentrated expression of the common fight against the exploitation of human labour and the destruction of natural resources by capitalism, ecosocialism does not proceed from an idealistic and chimerical vision of the "harmony" that is to be established between humanity and nature, but from the materialist necessity of managing the exchanges of matter between society and the environment, while controlling consciously, collectively and democratically the tension between human needs and the proper functioning of the ecosystems.

5. Our tasks

5.1. Prepare the activists of the social movements so that they can aid the development of the consciousness of the masses and contribute to building a mass mobilization on climate. The fight for the climate requires in priority the construction of relationships of social forces. Faced with the urgency of the question and with the criminal policies of capitalist governments, we work in all countries for the building of a powerful unitary mass movement, coordinated on a world scale. This movement must be conceived of as a grid of social resistances existing on different terrains, with convergent coordinated actions and periodic pluralist demonstrations, on a common minimal platform. Its goal must be to force governments to aim for at least the most radical reductions in emissions put forward by the IPCC, respecting the principle of "common but differentiated responsibilities" and of social and democratic rights as well as the right of everyone to a human existence worthy of the name. Mass mobilization in defence of the climate is a difficult task, due in particular to

the double de-phasing, spatial and temporal, between the phenomenon and its effects. A broad campaign of information on global warming and its impacts is necessary. It must be aimed in particular at the activist nuclei of the various social movements and the political formations of the left, because these nuclei play a decisive role in establishing the concrete link between the global climate threat and particular social problems, and in deducing from that strategies that make it possible to combine social struggles and the fight for the environment.

5.2. Build a left current which links the fight for the climate to social justice.

The change that is necessary cannot be obtained without the mobilization and the active participation of the exploited and oppressed who make up the vast majority of the population. Capitalist climate policy makes this participation impossible because it is unacceptable on the social level. This policy in fact implies the reinforcement of imperialist domination and of capitalist competition and violence; therefore of exploitation, oppression, social inequality, competition between workers, violation of rights and private appropriation of resources. In particular, this policy does not provide any answer to the major challenge represented by the jobs, the wages and the social gains of the millions of workers employed in the sectors that emit large quantities of greenhouse gases. So it can only encounter legitimate social resistance. The big environmental NGOs try to radicalize the climatic objectives of governments while refusing to see that this radicalisation involves at the same time the accentuation of antisocial attacks. This is a dead end. We defend the need for a combined fight for the climate and for social justice. Within the broad movement, we work for the constitution of a left pole which links these two dimensions and which argues consistently against proposals based on market instruments, accumulation, neo-colonial domination and technological forward flight. This pole will seek to bring together elements of the trade-union, ecologist, global justice, feminist and third-worldist lefts, the "decreasing" left, the organizations of the radical left,

critical scientists, etc.

5.3. Conduct the ideological fight against green neo-Malthusianism, in defence of the poor and of women's rights.

By its nature as a global problem and by the extent of the catastrophes which it is likely to cause, global warming favours the development of a whole series of ideological currents which, under cover of radical ecology, try to rehabilitate the theses of Malthus by packaging them in an apocalyptic discourse with strong religious accents. These currents find an echo at the highest level in certain sections of the ruling classes, where the disappearance of a few hundred million human beings is easier to imagine than the disappearance of capitalism. Because of this, they represent a potentially serious threat to the poor, particularly to women. The fight against these currents represents an important task, which our organizations must assume, as such and in liaison with the women's movement. The population level is obviously one parameter of the evolution of the climate, but we have to categorically combat the false idea that population growth is a cause of climate change. The demographic transition is largely underway in the developing countries, and is progressing more quickly than had been envisaged. It is desirable that it continues, but that will be a result of social progress, the development of social security systems, the information that women dispose of and their right to control their own fertility (including the right to abortion in correct conditions). This is obviously a long-term policy. Short of resorting to barbaric methods, no policy of population control makes it possible to respond to climatic urgency.

5.4. Introduce the question of the climate into the platforms and the struggles of the social movements.

In the perspective of a broad mobilization rooted in existing struggles, we act so that the defence of the climate becomes a major concern of the social movements and that it finds a concrete expression in their platforms of demands, on all terrains. For example:

- the fight for peace: the production and the use of arms constitute an unacceptable folly in relation to climate change... which is itself a possible cause of additional conflicts;

- the fight against poverty, for the right to development and social protection: the ability to adapt to climate change is directly proportional to the level of resources and development. Social inequality increases vulnerability and handicaps energy change;

- the fight of women: adaptation to climate change reinforces the importance and the urgency of the specific demands of women for equal rights, for society to take responsibility for the care and protection of children, against the double working day, for the right to abortion and contraception;

- the fight for employment: to radically reduce the consumption of energy, to reorganise the territory and the cities, to take care of biodiversity, to develop public transport and to substitute renewable sources for fossil fuels offers a gigantic reserve of quality employment;

- the fight for access to land, water and natural resources and for an organic peasant agriculture: rural communities which practice a labour-intensive organic agriculture know how to increase the organic matter content of land and to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in agriculture;

- the fight against globalization and the liberalization of agricultural markets: a cause of the ruin of rural populations, famine, rural exodus and/or the plundering of ecosystems, the liberalization of these markets is also a major source of emissions, direct (transport of products for export) and indirect;

- the fight for the right of asylum: faced with the increase in the number of environmental, and in particular climatic, refugees, freedom of circulation is essential and constitutes the only response worthy of humanity;

- the fight of indigenous communities for their rights: by their knowledge

and their mode of exploitation of ecosystems, in particular forests, these communities are the most capable of preserving and developing carbon sinks;

- the fight against the flexibility and the precarisation of work, against the lengthening of working time: work schedules that are cut and made flexible and capitalist campaigns in favour of the increased mobility of the labour force workers to use cars. "Just in time" production is a major source of emissions of greenhouse gases in the transport sector. The reduction of working time is a necessary condition for the development on a mass scale of alternative patterns of consumption and leisure;

- the fight against privatizations, for a public sector of quality in the fields of transport, energy and water. Only a free public transport sector of quality can reconcile the right of everyone to mobility and the reduction of emissions. The liberalization of electrical production complicates the introduction into the network of intermittent renewable sources. Only a public enterprise not working for profit can take up the challenge that consists of suppressing within two or three decades the totality of emissions in the housing sector.

5.5. Outline the perspective of a global anticapitalist plan for social and ecological reconversion. In this framework put forth demands concretely linking the struggle for the climate and the struggle for meeting social needs, in particularly the right to work.

The leaderships of the big international trade-union confederations accompany capitalist climatic policies in exchange for the possibility of them negotiating certain of their modalities. This orientation is concretized in the proposal of a "Green Deal" based on the illusion that green technologies will make it possible to absorb unemployment and give the impulse to a new long wave of prosperity and capitalist expansion. The trade-union bureaucracies accept the requirements of productivism and capitalist profitability as well as the instruments of the dominant climate policy: government aid to "green"

companies, "ecological taxation", Clean Development Mechanism, the market in emission rights, even support for nuclear energy and biofuels. This policy is likely to make the trade union movement co-responsible for catastrophes. It sows division among workers on an international level, and between sectors within the different countries. To take up the challenge the trade union left must get away from a cramped vision centred on the redistribution of wealth, in order to contest the very conception of wealth and the way in which wealth is produced i.e. the very foundations of the mode of production. To the bureaucratic trade union leaderships' policies we oppose the prospect of a global anti-capitalist plan for social and ecological reconstruction. This plan includes the defence and strengthening of the public sector (in particular the transport and energy sectors), the right to work, social and income protection as fundamental rights, collective reconversion under workers' control of workers in useless of harmful production, a radical cut in working time with no loss of wages with a slowing of production rhythms and compensatory hiring, the creation of green jobs in public firms and free basic services. Based on this framework we will intervene in struggles, notably around industrial restructuring in ecologically non-sustainable sectors (such as the car industry) to propose concrete solutions to the infernal choice between continuing production and destroying jobs. We demand that governments create ecologically useful public jobs in sectors such as insulation of dwellings; public transport and the development of renewable energy sources independently of their costs.

5.6. The massive transfer of clean technologies towards the countries dominated by imperialism and the financing of adaptation to the effects of climate change in these countries require a sharing of assets and knowledge on a world scale, therefore substantial taxation of capitalist profits. The rescue of the climate requires a sharing of assets and knowledge on a world scale. It must thus be related to:

- the cancellation of the debt of the third world and restitution to the people of the assets that the dictators of countries of the South have placed in Western banks;

- lifting of bank secrecy, suppression of tax havens, taxing of inheritances, a tax on speculative movements, etc;

- a substantial increase in the budgets of the imperialist countries that are allocated to government aid to development;

- the creation, in addition to this aid, of a single world fund for the adaptation of the developing countries to the inevitable effects of climate change and for the transfer of clean technologies towards the public sector of these countries, without financial conditions;

- the resources for this fund should come from taxing the profits and the excessive superprofits of the economic sectors most responsible for climate change (in particular the oil sector, coal, cars and electrical production);

- suppression of the system of patents in health and in technologies that make it possible to produce essential consumer goods and services (transport, light industry, water and energy, communications) so that all the populations of the planet can have access to basic goods;

- a system of financial compensation for the countries of the South which give up exploiting their fossil fuel resources.

5.7 The emissions of the countries dominated by imperialism will not be able to diminish by at least 30 per cent compared to projections unless the capitalist model of development is called into question. The contribution of the countries dominated by imperialism to the stabilization of the climate at the least dangerous level possible can only be achieved by an endogenous development, responding to the needs of the great mass of the population, therefore linked to land reform in favour of peasant agriculture and to a reorientation of production towards the domestic market. To reconcile the right to human development with the

stabilization of the climate thus requires taking measures against the local ruling classes, who use the right to development as a pretext to try and refuse any obstacle to the burning of fossil fuels, who plunder natural resources, appropriate the forests for themselves, act as intermediaries for the sale of carbon credits, produce biofuels and export agricultural food products or industrial products at low prices for the markets of the developed countries. To prevent them being used to fuel this socially and ecologically harmful model, the funds and the technological means that are placed at the disposal of the countries of the South must be placed under the democratic control of the populations and their social movements.

5.8 Indigenous peoples by the defence of their way of life and their type of relationship with the environment, play a leading role in the struggle for forest protection, thus of the climate and the environment in general. The peoples of Latin America, in particular, have a conception of linked to their ancestral civilisation that is the polar opposite of the one promoted by bourgeois ideology. They do not see themselves as owners of their land; rather, they see themselves as belonging to the land - and this idea summarizes the central thrust of their philosophy, which is inspired by respect for the Earth. This is why they call their territory Mother Earth, or Pacha Mama. They nurture, maintain and cultivate another, community and solidarity-based, model of life, one which is deeply connected to nature. As such, the socio-political organization of aboriginal peoples on their territory does not limit itself to the borders imposed on them by the imperialists. The threats to their way of life, social structures, natural resources and peoples - as a result of the countless invasions of their territories - are an attack on their inalienable rights; and this prompts them to organize themselves and to resist the predations of multinationals carried out within the framework of the free trade agreements or the IIRSA (Initiative for the Integration of Regional Infrastructure in South America). We must support their demands and oppose any occupation

of their territories by extractive industries, and any building of hydroelectric stations, railways, roads and dams without the previous consent of these peoples.

As the environmental question is clearly taking on a strategic role and place in the anticapitalist struggle, building an alliance between workers in countryside and towns and aboriginal peoples is one of the greatest challenges of our epoch. What is at stake in these struggles is also the preservation of the last tropical forests which play a major role in the climate system.

5.9 Oppose technological forward flight and incorporate all the great ecological challenges into a really sustainable perspective of development. The history of capitalism is littered with environmental crises that were "solved" without a global ecological vision, by the implementation of partial technological answers subordinated to the demands of profitability, whose harmful environmental effects appeared later. To solve the climate/energy crisis while following this same method of the sorcerer's apprentice is likely to have even more dangerous consequences, in particular in three fields: the increased recourse to nuclear power and genetically modified organisms and the geological storage of CO₂ in the framework of a new wave of exploitation of coal. To oppose these capitalist responses is one of the most important tasks. They should be denounced as symbols of the madness of unbridled capitalist growth, as the absurd attempt of the system to jump over its own head in order to maintain in spite of everything the accumulation that generates profit. In a more general way, the climatic challenge brings together all the environmental questions. The response must thus integrate all the great ecological challenges, in particular: (i) the defence of the tropical forest, respecting the rights of the indigenous communities which live off its resources (carbon sinks); (ii) the defence of biodiversity; (iii) rational and public management of water resources; (iv) the fight against the poisoning of the biosphere by the several hundred thousand molecules

resulting from petrochemicals, which do not exist in nature and thus in some cases cannot be broken up by its reducing agents; (v) the elimination of the gases that destroy stratospheric ozone and their replacement by compounds which do not have other dangerous ecological impacts; (vi) the fight against atmospheric pollution and its consequences for human health (asthma, cardiovascular diseases,) and for the ecosystems (acidification, tropospheric ozone).

5.10 Denounce the gulf between the capitalist plans and the diagnosis of the situation by scientists. Establish links with critical scientists. Pose the questions of intellectual property rights and the social role of research. The claim by governments which are trying to make us believe that their capitalist and liberal climate policies are founded on “science” must be fought vigorously. To do this, we must denounce the gulf that separates the objectives of governments from the conclusions that the precaution principle makes it necessary to draw from the reports of the IPCC. This denunciation implies assimilating the essence of the scientific expertise while criticizing the dominant ideological and social presuppositions which are conveyed by a large majority of the experts. The left must establish relations with scientists, invite them to communicate their expertise to the social movements, challenge them on their general political positions, on the basis of their own scientific expertise, push them to speak out on the contradiction between the global rational solutions which the fight against global warming requires, on the one hand, and on the other hand the extreme compartmentalisation of science in the service of partial capitalist rationality. Considering the place occupied by

scientific expertise in the development of policies, it is of considerable importance to establish relations between the social movements and critical and humanistic researchers. Within this framework, we develop a more general point of view on the role of science and research in the fight for the stabilization of the climate in a framework of social justice. We do not refuse technological solutions, nor the concepts of development and progress. We argue on the contrary for scientific research and technique to be freed from the influence of capital so that their potential can be placed massively and quickly at the service of progress in energy efficiency, rational management of resources and the sustainable development of renewable energy sources. We demand massive public refinancing of research, an end to the contracts which tie universities to industry and to finance capital, the democratic definition of research priorities in the context of the transition, in a framework of social justice, towards a society without fossil fuels.

5.11 Fight against the attempts to make individuals feel guilty, but assert the need for energy sobriety as far as socially possible. The discourses of governments aimed at making people feel guilty, which place responsibility for global warming on the behaviour of individuals, seek to conjure away social inequality, to hide the responsibility of capitalism, seek to divert attention from the profound structural changes that are necessary and pave the way for unjust measures such as the “carbon tax”. It is an illusion to believe that the climate could be saved by a movement of “cultural contagion” against overconsumption, whereas more than half of humanity lives in a situation of

chronic underconsumption. But it is also an illusion to gamble on hypothetical revolutionary scientific breakthroughs in order not to put in question individual overconsumption and practices which result from it. Instead of counterposing actions in the sphere of consumption to structural changes in the sphere of production, the first must be conceived of as a means of making people aware of the need for the second. Alternative social practices, democratic campaigns and mobilizations, even those which only involve a minority, which contest productivism and consumerism, can also play a positive role in the formation of the collective consciousness that structural changes are necessary, in the sphere of production, and that these changes will be accompanied by a higher quality of life.

5.12 Develop a practice of popular aid in the event of a catastrophe. Climate change considerably increases the risks of catastrophes, affecting more particularly the workers and the poor, in particular in the developing countries. In the face of this threat, we must prepare to intervene with the social movements on two different terrains: the terrain of demands, consisting of placing states and governments before their responsibilities; and the terrain of direct, popular and interdependent aid, taken in charge by the local populations and their organizations with the assistance of networks of activists on a world level. The experience gained in natural disasters shows in fact that these popular aid initiatives are faster, more directly directed towards the poor and their real needs and are less expensive. Moreover, they favour the development of a different kind of social relations and of contestation of the established order.

Solidarity with Haiti

7 March 2010

This is not only a “natural” disaster. It has been magnified by the social and economic consequences of the domination that the great powers have exerted and continued to exert over Haiti.

Haiti was the first colony to abolish slavery, to struggle for and win its independence. The imperialist countries, first and foremost France and the USA, have made Haiti pay a high price for this emancipation (since 1825, when the country was burdened with a debt to France).

With almost 90 percent of the population living below the poverty level, Haiti is the poorest country in the Americas. For decades, the Haitian people have been a plaything for the neo-colonial machinations and exploitation carried out by the imperialist powers, especially France and the United States. These powers have one after the other installed and supported pliant regimes — as with the Duvalier dictatorship between 1957 and 1986 and the coup d’état of 2004 — that have plundered the country’s wealth and people for the benefit of multinational corporations and the rulers they put in place.

The neoliberal policies imposed by the World Bank and the IMF have brought local agriculture to its knees, forcing tens of thousands of peasants to crowd together in precarious dwellings in the cities. The earthquake mowed down entire neighbourhoods in these slums.

These neoliberal policies have reduced wages and dismantled social services, especially in the healthcare sector. Before the earthquake, more than 40 percent of the population had no access to healthcare; among women the rate was as high as 60 percent.

In 2004, the USA “delegated” their military domination to the UN

Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH), a UN occupation force under Brazilian leadership. From the beginning, it earned a reputation for putting down hunger riots, for murder and rape and for violence of all sorts against the poor. The economic programme that has been implemented is similar to the one seen elsewhere in the Caribbean — with the goal of creating special zones made up of industries using very cheap labour.

The present disaster has led to the military occupation of the island. The media have spread the idea that a massive military presence was required in order to prevent “chaos”, looting and insecurity, even though US military officials themselves recognize that there is a “lower level of violence than that which existed before the earthquake.” More than 20,000 US troops have been dispatched to control the population and all modes of transport (land, sea and air). This occupation can be explained in part as being a result of the strategy of remilitarization of the Latin American continent and the Caribbean. Indeed, Haiti is located between Venezuela and Cuba and is just across from Honduras (where the coup d’état has rolled back the distancing from US interests undertaken by the ousted president, Manuel Zelaya). The occupation is also welcome news for American arms, security and construction companies. The recolonization of the country “which sets the country back 200 years” has been greeted by the studied indifference of the “international community”.

But eyewitness accounts from Haiti show that while the centres of Haitian government may be paralyzed the population itself has shown tremendous solidarity and self-organization — setting up camps and

rebuilding the country in spite of the state of emergency declared by the USA.

- Reconstruction cannot take place under military occupation. The occupation troops must leave immediately; the country doesn’t need soldiers; it needs doctors, nurses and engineers!

- The borders should be opened up to allow for the delivery of aid shipments and the free circulation of people. No Haitians should be deported back to Haiti; and stable conditions should be guaranteed to any Haitian wishing to leave the island (following the example of Venezuela and Cuba).

- The reconstruction of Haiti should not lead to an increase in the country’s external debt — which should be cancelled in its entirety by other countries and by the World Bank, the IMF and the Inter-American Development Bank.

- France and the United States owe a huge debt to Haiti for the plundering and violence they have visited upon the country. Moreover, they should return the Duvalier fortune held in foreign banks.

- The Fourth International calls on working-class organizations to follow up on the enormous popular outpouring of solidarity by providing financial and political support to grassroots organizations in Haiti.

- It commits itself to send material assistance to Haitian working-class organizations with whom we share the same objectives to help them rebuild on a new foundation in this devastated country.

Sixteenth World Congress of the Fourth International
27th February 2010

International solidarity with the peoples of Iran

7 March 2010

Since 13 June 2009 and the fraudulent presidential elections, the Islamic Republic of Iran has been plunged into a regime crisis without precedent, who opened a space which young people, women and workers have entered en masse to express their democratic aspirations. For the past eight months, the peoples of Iran have massively expressed their anger with cries of "Down with the dictatorship!" From an electoral challenge to a rejection of the very foundations of the Islamic Republic, the process has continued to grow and radicalize.

Brewing conflicts between the different factions that have shared power since 1979 have become an open war. Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei, President Ahmadinejad and the Pasdaran leadership have decided to take full control of oil revenues and to consolidate their economic and financial interests. In refusing to be evicted from the power, the clan incarnated by par Moussavi, Karoubi et Rafsandjani, associated ton the bloody balance sheet of the Islamic republic accentuated the crisis.

The population's determination to remove this stifling deadweight and to put an end to the daily repression

against young people and women fighting for their rights has become increasingly intertwined with the specific demands of workers.

For the past eight months, young people, women and workers seize every opportunity to defy the military-theocratic regime. Their courageous mobilization has accentuated the divisions within the government and weakened the Islamic Republic.

Khamenei, Ahmadinejad and the Pasdaran have met the legitimate social and democratic aspirations of the peoples of Iran with violent repression. The Islamic Republic of Iran has sought to stamp out the protest movement with mass arrests, show trials, rapes of detainees and executions. But this has not worked. Opposition to the existing government is deep-seated; repression will not snuff out the anger and determination of the regime's opponents.

A new phase of struggle has begun in Iran, in a context where political crisis is combined with economic crisis. In the face of unemployment, layoffs, privatizations and runaway inflation, the country has seen a number of strikes, especially for the payment of unpaid wages and for the right to

organize unions. The regime has not forgotten the wave of strikes in 1979 that played a major role in the fall of the monarchy; it therefore brutally puts down working-class struggles.

Our support goes to women, workers, youth and all those defying the Islamic Republic. The coming together of democratic aspirations with the social demands of workers will be the decisive factor. With the working class entering the fray, the current movement may acquire the necessary coherence and strength to overthrow the Islamic Republic and establish a social, democratic and secular Republic genuinely opposed to imperialism and Zionism.

Robust international solidarity is required for the struggle for real democratic rights, for the liberation of political prisoners and the abolition of the death penalty, for the right to association and to strike, for free elections, for the rights of national minorities and for social justice, and for equality between women and men.

Their struggle is our struggle!

Sixteenth World Congress of the Fourth International

27th February 2010

Gains and losses

4 March 2010, by **Penelope Duggan**



Addressing the congress

Photo: Julien

Our last congress took place in February 2003, on the eve of the broadest world wide mobilisation on a single theme that we have known, against the imperialist war in Iraq.

We noted then that this was a significant sign of the emergence of the worldwide global justice movement that since 2000 had put back on the agenda the idea that another world is possible - as a result of the initiative taken in Porto Alegre by forces including those of the Fourth International.

Since then this movement has

developed in an uneven way through regional, sectoral and world social forums, and recently it has known a new upsurge with the mobilisation for the Copenhagen climate summit in December 2009.

Recognising the importance of this movement, we, as the Fourth International, have been present and visible at world and regional social

forums. We have participated in the organised discussions with other forces notably on the questions of strategy for achieving another world, and defended a consistent class struggle and internationalist perspective in our specially published multi-lingual newspapers and leaflets in the name of our publications.

However the emergence of this new hopeful movement, and developments in Latin America, have not changed the overall relationship of forces which continues to be unfavourable to the workers and oppressed.

The neoliberal agenda has not been derailed by valiant fightbacks from workers in different sectors and different continents, the traditional organisations of the labour movement have moved further along the road of collaboration under the pretext of softening the blows of the neoliberal attacks.

The imperialist war drive has not been stopped by the ongoing activity of unevenly powerful anti-war movements in the imperialist centres and the resistance of the populations under attack. The Palestinian people notably continues to suffer an extraordinary level of attack and repression.

The attacks on women's rights, notably the right to choose, continue despite resistance and the existence of an ongoing feminist international network in the World March of Women.

The Fourth International has been part of all these resistances, in particular we can mention in our presence in the recent march on Gaza.

The emergence of new forces from the workers' and oppresseds' movements capable of leading these fightbacks and offering them a new political perspective has been limited and partial.

We have taken the lead in proposing forums for these radical and anti-capitalist forces to come together and discuss their common positions and possible common action, in a series of anti-capitalist gatherings in Europe or in the context of World Social Forums.

Strengthening our political presence

To strengthen our political contribution to the necessary political discussion we have taken a number of steps :

In 2005 we relaunched International Viewpoint as an online magazine in English to get our point of view and information out to a much broader audience than could be reached by a printed magazine. This in particular makes our profile more prominent in large parts of Asia where new political forces are developing and looking for political relations.

In 2007, we also launched a sister site in Castilian, Punto de Vista Internacional, to ensure that the Fourth International speaks also to the broad audience in Latin America, which is today the site of the most important radical mass movements in the world.

These online magazines are completed by the French Inprecor which continues to be printed monthly and has its own website.

Despite our severe organisational weakness which makes these far from perfect instruments, they offer the opportunity to get our point of view out world wide. The numbers of visits to the sites show that there is an audience looking for our points of view.

In 2007 we relaunched the International Institute for Research and Education in Amsterdam as an open centre for educational sessions for our own comrades and other organisations with whom we have fraternal links, and as an organising centre for seminars on topics demanding further development by the radical Marxist movement. Seminars on the climate question, Palestine and the economic crisis as well as the question of women and LGBT have all produced material that among other things has enriched the preparation of this World Congress discussion.

In collaboration with our British comrades the IIRE maintains a

publishing programme. which has enabled us to publish timely works on the strategic debates in the global justice movement and the climate question.

Conscious that the revolutionary movement must be consistently renewed and bring to the fore comrades leading the battles of today's world, with today's perspectives the Fourth International pays particular attention to work with young people. The youth camp organised every year in Europe brings together several hundred young comrades in a unique event where the young comrades organise a week of political discussion on the questions of the day, and the theory and history of the class struggle. An institution for over 25 years, it is appreciated every year by new generations and many of the comrades here are in some ways graduates of the camp.

These are significant achievements for a small organisation and we are proud of them and hope and intend in the coming period to build and extend on them.

Homage to fallen comrades

However since our last World Congress we have also suffered some sad losses. I cannot unfortunately mention them all here.

Just after the 2003 Congress we heard of the death of **Wang Fanxi**, one of the last original Chinese Trotskyists, at the age of 95. After years in Chiang Kai Shek's prisons he was driven out of China by Communist repression and spent the rest of his life in Britain where until an advanced age he maintained a lively interest in and commentary on Chinese affairs.

Comrade **Livio Maitain**, for many years a central leader of the Italian section and the International, was our last link with the generation that maintained the Fourth International through the difficult period post Second World War. He died in 2004, active up to the end in the battle to build the International and the Italian section.

Roland Lew, former member of the Belgian section and continuing collaborator with our press, notably on the question of China, died in 2005.

Comrade **Redouane Nakaba** a student and teacher unionist activist, leader of struggles in the education sector since the 1980s in Algeria died suddenly in 2008.

The British section suffered an important loss in 2008 with the death of **Greg Tucker**, who was a well-known national trade-unionist leader among railworkers and political activist. He contributed to the International both in building international links in his sector and the launching of International Viewpoint of which he was the webmaster.

Peter Camejo was a mass leader in the US anti-war movement and joined the American SWP in which he rapidly became a central public figure. He broke with them in 1980 and continued in progressive politics, becoming a leader of the Greens in California. He died in 2008. We remember also **Caroline Lund** and **Ed Kovacs** formerly of the SP.

In 2009 a number of leading comrades and former members died :

Hoan Khoa Khoi, known as Robert, the oldest Vietnamese Trotskyist then

living, long time leader of the Vietnamese Trotskyist group in exile in France and former member of the international leadership.

Nellys Palomo, of the founding generation of the Mexican PRT and a central figure notably in its feminist work and work in Chiapas.

André Fichaut, known as Max, a historic figure of the Brest workers movement and of the LCR since the time of its predecessor the PCI.

Leni Jungclas, a historic figure of the German Trotskyist current, active since the age of 14 in the progressive movement, continuing throughout the Nazi period and member until her death.

Peter Gowan a former leader of the British section in the 1970s, and continuing anti-imperialist writer and analyst.

Angel Fanjul, known as Heredia, and the feminist **Dora Coledsky**, both active leaders of the Trotskyist movement in Argentina, including on their return in 1984 after exile in France.

At the end of December 2009 **four leaders of the Pakistan LPP** were killed in a road accident. This was a severe blow to the expansion of their work in Baluchistan province. Other

LPP comrades had been killed in 2007 and 2008 in suicide bombings in Swat and Peshawar.

Hugo Gonzalez Moscoso, historic figure of Bolivian Trotskyism, participant in the Bolivian revolution of 1952, imprisoned, tortured and exiled several times for his political activity but a militant until the end, died in January 2010.

Also in January 2010 we suffered a loss that touched personally thousands of comrades all over the world. **Daniel Bensaïd**, one of the leaders of the French May 68, was an active central leader of the French section and of the International throughout the 1970s and 80s. From the 1990s, he concentrated his brilliance and formidable energy in writing and speaking. Despite his frail health he travelled all over the world including to Japan and in particular to Latin America. He was also right to the end an active member of the LCR and then the NPA, participating regularly - as I can testify as a member of the same branch - in local discussions and activities.

In the memory of all these comrades, the many others I have not been able to mention, and all those who have lost their lives in the fight against repression, oppression and exploitation, I ask you to stand for a moment's silence.

The International becomes a perspective

4 March 2010, by **Salvatore Cannavò**



The Sixteenth World Congress
Photo: Inprecor

We could continue by noting the presence of many Latin American organizations, starting with Marea Socialista, which is part of Chavez's United Socialist Party in Venezuela and proposed to strengthen political and international unity so as to

respond collectively to the proposal for a Fifth International launched by the Venezuelan president. We could stress the importance of the birth of the Nouveau Parti Anticapitaliste in France, regardless of its contradictions and its growing pains, constituting the main novelty of European politics as well as the dynamics, under other political latitudes, of the German left.

However, to reflect the success

represented by the 16th World Congress of the Fourth International - which ended on February 28, 2010 at Ostend, Belgium, on the North Sea - we prefer to cite three elements:

* Firstly, participation. Delegates, observers and guests coming from a good 40 countries helped develop a debate powered by the presence of all the continents, from Australia to Canada, Argentina to Russia, China to Britain, and Congo to the United

States. To succeed in bringing together in one place over five days, in completely self-financed manner and without any institutional support, so many organizations, is not an easy thing.

* Then the fact, that for the first time the new International Committee elected at this Conference is more than 40% female. And there were many young members. The international Committee is a "federal" body, which means that each national reality has its own representatives. There is no "rebalancing" of the central bodies - history taught this international current that a political line cannot be imposed from above, still less by a "guide" party - the composition of the international Committee therefore reflects a generational renewal, a change of mentality and a new political and social reality.

* The third element was the major political and organizational discussions, focused on the future. The Congress turned towards the East, to Asia, with a fundamental role played by the Philippine organization, the already mentioned presence of the Russians (Socialist Movement Vperiod), the Polish Party of Labour (PPP) invited, the orientation of the Hong Kong group in China and the new Japanese organization under construction. But above all with the important and decisive presence of the Labour Party Pakistan (LPP), a significant organization, whose national Congress in January ended in a rally involving over ten thousand workers, peasants and, especially, women.

Revival

For the Fourth International this was a renewal, a symptom of the overcoming of the difficulties of the 1990s and the first decade of the 21st century. After a series of defections or divisions and a loss of perspective, the discussion concerning the possibility or, at least, the will to consider a "new international" - the fruit of a possible political process, initiated by the choices made in France, by the attendance of organizations such as the Pakistani one or by the debate

taking place in Latin America - has provided a fresh impetus and a new internal debate. The political process that must be watched carefully is the construction of "new anti-capitalist parties", broad and with a mass influences, including "the current response to the crisis of the workers' movement and the necessity of its reconstruction". A perspective that has an organic, international character without however resulting automatically in a "line" that should be followed slavishly everywhere.

A perspective, we should emphasise, which coincides with the desire and the project to strengthen this political current which has now existed for more than seventy years, but which retains considerable vitality, as evidenced by its ability to devote a session of its debate to - and approve a new resolution on - climate change, considered one of the main novelties of the new century and a decisive battle in the "capital-labour" conflict. Moreover, this attention to new themes and new subjects of conflict had been shown already in the previous Congress which approved a resolution on the anti-globalization movement and the LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered) issue. There are not many revolutionary Marxist organizations which can integrate, or even aspire to integrate, in their programme questions which were so controversial in the history of the labour movement. Indeed, there is no other.

Obviously we have to keep a sense of proportion: we are talking in various parts of the world of small political organisations, sometimes small groups, even if generally they are activist collectives inserted in their national, social and political reality. But the fact of belonging to an international framework helps the preservation of a certain vitality and the ability to maintain a thread and a common discussion. And thus to respond now to current challenges, such as the possible convening by the Venezuelan Government of a debate for a Fifth international. The propagandist nature of this proposal and the complexity of an invitation from a head of government escaped nobody. At the same time, and this has been stressed repeatedly, the

hypothesis gives new credibility and a new visibility to the conception of the International, the fact that this dimension is crucial to confront capitalist globalisation and its crisis. And it is no coincidence that, besides the proposal from Chavez, there is another, originating from the US Znet website, with, among its first signatories, people like Noam Chomsky, Michael Albert, Vandana Shiva, Michael Löwy, John Pilger and many others.

The Congress decided to participate in this debate while maintaining intact its conception of the International, i.e. of a body based on a program, a common perspective (the transcendence of capitalism), internal democracy, social effectiveness and absolute independence from governments. At the same time, Marea Socialista's call for the holding of an international meeting in Caracas, possibly in June, was welcomed positively. Also the question of the social movements was at the centre of discussion, with the commitment to the "Summit" in Cochabamba on global warming, called by the Bolivian President Evo Morales, the various Social Forums - that of the Americas in Asunción, the European Social Forum in Istanbul and the World Forum, in 2011, in Dakar, the Euro-Latin American summit in Madrid next May and that against NATO in November 2010 in Lisbon. Fresh impetus was also given to the Institute for Research and Education in Amsterdam, which will be supported by two new "regional" centres, in Manila and Islamabad, whose symbolic importance is obvious.

At the European level, in addition to the above-mentioned emphasis on the Madrid and Lisbon summits, it is important to put in motion the process of convergence of the anti-capitalist left, beyond formulas and forms, necessary to advance common reflection and, above all, to initiate common political campaigns. In this connection, the Congress voted in favour of the organization of thematic conferences to discuss various issues with a view to taking common initiatives. The first meeting will be dedicated to the economic crisis and in particular how to effectively oppose it in three aspects: redundancies, and

attacks on pensions and public services.