

Building a global movement against genocide in Palestine

A global movement of solidarity has emerged in response to the barbarity of the new genocide against the Palestinian people. Despite intense repression, this movement is bringing together millions across the world.

For 77 years, imperialists have been trying to destroy and drive out the Palestinian people, exploiting the horrific genocide of the Jews in World War II to justify dispossession, ethnic cleansing, and genocide. Since October 2023, Israel has been trying to destroy Palestinian life in Gaza, to replicate the Nakba of 1948, committing itself in turn to a genocide without parallel in the 21st century. Meanwhile, settlers are stepping up their attacks in the West Bank, Palestinians inside the green line face greater discrimination than before and Israel has carried out military attacks against Lebanon, Syria, and Iran.

The direct participation or deep complicity of most of the Western imperialist powers is now clear, as is that of the Arab countries that are “normalizing” their relations with the genocidal state, while in many other countries, the ruling classes make polite criticisms but distance themselves from any real resistance. All this in the name of a sickening “right of Israel to defend itself,” which attempts to portray the aggressor as the victim and vice versa.

Resistance in the face of repression

Fortunately, in much of the world, millions have mobilized to demand an end to the massacres, the blockade of Gaza, and sanctions against Israel. They have faced ruthless repression, including bans, imprisonment, police and judicial attacks, and false accusations of antisemitism.

The March for Gaza and the Soumud Convoy attempted to break the blockade of Gaza and bring aid to the Palestinians. The repression they were met with in Egypt and Libya showed the appalling complicity of those regimes. Thousands were beaten, intimidated, arrested, and sent back to their countries of origin, with little response from their governments.

The Freedom Flotillas, carrying world-renowned personalities, also attempted, more symbolically, to break the blockade. It succeeded in further highlighting the Zionist state's total contempt for international law, its contempt for truth and any limit to its jurisdiction, symbolizing its unlimited colonialism.

In a number of countries, it is simply forbidden to express solidarity and assert demands, like in Algeria, where the government claims to support Palestine but prevents solidarity from being expressed.

In the United States and elsewhere, protests and occupations have been banned or attacked violently by the state. University teachers have been sacked for supporting the movement. Students and people of colour, especially anyone from the Middle East, have been particular targets of repression.

Criminalization of solidarity organizations is another key tactic. The British government declared the direct action movement Palestine Action to be a terrorist organization, support for which is a criminal offence – lawyers, vicars and other notables were all arrested at an immediate protest action. The French state has been threatening to dissolve Urgence Palestine since April but has not yet done so perhaps because of a major international campaign of objections.

In Germany, tens of thousands of people who have mobilized are facing relentless repression. False accusations of antisemitism are being used to ban demonstrations, shut down

media outlets, and discredit the entire movement. While the weaponisation of antisemitism is a particular problem in Germany, it is used against the movement everywhere – including against Jewish organizations asserting “Not in our name”.

In the state of Israel, even if a large majority of the Jewish population supports the action of the army, there is a reaction against the war crimes committed to the Palestinians, the actions of the settlers in the West Bank and the policy led by the far-right government of Netanyahu, in particular the criminal will to expel the population of Gaza.

Hypocrisy is rife as governments attack and criminalize all demonstrations of support and solidarity for the Palestinian resistance of whatever limited form – such as chants at a music festival – yet refuse to condemn and take sanctions against Israel.

But it is, of course, in Palestine that repression is most intense. In the West Bank, attacks have intensified in recent months, with daily attacks by settlers against Palestinians and the destruction of homes. It has also emerged that Israel has armed and financially supported Palestinian gangs and jihadist groups in order to undermine the resistance in Gaza from within.

The massacres in Gaza continue; in one month, more than 600 Palestinians were killed while waiting for food aid. Food distribution points are death traps. Several studies now suggest that hundreds of thousands of Gazans have died in the last two years.

Palestinian resistance is a key to the global situation

The Palestinian people are resisting the second Nakba and their expulsion from their territory with the means at their

disposal. So far, despite famine, terrible living conditions, and murderous attacks, they are standing their ground, refusing to disappear, and defending themselves.

The international solidarity movement has helped to expose the reality and scale of the genocide. It has mobilized millions, and the boycott divestment and sanctions campaign together with mass mobilizations can isolate this criminal regime as has happened before, for example for apartheid South Africa

This movement will not stop.

The fate of the Palestinian people is intimately linked to that of all oppressed peoples and the fight against global imperialist ambitions. We are living in a period of growing inter-imperialist contradictions but one which has limits too. Russia for example did not back Iran when Israel launched military attacks against it. The Israeli and US attacks on Lebanon, Syria, and Iran, and the complicity of Arab states point to the fact that the imperialist powers, led by the US, want to strengthen their domination over every inch of the globe in a period of intense economic and ecological crisis. And the Middle East remains one of the – if not the central – strategic battlefield.

Preventing the continuation of colonization in Palestine, pushing back Israel and the United States, and liberating Palestine from imperialism are key points in the global shift in the balance of power that we must build to change the world. Therefore, the Fourth International calls for redoubled efforts to build a global movement against genocide and for the liberation of Palestine, through mass and workers' action in particular. We will work to ensure that, on the occasion of 7 October 2025, broad mobilizations contribute to changing the balance of forces.

Free Palestine, Palestine will free us all!

From Ukraine to Palestine occupation is a crime!

13 July 2025

Trump's first six months: A threat to our planet and its peoples

The election of Trump represents the coming to power of a neofascist leadership in the main imperialist country of the world, who is actively fuelling the genocide of the Palestinian people. This represents a further shift to the right in the international balance of forces, and strengthens the Orbans, Modis, Melonis, Bolsanaros and others.

Since assuming office on January 19, 2025, after winning a close election with a plurality of the popular vote, the Trump presidency has pursued a deeply reactionary agenda, threatening democratic rights in the US and aggression for the rest of the world. Trump also represents a particularly virulent threat to the US working class and oppressed communities throughout the world. One of his main fronts is his attacks on LGBTIQ*, particularly trans people, which is in line with large parts of the international far right including Putin. This is part of Trump's general reactionary social agenda with vicious attacks on racialized minorities, women's reproductive rights, migrants, climate change denial, hostility to democratic rights, readiness to use violence, a contempt for democratic processes and checks and balances, and a drive for total power.

The generalization of trade tariffs is an ideological

obsession of Donald Trump, and this announcement was a show of imperial force from the first days of his mandate. But fears of internal economic impacts and announced retaliations, notably from the BRICS, made Washington step back and contributed to the crisis of hegemony of US imperialism. The 50% tax on Brazil's imports in US, with openly political purposes "punishes" the Brazilian government to pave the way for Bolsonaro and others coup plotters to escape lawsuits. Contradictorily, the measure opened a new and positive political moment in the country.

His drive for total power aided and abetted by the Republican party and a section of the US judiciary makes him a would-be authoritarian and neo-fascist, and strengthens the hands of the far right worldwide. While opposition has not been banned and democratic rights not completely eliminated -indicators of neo-fascism- the tendency in that direction is clear.

The US has long been the biggest abuser of fossil fuels. Under Trump the US has left the ineffectual COP international climate change association, has given the green light to oil companies to increase fossil fuel extraction and use, and US regulatory documents have been scrubbed of all reference to climate change.

The Trump administration has launched a particularly cruel police-military campaign of persecution and deportation against millions of migrants, mostly Latin Americans and South Asians. With its cynical rhetoric equating all immigrant workers with criminals, it has turned El Salvador into a Guantánamo for hire. This campaign emboldens the most reactionary white supremacist forces.

Trump's attacks against elite US universities cynically accuse them of antisemitism for insufficiently cracking down on pro-Palestinian protests. This repression has chilled the Palestine Solidarity movement and the rights of free speech. The labelling of pro-Palestinian demonstrations as antisemitic

serves to cover up the real antisemitism nourished by Trump's racist speech and policy.

Trump and his allies recently passed a reactionary budget giving enormous tax benefits to the ultra rich paid directly by cuts to Medicaid, a program of government health insurance used by seventy-one million people, and food stamps for the poorest.

Trump's open threats to annex the Panama canal, Canada, and Greenland represent a return to naked nineteenth century imperialism. On Ukraine, Trump is seeking a predatory deal with Putin (with whom he shares many far-right ideological ideas) to share out areas of influence at the expense of the people who are the victims of the Russian state's colonial war.

After the political shock in the European powers faced with the disengagement rhetoric from Trump on NATO, this alliance recovered its historical place – the scenario of European subordination – when Trump used it to show European obedience to US orders for the increase of arms expenditure.

While the America First policy guides Trump's bellicosity to its allies, the recent attack on Iran reminds us that the US will not hesitate to use military force where its interests are threatened.

Trump continues Biden's and all US presidents' military and political support for Israel. His threat to empty the Gaza strip of its inhabitants and turn the area into a luxury resort would be a crime of world historic importance.

The Democratic party has shown itself to be totally ineffective in opposing Trump. This is mostly because the Democratic party serves the same 1% as the Republicans.

The huge and enthusiastic rallies of AOC and Bernie Sanders reflect the depth of anti-Trump sentiment. The recent victory

of Mamdani in the New York City Democratic Party primary also represents a challenge to the Democratic Party establishment and his progressive social agenda shows the potential to elect progressive and anti-capitalist public officials A mass anti-Trump movement in the streets has arisen over the last few months. Millions have participated in thousands of anti-Trump demonstrations in thousands of cities and towns across the country. Immigrant workers have been at the forefront of this resistance. These demonstrations encourage those resisting far-right governments around the world.

The Bureau of the Fourth International solidarizes with the growing anti-Trump movement.

Down with the Trump regime!

Down with all US threats to other countries and peoples!

Hail the heroic protests in Los Angeles!

Stop US fossil fuel expansion!

Stop the war on migrants!

Self-determination for Ukraine!

Stop US support for the Israeli genocide in Gaza!

Executive Bureau of the Fourth International

13 July 2025

British government declares Palestine Action terrorists

The Labour government at Westminster proscribing Palestine Action as a terrorist organisation is a ridiculous undemocratic move by a government that only exists to perpetuate war and capitalism, argues [Simon Hannah](#)

Two Palestine Action members damaged some war planes at a UK air base in protest against the genocide in Gaza and the escalation of the conflict into Iran. This led immediately to the government taking steps to put the protest group on a par with Al-Qaeda or Islamic State. A frightening overreach.

This coming from ex human rights lawyer Kier Starmer, a man who defended protestors who broke into an RAF base in 2003 and damaged planes in protest against the war in Iraq. Now his government is saying that people who throw paint at military aircraft are in the same category as those that fly commercial airlines into civilian buildings as happened in 9/11.

And Yvette Cooper, the Home Secretary, who stood up in parliament wearing suffragette ribbons to celebrate the fight for women to get the vote – the same movement that carried out direct action protests and caused all kinds of ‘nuisance’ for the governments of the day. What do they say about the liberals? They support every social movement apart from the present one.

A solidarity protest in London was attacked by the police with several arrests made on spurious grounds. The police were clearly spoiling for a fight and saw the government’s proposed ban as an excuse to do what they wanted.

Earlier in the day the chief of the Met Police Sir Mark Rowley had issued an outrageous statement saying the planned solidarity action left him “shocked and frustrated” that

people would come out in support of Palestine Action. Shut up Sir Rowley, it isn't your place to offer opinions on whether people should attend demonstrations or not.

The Labour government has kept the Tories draconian anti protest laws and sought to expand them. They have presided over the prosecution of peaceful protestors on conspiracy charges, landing them five years in prison (before they reduced that on appeal) – the longest prison sentence for non-violent protest ever handed down.

They are also going after the Irish rap group Kneecap for 'supporting terrorism' by allegedly having a Hezbollah flag on display at a gig. This government is one of the most illiberal ones for many years – targeting musicians for waving a flag is another example of the dangerous overreach of these police-politicians.

Reactionary wave

The clamp down on protest rights is happening as part of a global reactionary wave, a move towards authoritarian regimes that clamp down on civil and political rights and are seeking to roll back the gains of the last 50 years around women, LGBT and Black people's rights.

As late capitalism gets worse, with greater wealth inequality, collapsing public services and horrific genocidal violence, more governments are imposing harsher laws and restrictions on our freedoms. They can see that social crises are growing but the politicians in power only want to protect the interests of a small group in society – the billionaires and capitalists.

The far right – normally free speech advocates when it comes to say anything racist or transphobic – back these moves, seeing them for what they are – an attack on working people and progressive voices fighting for a better world. The far right pose as anti establishment fighters but they are in

reality just fighting on behalf of their super rich pay masters like Elon Musk and Arron Banks.

Diversion

Of course the proscription of Palestine Action is also to focus attention away from the genocide in Gaza and the escalation of war in Iran. Israel is effectively a rogue state, completely ignoring any principles of international law and expanding the war from Gaza to Iran on the spurious grounds that Iran might be developing weapons of mass destruction (those of us around in 2003 for the Iraq war movement will remember this same rhetoric!)

We are fighting for a better world for all and we won't let government proscriptions or police violence or far right terror threat intimidate us. There are some many struggles against the crises of late capitalism and they are growing. We can link these struggles up to point to how capitalism and class society based on hierarchies of wealth and power are at the root cause of so many of these issues.

Some people say they want to leave the country. The reality is there are not many countries in the world that are not heading in this authoritarian direction. We have to fight where we are, working together to build powerful social movements and political parties that can contest for power to overthrow the capitalists and their state.

Simon Hannah is a socialist, a union activist, and the author of *A Party with Socialists in it: a history of the Labour Left*, *Can't Pay, Won't Pay: the fight to stop the poll tax*, and *System Crash: an activist guide to making revolution*.

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Stop Israel Now! Executive Bureau of the Fourth International, 13 June 2025

Israel's unprecedented attack on Iran is a direct result of the impunity it has enjoyed while carrying out a live-streamed genocide in Palestine over the past 20 months. Under the false pretext of "self-defense," Israel has escalated its long-standing policy of Palestinian erasure into full-scale genocide. Now, it extends that aggression by bombing Iran, claiming to defend itself from a hypothetical nuclear threat—despite not being a signatory to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and remaining unaccountable for its own nuclear arsenal.

This impunity is made possible by the United States and other governments that continue to arm Israel—supplying weapons, funding, and political cover as it carries out mass atrocities across the region. The U.S. has emphasized that Israel acted unilaterally in its strike on Iran and has denied any involvement while being the primary supplier of the weapons used in this attack. Alongside other governments that arm and shield Israel, the U.S. is complicit in enabling Israel's expanding aggression across the region. They are all partners in atrocity.

This belligerence has not only claimed civilian lives, but it also threatens the long and courageous struggle of the Iranian people against a repressive regime, of which the latest high point was the movement "Woman, Life, Freedom". History shows clearly: there is no path to democracy under the shadow of war.

We stand firmly with the people of Iran—both in their ongoing resistance to dictatorship and in their right to live free from foreign military aggression. We denounce Israel's attack on Iran and demand international pressure to stop its reckless regional escalation now.

We urgently demand:

Hands off Iran!

An immediate end to regional escalation!

Solidarity with political prisoners and human rights defenders in Iran, and vigilance against further repression by the regime.

As we have done for months, we continue to demand:

Sanctions on Israel now!

An immediate end to all arms trade with Israel!

Global mobilization to stop the genocide in Palestine!

**Statement by the Executive Bureau of the Fourth International,
13 June 2025**

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What do you know about us? by 'Somebody's Sister'

A note: If you feel like this article is addressing you, then it is. It's not my problem if you don't like seeing yourself in the mirror. To those who do know us and stand with us, I send comradely regards.

It's a question I find myself asking often enough, but it's been rattling around in my brain with especially violent force

in the days since that accursed Supreme Court decision:

What do you know about us?

I ask you sincerely. What do you actually know of or about trans people, trans communities, trans culture? I don't ask this facetiously. I really want to know- Do you actually, genuinely, know any of us?

And I don't mean passing acquaintances in your work, neighbourhood, political organisation, etc., nor do I mean the *idea* of trans people you have from some Twitter posts or newspaper articles.

Do you have any trans friends? Trans relatives? Do you talk with them and listen to them? And I don't mean talking *at* them or pretending to listen. Do you know how we speak, how we joke, how we love, how we grieve? Do you know about our far-reaching networks of friends and polycules, of our dumb in-jokes, our vernaculars, our tastes in fashion, our traditions of knowledge-sharing and mutual aid, our often-shrouded history of defiant existence and struggle?

Our history and community brims with wonderful writers, musicians, comedians, game developers, scientists, filmmakers, artisans, actors, programmers, activists, artists- Do you even know a single one of their names?

When the Supreme Court judgement went out, did you speak with any of us and hear our sorrow and disappointment, our fear for the future?

I ask because the news doesn't show this. At best, they have on a couple people from a charity or the Green Party, if you're lucky an actual trans person, to offer a quick snippet or quote, and then it's back to the gender-criticals, the ideologues and the cynical politicians. We are mostly just discussed, never truly spoken with.

And it shows! The discourse about us is conducted in terms of grotesque stereotypes and ridiculous “what-if” situations. I’ve seen the idea of us that gender-critical slopheads in Twitter threads and newspaper columns hold to, an absurd caricature that would be hilarious if it wasn’t influencing policy and assisting the rise of the far right. The trans people that exist in their heads are creepy, slovenly, asocial and predatory- essentially, inhuman creatures beyond empathy. And yet, it’s these imaginary, stereotypical trans people, imaginary trans women specifically, that all the “legitimate concerns” are premised on.

Legitimate concerns. Let’s linger on that term for a moment. I can think about some other “legitimate concerns”:

The “legitimate concerns” of parents about homosexuals “influencing” their children.

The “legitimate concerns” of Israeli settlers about the “dangers” posed by dispossessed Palestinians.

The “legitimate concerns” of racists all over Europe about Syrian, Afghan, Eritrean, Sudanese, Kurdish and other refugees constituting a force of “fighting-age men” ready to undermine their host country.

And do you remember Emmett Till?

The road to his brutal murder, and the lynching of countless others, was paved with the “legitimate concerns” of white people about “threatening”, “lustful” black people, “concerns” that were just the outward justifications for stereotypes, bigotry, and hatred.

It’s all stereotypes, it’s all horseshit! It’s always horseshit! And you know it. We have seen it all before, past and present, as one group of bigots fearmongers about another marginalised group, and it’s no different with trans people. You might hide behind your “legitimate concerns”, but the

truth is that you have more in common with the lynch mob and the settler on the West Bank than any real fighter for human justice.

The trans community as it genuinely exists does not deserve to be demonised like this, just as the concrete, genuine human beings underneath abstractions and umbrella terms like “refugee” or “homosexual” do not deserve to be the victims of prejudice as they try to live decent, dignified lives. Neither me nor the man from Syria should have to answer for *your* ignorance. We just want to live our lives without someone else’s boot on our necks.

Lets face it, whatever legal finery and rhetorical flourishes this offensive against trans people is being draped in, it stems at its core from simple, brutish feelings of disgust. Our enemies are disgusted by us. Or, to put it another way, they pretend that their disgust for us can be hidden by some concocted political or moral ideal. Women with penises give them the ick, and it really does just boil down to that. Never mind that many of us want rid of our dicks at the earliest convenience, and many of us already have vaginas.

Not that genitals are necessarily the ultimate definers of my or any trans woman’s womanhood, by the way. Are your genitals the be-all-and-end-all of your womanhood? Or does some man think so? Excuse me- Hasn’t the feminist movement been fighting for centuries to destroy a patriarchal tyranny upheld by biological essentialism? And anyhow: *My* genitals are only of significance to me and my partners- The rest of you can fuck off and stop being so bloody nosey!

And yet we have to face the consequences for everyone else’s creepy obsession with our genitals- And the transphobes call *us* perverts? The nerve!

On the subject of patriarchal domination, let me take this opportunity to point out my own speck of blood on the banner.

I've been assaulted by a man on public transport, and I've been sexually assaulted by a man on the street. Do I have to certify my suffering, my oppression by the patriarchy to you, to gain some kind of solidarity and sisterhood?

Let's stop bullshitting. If a man wants to rape a woman, he doesn't go to the ridiculous contrivance of transitioning to be a woman first- What kind of cartoony secret-disguise nonsense do you think rapists operate by? A rapist breaks whatever boundaries he wants- If he wants to force his way into a women's toilet and sexually assault women, he'll try it. If you bothered to know any of us, you'd know that trans women are victims of this too. We are also assaulted, raped and murdered by men, whether in public or in private. The patriarchy aims to control, exploit and mutilate *all* women, cis or trans.

And yet, you consider me and my trans siblings the threat to women's safety, the obstacle to feminist gains? Fuck off and get a grip. Have a good think and realise who your real enemy is. Trust me, he wants me dead too.

The answer to rape culture and patriarchy is not the toilet gestapo. The answer is a united feminist movement that protects and uplifts all targets of the patriarchy, no matter whether they are cis or trans. Feminist comrades in Mexico, Argentina and Brazil understand this far better than us, and it's no surprise that their feminist movements are bold, powerful and truly inclusive, while ours here is tiny, weak and demoralised.

I'm tired and hurt, and the quiet burning rage I feel at the collapse I'm seeing around me is so palpable, and has made my hands shake with such fury, that it has been hard to set my thoughts out in greater detail or length. I am going to end here for now, but first:

I must say specifically, to all the useful idiots, fairweather

friends, grifters, cynics, opportunists and cowards of the left who skipped out on trans liberation, ignored our struggle, or bought into the culture war offensive against us: I despise you, and if you even bother to read and digest the thoughts of a single trans person about the destruction you've assisted by ignorant omission or conscious activity, then I hope you feel sick to your gut with shame for the rest of your life. I hope the guilt chases you forever. You are serving as the "left" wing of a movement for segregation and social murder and I will never consider you a comrade of mine. Ever.

I don't care how you feel about what I've just said. I care about the trans people who will be harassed, beaten, sexually assaulted and killed in public places, who will face discrimination in workplaces, who will feel like they need to go back into the closet to live. Many trans people, despairing of everything, will take their lives in the years to come, and we both know this- don't you dare be a shitebag and deny it. It is a deeply horrible thing to acknowledge that there are sisters of mine, dear cherished friends, who may not live to see all of this bullshit repealed and sorted. We trans people will do our best to help each other get through this and avoid as much of that as possible. It's going to be a long and painful road, but we will endure it, just as we always do, no matter the circumstances. Do not forget- Once, many decades ago, using bonfires, camps and mass graves, Hitler's men tried to wipe us from the face of the Earth.

And yet, they failed. Trans people will never disappear.

But will the bulk of the left be much help to us in defeating this next round of repression and social murder? After witnessing the way the last few years have played out, I can only laugh at that notion. And the laughter is hollow and bitter.

You have failed not just trans people, but all of us. And when the far right goes after abortion or gay rights next, I

honestly doubt you'll understand the connection between all of these assaults on civil rights, and the role the anti-trans offensive has played in galvanising them all.

After all, what the fuck do you know about us?

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Review – Against the Crisis: Economy and Ecology in a Burning World by Ståle Holgersen

Amongst the most overused terms in politics and journalism, 'crisis' must be a strong contender for the top spot. A quick glance at today's news headlines reveals – amongst others – a nightlife crisis, a tariff crisis, a cholera crisis, a housing crisis, and – heaven forbid – an injury crisis at a leading football club! More specifically, for the Marxist left, the notion of 'the capitalist crisis' has played an important role in our collective political imaginary. How many times have we heard something to the effect that "as the crisis deepens", the working class will shed its illusions and in due course will rally to the socialist cause? Ståle Holgersen recent book, *Against the Crisis*, takes issue with both the conceptual confusion surrounding the concept of crisis and, more importantly, at the notion that capitalist crises should be conceived as opportunities for the left.

In relation to the first point, Holgersen proposes a working

definition of crisis which comprises three essential elements, as he writes, "*Crises are events that 1) come relatively quickly, 2) are embedded in underlying structures and processes, and 3) have negative effects on people or nature*" (p.5) Thus, as a consequence, he is sceptical about the concept of a 'permacrisis' (the Financial Times' word of the year 2022). As to the second, he stresses the role that crises play in sustaining the system and the political difficulties that they pose for the left:

"While crises can – in theory – help us to reveal and expose capitalism's weaknesses and problems, they are also – in the actual political economy – central to the reproduction of capitalism. Crises are a good starting point for criticising capitalism, but they also make it harder to actually overthrow the system"; (p.10) moreover,

"If opportunities – as defined in textbooks – are occasions or situations that make it possible to do something you want or have to do, and if opportunities – as conventionally understood – entail moments of excitement, optimism and hopefulness, and chances for advancement, then we must refrain from referring to crises as opportunities for the working class, the environmental movement or the political left" (p.16).

'Make the Rich Pay for the Crisis!' may be an attractive slogan but, as Holgersen points out, it is rarely the case that they ever actually do.

Against the Crisis focusses on the nature of the recurrent economic crises under capitalism and on the overarching issue of the ecological crisis. One of the main strengths of the book is how it analyses the specifics of each of these, their similarities and differences, and the complex relationship between them. Holgersen takes issue with the (reassuring?) view that the ecological crisis, in itself, poses a threat to the continued existence of capitalism. Paraphrasing Lenin he

wryly observes, “[It] is more likely ... that the last capitalist will sell a jug of gasoline to his last customer in a world on fire; or that the last capitalist will order workers to use the latest technology to produce even more survival kits” (p.106).

In attempting to understand these economic and ecological crises, Holgersen applies an approach which combines both empirical data and structural analysis by way of a series ‘abstractions’. Thus crises, Holgersen argues, need to be understood simultaneously (1) at the ‘surface level’ (e.g. a financial crisis), which is in turn related to (2) the concrete organisation of nature/capitalism (e.g. ‘neo-liberalism’), rooted in (3) the crisis tendencies of the system (e.g. the increase in the ‘organic composition of capital’) which are finally associated with (4) the profit-driven nature of the system and (5) ultimately, with the underlying contradiction between use-value and exchange value which characterises the capitalist system as a whole. It is at these, more fundamental levels of abstraction, that both the economic and the ecological crises – despite their specificities and important differences – can be conceptualised as different manifestations of the same systemic imperatives and contradictions.

Holgersen applies this overall framework to a number of specific issues associated with crises under capitalism. Above all, he underlines the essential class dimensions of such crises. Far from us all being in the ‘same boat’, crises are caused by one class but typically paid for by another. More broadly he writes,

“[t]hat class struggle intensifies during crises of capitalism may sound like a dream to the left, who might be more than happy to welcome some extra class struggle. But most of this is nothing to cheer about. This is class struggle from above, subtly and quietly, often with murderous efficiency” (p.142).

Against the Crisis also includes a very useful discussion of the relationship between racism, fascism and capitalist crises. For Holgersen racism is a permanent feature of such crises, a predictable response “*within a capitalism built for centuries on colonialism and imperialism*”, but “[w]here racism is the rule, fascism is the exception; if racism is the eternal answer to crisis, fascism is the exceptional solution” (p.187) and “[f]ascism is a solution when it seems that the crises will not be able to reproduce capitalism. In other words, fascism becomes a possibility when the basic hypothesis of this book is challenged. Fascism is the shock therapy when capitalism really needs to change in order to survive” (p.194).

Holgersen applies a variety of theoretical frameworks to help illuminate the nature of capitalist crises, drawing on both the Trotskyist tradition, especially the work of Ernest Mandel and Daniel Bensaid, and on the ‘left eurocommunism’ of Nicos Poulantzas, and specifically, on the latter’s concept of the ‘relative autonomy’ of the capitalist state. This represents a potentially innovative fusion of traditions that have traditionally been somewhat remote and indeed hostile to each other; the resumption of a dialogue that briefly took place in the late 1970’s and was subsequently lost to history, not least by the virtual disappearance of the ‘left eurocommunism’ perspective by the early 1980’s [\[1\]](#).

However, whilst Holgersen’s book is theoretically rich and stimulating, in a refreshing contrast with much current leftwing theorising, it also focusses on the practical responses which capitalist crises demand of the left. Paralleling the analytical abstractions that he employs to understand the nature of crises; he distinguishes between three ‘levels’ around which the left should formulate such a response. In particular, he distinguishes between (1) crisis management (2) crisis policy and (3) crisis critique and argues convincingly that the left needs all of the above. In

fact, it is the weakness of the left at the level of crisis management/policy, in contrast to its relative sophistication at the level of crisis critique, which leaves us vulnerable to collapsing into essentially 'Keynesian' solutions to when the crisis actually hits. Holgersen rightly stresses the urgent need for the left to develop its own distinctive and credible crisis policies and proposes several possible sources for these; including a renewed programme of 'transitional demands', the advocacy of anti-capitalist 'structural reforms' and a strategy which operates simultaneously 'in and against' the capitalist state. As he notes:

"Crisis and its causes are something we must fight against. Rather than opportunities we look forward to exploring, or moments when the fight for socialism is put on hold, the crises are problems we must solve" (p.19).

Overall, *Against the Crisis* is a fascinating and rewarding read providing useful material on a host of topics. If I have one reservation about the book it would be that whilst correctly stressing the 'destructive functionality' of cyclical crises under capitalism and their essential role in ensuring the reproduction of the system, it is not at all clear that similar considerations apply to the more long-term 'organic' downturns of the system which can and do span numerous cyclical 'booms' and 'bursts'. It is not of course that Holgersen is unaware of the distinction here and in fact discusses it at various points, but perhaps the relationship between these different 'crises' (indeed whether the latter is correctly regarded as a 'crisis' in the sense that Holgersen defines the term) could have been explored more thoroughly. The 'functionality' of capitalism's cyclical undulations makes much more intuitive sense than those of its 'long downturns', especially when the latter – for example in the case of the 'Great Depression' of the 1920's and 30's – required a cataclysmic world war to finally resolve. In a similar vein, whilst there is no guarantee that any particular crisis will

be the 'final' crisis of capitalism, it doesn't follow that we can't or shouldn't talk in terms of an overall systemic decline.

Notwithstanding this, Holgersen's overall thesis is thoughtful, important, and timely. We can't rely on the crisis of capitalism to deliver the transition to socialism; on the contrary, it is only by finding the political resources to struggle effectively 'against the crisis' that we will find our way to a better society. Although crises typically and paradoxically strengthen the system, the ultimate challenge is, as Holgersen concludes, to definitively 'falsify' this very thesis.

[\[1\]](#) See 'L'État et la transition au socialisme. Interview de Nicos Poulantzas par Henri Weber', *Critique communiste* (the Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire journal), no. 16, June 1977 translated to English as 'The State and the Transition to Socialism', in *The Poulantzas Reader*, ed by James Martin (Verso, 2008) pp. 334-360

Reviewed by Iain Gault, *Against the Crisis: Economy and Ecology in a Burning World* is published by Verso and is available [here](#)

There is a *Scotonomics* You Tube interview with Holgersen which outlines the main themes of the book and which is well worth a look. It can be accessed [here](#)

Ståle Holgersen is a Senior Lecturer in Human Geography at Stockholm University, Sweden. He is a member of two research collectives: the Zetkin Collective (ecosocialist group working on political ecologies of the far right) published *White Skin, Black Fuel* on Verso in 2021 and Fundament (a housing research collective) published *Kris i Bostadsfrågan on Daidalos* in 2023.

Review – For the Earth to Live: The Case for Ecosocialism by Allan Todd

“For the Earth to Live” is a compelling and essential read for anyone seeking a radical and comprehensive understanding of the interconnected ecological and social crises facing our world. Written by Allan Todd, with a foreword by Professor Julia Steinberger, it emerges as an unapologetic and passionately argued case for ecosocialism.

The book distinguishes itself by its direct and unwavering commitment to ecosocialist principles, boldly asserting the necessity of uniting ecological concerns with socialist solutions. In an era often characterised by cautious and diluted discourse, “For the Earth to Live” offers a bracingly clear analysis and position, advocating for a political direction that is uncompromisingly pro-ecology and pro-socialism. It actively seeks to combine “Pessimism of the intellect, optimism of the will,” drawing on the wisdom of Antonio Gramsci to provide both a stark awakening to the realities of our situation and a powerful call to action.

A significant strength of this work lies in its well-informed and thoroughly cited analysis. Todd presents a treasure-trove of political, historical, and scientific evidence to contextualise the climate, biodiversity, and health threats we face within our prevailing political and economic systems. The book is structured logically, building from an exposition of ecological dangers to examining political and economic threats, culminating in a powerful argument for revolutionary ecosocialist politics as the necessary response. The extensive

referencing provides readers with an excellent foundation for further exploration and independent understanding.

“For the Earth to Live” makes a significant contribution by aiming to articulate a majoritarian perspective for ecosocialism. It moves beyond the notion of ecosocialism as a fringe ideology, presenting it as the potential “political home of the majority of humans on planet earth” and of the rest of life on Earth. This book offers a more accessible pathway for arguing for ecosocialism as a vital project for the 99 percent.

Furthermore, the book actively seeks to counter the understandable despair that can arise when confronting the severity of the ecological and political challenges. By promoting Gramsci’s “optimism of the will,” it encourages readers to see “horizons even in the darkest night,” fostering the determination needed to continue the struggle for a better future. It explicitly states that ecosocialism offers the “best hope for replacing today’s ‘old order’ with a new one”.

The author doesn’t shy away from highlighting the dire warnings from climate, ecological, and pandemic-health science reports, illustrating the interconnected crises facing our environment and the failures of current political responses. The book also touches upon the historical context of humanity’s relationship with nature, including the more harmonious approaches found in Indigenous societies, suggesting important ways forward.

In conclusion, “For the Earth to Live” is a vital and inspiring contribution to the literature on ecosocialism. It combines a rigorous and well-researched analysis with a passionate and hopeful call to action. By directly confronting the crises of our time and offering a clear and compelling alternative, this book will likely be an essential resource for activists, scholars, and anyone seeking a pathway towards an ecologically sustainable and socially just world. It

encourages readers to embrace “optimism of the will” grounded in a clear understanding of the challenges, ultimately arguing that our best chance for the Earth to live lies with ecosocialism.

Reviewed by Duncan Chapel, “For the Earth to Live” is published by Resistance Books and is available [here](#).

Allan Todd is an ecosocialist/environmental and anti-fascist activist. He is a member of Anti-Capitalist Resistance and Extinction Rebellion North Lakes (Cumbria), and is the author of *Revolutions 1789-1917* (CUP), *Trotsky: The Passionate Revolutionary* (Pen & Sword), *Ecosocialism Not Extinction* (Resistance Books), and *Che Guevara: The Romantic Revolutionary* (Pen & Sword).

Allan will speaking about the book at a free event in Glasgow at 7pm on 21st May 2025. For further details of the event and to reserve a copy of the book see [Mount Florida Books](#)

For a May Day of anti-fascist and anti-imperialist resistance

Declaration of the Executive Bureau of the Fourth International

On 5 April in the United States, 1,300 demonstrations involving 500,000 people expressed broad anger against Trump and his far-right government. These mobilizations, significant but still in their early stages, show that it is possible to respond to the violent attacks carried out around the world

against the interests of workers, migrants, victims of racial oppression, women, and the LGBTI community.

In Serbia, Greece, South Korea, Turkey, Britain, Germany, Argentina and India, significant sectors of the population have also mobilized against their governments – putting them in a tight spot, and against the far right. The youth have played a fundamental role in almost all of these resistance movements. The broad movement of solidarity with the people of Gaza against the genocide imposed by the Zionist state, which has mobilized hundreds of thousands of young people, many of them from racialized backgrounds in imperialist countries (including anti-Zionist Jews), shows the way forward in the mobilization against imperialist and extreme right offensives. This movement strengthens solidarity with the Ukrainian resistance against the Russian invasion, the resistance of the Kanak people against French imperialism, and all other forms of anti-fascist and anti-imperialist solidarity and resistance.

2025 May Day is an opportunity to demonstrate worldwide our international solidarity with the struggles against warmongering policies, the far right, against neoliberal policies, and for the democratic, economic, and social rights of the people. The Palestinian flag will fly as a symbol of resistance all over the world.

The world has become even more unstable, uncertain, and dangerous. We must confront the climate emergency and the economic, social, and political crises engendered by capitalism. The authoritarian and xenophobic-protectionist policies of Putin and Trump, and the imperialist and commercial wars they are waging are deepening the crisis of this system. Trump's measures worsen the economic crisis and cause more inflation, and layoffs, in addition to reinforcing ecocidal and imperialist extractivism. The authoritarian,

imperialist or regional imperialist governments of Trump, Putin, Netanyahu, Meloni, Orbán, Erdogan, Modi, Xi Jinping and Marcos are leading these attacks. Their reactionary conservatism is simultaneously articulated through a multiplication of attacks on social and democratic rights, including women's reproductive rights, LGBTI rights, particularly those of trans people, against freedom of the press and expression, against migrants and all racialized people – who are increasingly subjected to discrimination, illegalization, family separation, imprisonment and deportation.

Faced with this situation, the Fourth International affirms the urgent need to fight for the broadest freedom of movement and settlement, with equal rights regardless of nationality, origin, gender, or sexuality. The Fourth International demands a freeze on prices and an increase in wages, the cancellation of illegitimate debts, and the expropriation of banks and large energy companies.

The response to the warmongering policies of Trump and Putin, which are embodied in the invasion of Ukraine and the genocide in Palestine, as well as in their attempts to reach an agreement to divide up Ukraine's wealth, cannot be militarism. The European Union is trying to organize itself to form a third economic and military pole based on a headlong rush into warmongering and antisocial austerity policies. It uses the pretext of responding to Putin and Trump to increase military budgets. It claims that, to do so, drastic cuts in social spending are necessary – in hospitals, schools, pensions, public jobs, and, of course, aid to countries in the South, as Trump has done. This policy is fraught with threats to humanity, whether through the threat of war, including nuclear war or through the rise of neo-fascism around the world and their open rejection of the fight against the climate crisis.

The Fourth International calls for a global movement against wars, militarization, and against nuclear weapons. This movement does not clash with but instead strengthens support to the armed and unarmed struggle of the peoples against imperialist wars, particularly in Palestine and Ukraine, but also of all peoples subjected to imperialism and regional powers in the Congo, Sudan, the Sahel, Kurdistan, Armenia, Yemen, Myanmar. Because there can be no peace without justice.

There is an urgent need to build another world based on cooperation rather than violence, on socialization (of natural resources, transport, banks) and not competition, on democratic decisions about what to produce and what goods to circulate, on solidarity instead of the hatred encouraged by the far right. At the forefront of this struggle are these ones who fight against the far right, against liberal governments, against war, for the liberation of Palestine and Ukraine. The Fourth International expresses this in its manifesto for the eco-socialist revolution, adopted at its 18th Congress.

This May Day, we call on workers, peasants, those living in poor neighbourhoods, and all oppressed peoples and sectors to mobilize massively to change the world. In the face of the rise of the far right and the authoritarian policies of all governments, the Fourth International calls for building unified campaigns in response to warmongering imperialism, neo-fascism, and neoliberalism. Let's change the balance of power!

- International solidarity against imperialism and authoritarianism on the 1st of May, historical day of international resistance and solidarity!
- Stop wars and militarization! Free Palestine! Russian troops out of Ukraine!
- Stop the far right all over the world!
- Defence of workers' demands, for an ecosocialist revolution!

28 April 2025

From [Socialist Politics, Sweden](#)

Vietnam: A Victory Against Imperialism – Lessons for Ukraine Solidarity

Fifty years on from the historic victory of the Vietnamese people against imperialist intervention, it is vital for socialists in Scotland and across the world to reflect on the lessons of that struggle, particularly in the context of the ongoing war in Ukraine. The unwavering resistance of the Vietnamese people, in the face of immense military power, offers profound insights for those in solidarity with Ukraine's fight against Russian aggression.

One of the most striking parallels is the incredible resilience of a people fighting for their national liberation. Just as the Vietnamese people demonstrated an unyielding determination to defend their sovereignty against a powerful aggressor, so too have the people of Ukraine mounted a significant and inspiring resistance to the Russian invasion. This popular will to resist is a crucial element in the struggle for self-determination and should serve as a powerful reminder that the resolve of a determined nation can thwart imperial ambitions. The people of Ukraine are "fighting for national liberation, independence, and democracy".

The Vietnam War also starkly illustrated the inherent limitations of even the most formidable imperial power. Despite the vast resources and military might of the United

States, they were ultimately forced into a humiliating retreat. This historical precedent suggests that Russia's imperialist venture in Ukraine, despite its initial military advantages, may also ultimately fail in the face of sustained Ukrainian resistance and international pressure. The struggle in Vietnam serves as a powerful reminder that military might alone cannot overcome the determination of a people fighting for their freedom, a lesson that offers both hope and strategic insight for the Ukraine solidarity movement.

Furthermore, the victory in Vietnam was significantly aided by a powerful international solidarity movement. Mass mobilisations, protests, and various forms of support across the globe played a vital role in raising awareness, challenging dominant narratives, and providing crucial moral and political support to the Vietnamese resistance. This resonates directly with the urgent need for sustained and broad international solidarity with Ukraine today. The anti-Vietnam War movement, like the current efforts to support Ukraine, involved learning and action. The Ukraine solidarity movement can draw inspiration from this history, understanding that providing political, material, and moral support to the Ukrainian people, including refugees and anti-war activists, is indispensable. The Fourth International's recent world congress of socialist organizations highlighted the importance of solidarity and building mass anti-racist movements and organisations for practical solidarity.

The struggle against the Vietnam War also necessitated a coordinated worldwide counter-strategy from progressive and anti-imperialist forces. Similarly, in the context of Ukraine, there is a pressing need to foster coordination among different progressive forces globally to effectively challenge imperialism in all its forms. This means building bridges between struggles, from Ukraine to Palestine and beyond, based on the principle of "solidarity without exception".

Moreover, the Vietnam War era witnessed the growth and

radicalisation of left-wing movements internationally. The current war in Ukraine is similarly prompting significant debate and realignment within the left. The Ukraine solidarity movement can serve as a crucial space for learning and clarifying anti-imperialist principles in today's context. This includes addressing complex issues such as "campism" – the problematic tendency to uncritically support states opposing Western imperialism, even if they are authoritarian – and pacifism, while striving to foster a more robust and principled internationalist left.

While there was widespread support for Vietnamese national liberation, views on the Vietnamese Communist Party were not always uniform. However, unity in action against US intervention and in support of Vietnamese self-determination remained paramount. This offers a vital lesson for the Ukraine solidarity movement, where diverse political perspectives exist regarding the Ukrainian government and the role of external powers like NATO. The central focus must remain on the fundamental principle of Ukraine's right to self-determination and resistance against imperial aggression. Solidarity should be with the Ukrainian people's resistance from below, including trade unionists, feminists, and social and democratic activists, while maintaining political independence and critically assessing the actions of all involved parties.

Ultimately, the struggle in Vietnam underscored that solidarity is an active commitment to stand alongside those fighting for their liberation. This principle must be at the heart of the Ukraine solidarity movement. Scottish socialists should actively seek ways to support the Ukrainian resistance, not just through symbolic actions but through practical solidarity, such as supporting the Ukrainian left (like [Sotsialnyi Rukh](#)), providing humanitarian aid, and advocating for Ukraine's right to defend itself by whatever means necessary. This also includes building direct links with

workers' movements in Ukraine and amplifying the voices of Ukrainian socialists.

By drawing on the historical lessons of Vietnam's victory against imperialism, the solidarity movement in Scotland can strengthen its support for Ukraine's struggle for national liberation, contributing to a just and lasting peace based on the principles of self-determination and internationalism. It is crucial to learn from the past to effectively confront the imperialist aggressions of the present.

Duncan Chapel

No Going Back! Stand Up For Trans Rights



Class War on Workers – Revisiting The Great Miners' Strike 1984-85

40 years on from the most decisive class confrontation in Britain since the Second World War, Duncan Chapel finds much to like in a new retelling of the 1984-85 Miners' Strike.

For those like me who didn't yet read Richie Venton's new book, *Class War on Workers – The Great Miners' Strike 1984-85 & Its Aftermath*, two recent podcasts with him commemorating the 40th anniversary of the Miners' Strike offer a valuable and accessible path into his insights. Listen to them [here](#) and [here](#)

I listened, and here are a few thoughts I had along the way.

The welcome to one podcast rightly says, "This is our history. I mean, it's 40 years ago. It's recent history. And anybody younger than me and Marlene, there are some of you around. We know you might find this really interesting as well". Richie Venton comments on the "broader context of the miners strike, and also lessons we can learn in the present day about it". He is aptly described as having "decades of dedicated experience" as a trade unionist and socialist, widely respected for "building support for workers and communities and struggle".

Venton highlights the fundamental nature of the dispute, stating it "was far more than a strike. It was premeditated class war against the workers. It unleashed the biggest confrontation between classes since the 1926 general strike". He outlines how the Tories, having been defeated by the miners in 1972 and 1974, "plotted revenge against the miners", referencing the "1977 infamous Ridley plan" which aimed to "smash the miners amongst others". The podcasts vividly recount the "biggest police operation ever mounted in

peacetime UK" and how "freedom of movement was abandoned. Police stopped 164,000 presumably pickets moving around the country". The use of police as "armies of occupation in the villages" is also mentioned.

Venton stresses that despite the immense pressure, "we were so close, and sometimes people don't know how close we are. In October 1984...the Financial Times clearly worried about coal stocks and the supply and demand conundrum as the miners were so close to victory". He argues that victory was within reach "if only the leaders of the labour and trade union movement had lifted their finger to help us". He is rightly critical of the role of the right-wing trade union and Labour leadership, stating their role was to "join the ranks of the millionaire press and complain about picket line violence and the lack of a bar", and that "Norman Willis...and Neil Kinnock...were acting like referees calling for fair play when we were literally getting kicked in the hobs with our hands tied behind our back". Kinnock's condemnation of violence "on all sides, was a tragic response from a useless Labour leader".

Venton in the podcasts focuses on the betrayal of national union leaders. The strike occurred during a period when early neoliberal regimes, like Thatcher's in the UK, were targeting democratic rights, with trade union rights being a primary focus. Before the strike, there was a substantial increase and coordination of shop stewards, both within and across different workplaces. However, the strike also coincided with a historic low in the number of working days lost to strikes and a decline in trade union membership, reflecting the impact of Thatcher's first term.

The Tories' aimed to weaken the strength and coordination of grassroots labour organisation, and the historic defeat of the miners' strike had profound and lasting consequences. In particular, the defeat of the miners' strike contributed to a weakening of shop stewards' organisation.

While Venton's comments in the podcasts primarily focus on the domestic aspects and the solidarity received, the international political context of the strike mattered too. Venton mentions the "£60 million...collected for the miners from the wider working class, nationally and internationally", a "phenomenal indication of the support that they gained". The international solidarity mattered. For example, women's delegations toured Ireland, supporting women involved in the miners' dispute and seeking support for British workers.

It is challenging to encompass every facet of such a complex and far-reaching dispute. While Venton powerfully portrays the transformative impact on women in the pit villages who organised soup kitchens and their own picket lines, becoming eloquent speakers for the struggle, a more exhaustive account might explore the specific formations and national coordination of groups like Women Against Pit Closures. Similarly, while the book undoubtedly captures the spirit of solidarity that transcended traditional boundaries, the specific roles and networks of other support groups, such as Lesbians and Gays Support the Miners, warrant further exploration.

Despite these necessary limitations of a slim volume, Richie Venton's "Class War on Workers" is a powerful contribution to British socialist history. It provides a crucial understanding of the fundamental forces at play during the Miners' Strike and its lasting consequences. By grasping the lessons within these pages – the nature of state power, the necessity of working-class solidarity, and the dangers of right-wing opportunism – today's socialists will be better equipped to "fight climate change without sacrificing workings on the altar of green capitalism" and to build the "socialist future" that Venton argues is eminently achievable. This book is not just a history lesson; it is a call to action, urging us to learn from the past to build a stronger socialist movement for the future.

Class War on Workers – The Great Miners’ Strike 1984-85 & Its Aftermath is published by the Scottish Socialist Party and is available to buy [here](#).

Manifesto for an Ecosocialist Revolution – Break with Capitalist Growth

Introduction

This Manifesto is a document of the Fourth International, founded in 1938 by Leon Trotsky and his comrades to save the legacy of the October Revolution from Stalinist disaster. Rejecting sterile dogmatism, the Fourth International has integrated the challenges of social movements and the ecological crisis into its thinking and practice. Its forces are limited, but they are present on every continent and have actively contributed to the resistance to Nazism, May 68 in France, solidarity with anti-colonial struggles (Algeria, Vietnam), the growth of the anti-globalization movement and the development of ecosocialism.

The Fourth International does not see itself as the sole vanguard; it participates, to the extent of its strength, in broad anti-capitalist formations. Its objective is to contribute to the formation of a new International, of a mass character, of which it would be one of the components.

Our era is one of a double historic crisis: the crisis of the socialist alternative in the face of the multifaceted crisis of capitalist “civilization”.

The Fourth International is publishing this Manifesto now because we are convinced that the process of ecosocialist revolution, at different territorial levels but with a planetary dimension, is more necessary than ever: it is a question of not only of putting an end to the social and democratic regressions that accompany global capitalist expansion, but also saving humanity from an ecological catastrophe without precedent in human history. These two objectives are inextricably linked.

However, the socialist project which forms the basis of our proposals requires a broad refoundation fed by a pluralistic assessment of experiences and by the major movements fighting all forms of domination and oppression (class, gender, oppressed national communities, etc.). The socialism we propose is radically different from the models that dominated the last century or from any statist or dictatorial regime: it is a revolutionary project, radically democratic, to which feminist, ecological, anti-racist, anti-colonialist, antimilitarist and LGBTQI+ struggles contribute.

We have used the term ecosocialism for some decades now because we are convinced that the global threats and challenges posed by the ecological crisis must permeate all struggles within/against the existing globalized order. The relationship with our planet, overcoming the “metabolic rift” (Marx) between human societies and their living environment, and the respect for the planet’s ecological equilibrium are not just chapters in our programme and strategy, but its common thread.

The need to update the analyses of revolutionary Marxism has always inspired the action and thought of the Fourth International. We are continuing this approach in writing this Ecosocialist Manifesto: we want to help formulate a revolutionary perspective capable of confronting the challenges of the 21st century. A perspective that draws inspiration from social and ecological struggles, and from the

genuinely anti-capitalist critical reflections that are developing around the world.

The objective necessity of an ecosocialist, antiracist, antimilitarist, anti-imperialist, anticolonialist and feminist revolution

All over the world, far-right, authoritarian and semi-fascist forces are gaining power and influence. The lack of an alternative to the crisis of late capitalism is breeding despair which feeds misogyny, racism, queerphobia, climate change denial and reactionary ideas in general. Frightened because the ecological crisis objectively threatens accumulation for profit, billionaires are turning to a new far right that offers its services to save the system through lies and social demagoguery. Authoritarian policies and oligarchs form a powerful alliance to safeguard the power of capital. They target environmental protection but also social programmes, and wage a war against workers and the poor, all the while claiming to represent them against the liberal establishment.

Capital triumphs, but its triumph plunges it into the insurmountable contradictions highlighted by Marx. Faced with these, Rosa Luxemburg issued her warning in 1915: "Socialism or barbarism". One hundred and ten years later, sounding the alarm is more urgent than ever, as the catastrophe growing around us is unprecedented. To the plagues of war, colonialism, exploitation, racism, authoritarianism, oppressions of all kinds, is added a new scourge, which exacerbates all the others: the accelerated destruction by capital of the natural environment on which the survival of humankind depends.

Scientists identify nine global indicators of ecological sustainability. They estimate that danger limits have been reached for seven of them. Due to the capitalist logic of accumulation, at least six have already been crossed (climate, functional integrity of ecosystems, the nitrogen and

phosphorus cycles, ground- and freshwater, land use change, pollution by new chemical entities). The poor are the main victims of this destruction, especially in poor countries.

Under the whiplash of competition, big industry and finance strengthen their despotic hold on people and the Earth. The destruction continues, despite the warning cries of science. The craving for profit, like an automaton, demands ever more markets and ever more goods, hence increased exploitation of the labour force and plundering of natural resources.

Legal capital, so-called criminal capital and bourgeois politics are closely intertwined. The Earth is bought on credit by the banks, the multinationals and the rich. Governments increasingly strangle human and democratic rights through brutal repression and technological control.

The same causes underlie social inequality and environmental degradation. It is an understatement to say that the limits of sustainability have also been crossed on the social level.

Capitalism entails scarcity for billions of people and infinite wealth for a tiny number. On the one hand, the shortage of jobs, wages, housing and public services fuels the reactionary idea that there aren't enough resources to satisfy everybody's needs. On the other, with their yachts, their jets, their swimming pools, their exclusive massive golf courses, their many SUVs, their space tourism, their jewellery, their *haute couture* and their luxurious homes in all four corners of the world, the richest 1% own as much as do 50% of the world's population. The "trickle-down theory" is a myth. Wealth "trickles" towards the rich, not the opposite. Poverty is increasing even in "developed" countries. Labour income is squeezed ruthlessly, and social protections – where they exist – are dismantled. The world capitalist economy floats on an ocean of debt, exploitation and inequalities.

Within the working classes, the most vulnerable populations

and racialized groups are hardest hit. Ethnic and racial communities are deliberately placed in areas contaminated by often toxic and hazardous waste, in more polluted, as well as in high-risk areas, lacking urban planning (hillsides, for example). Victims of environmental racism, these populations are also systematically excluded from the design and implementation of environmental policies.

Assigning women the duty of caring for others allows capital to benefit from cheap social reproduction and encourages the implementation of brutal austerity policies in public services. Generally speaking, inequality and discrimination particularly affect women, who continue to provide most domestic and care work, whether free or paid. They receive only 35% of labour income. In some regions of the world (China, Russia, Central Asia), their share is declining, sometimes significantly. Beyond work, women are under attack on all fronts as women, from sexist and sexual violence – femicides, rapes, sexual harassment, sex and labor trafficking – to the right to food, to education, to be respected and to control their own bodies.

LGBTQI+ people, particularly transgender people, are the target of a global reactionary offensive that exacerbates their precariousness and discrimination, compromises their access to healthcare, and consequently, public health.

People with disabilities are discarded by capital because they cannot work for profit, or their work requires adjustments that reduce profits. Some are victims of forced sterilization. The spectre of eugenics is resurfacing.

While old people of the working classes are also discarded, the lives of future generations are generally mutilated in advance. Most working class parents no longer believe that their children will live better than they do. A growing number of young people observe the organized destruction of their world with dread, rage, sadness and grief, as it is raped,

gutted, drowned in concrete, engulfed in the cold waters of selfish calculation.

The scourges of famine, food insecurity and malnutrition had receded at the end of the 20th century; they are now burgeoning again as a result of a catastrophic convergence of neoliberalism, militarism and climate change: almost one in ten people are hungry, almost one in three suffer from food insecurity, and more than 3 billion cannot afford a healthy diet. One hundred and fifty million children under the age of five are stunted by hunger. The vast majority of them have the sole fault of having been born on the periphery of capitalism.

Hope for a peaceful world is evaporating. More than 30 countries are or have recently been in wars of considerable dimensions, including Sudan, Iraq, Yemen, Palestine, Syria, Ukraine, Libya, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Myanmar. The climate crisis itself, weather phenomena, and the resulting intense migratory flows are fuelling many conflicts around the globe. The suffering, displacement and death of populations is tremendous.

While imperialisms squabble, urgent measures for climate transition and a sustainable future are called into question. Wars, besides being calamitous in terms of human lives, attacking women's bodies, using rape as an instrument of terror and dehumanizing collective life, are harmful to the planet we live on. They destroy habitats, cause deforestation, poison the soils, the waters and the air, and are major sources of carbon emissions.

The brutal Russian war against Ukraine and the new level of ethnic cleansing perpetrated in Gaza and against the Palestinian people in general are major crimes against humanity. Both cases confirm the barbarian nature of capitalism. The Russian imperialist aggression against Ukraine has fostered geopolitical tensions on a global scale. It confirms the entry of a new era of inter-imperialist

competition for global hegemony. Land, energy and mineral resources are an important stake of this inter-imperialist competition.

Everyone could have a good life on Earth, but capitalism is an exploitative, macho, racist, warlike, authoritarian and deadly mode of predation. In two centuries, it has led humanity into a deep ecosocial impasse. Productivism is destructivism. The overexploitation of natural resources, rampant extractivism, the pursuit of maximum short-term yields, deforestation and land-use change are leading to a collapse of biodiversity, that is, of life itself.

Climate change is the most dangerous aspect of ecological destruction, it is a threat to human life without precedent in history. The Earth is in danger of becoming a biological wasteland uninhabitable for billions of poor people who are not responsible for this disaster. To stop this catastrophe, we must halve global carbon dioxide and methane emissions before 2030, and reach zero net greenhouse gases emissions before 2050. So, a priority is to banish fossil fuels, agribusiness, the meat industry and hyper-mobility... that is to say, produce less globally.

In this context, is it possible to meet the legitimate needs of 3 billion people living in appalling conditions, mainly in the countries of the Global South¹? Yes. The richest 1% emit nearly twice as much CO₂ as the poorest 50%. The richest 10% are responsible for more than 50% of CO₂ emissions. The poor emit far less than 2-2.3 tonnes of CO₂ per person per year (the average volume that must be reached in 2030 to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050 with a 50% probability). A dollar spent to meet the needs of the richest 1% emits 30 times more CO₂ than a dollar invested to meet the social needs of the poorest 50% of the world's population.

The climate impact of production aimed at satisfying human needs – especially when democratically planned and assumed by

the public sector in a context of social equality – is much lower than that of production aimed at satisfying the needs of the rich through GDP growth and blind market competition for profit. It would be largely offset by the radical reduction of the carbon footprint of the richest 1% – they must divide their emissions by 30 in a few years in the North as in the South! – and sobriety for all. In fact, stopping the catastrophe needs a society that provides well-being and guarantees equality like never before. Yet the rich refuse to make even the slightest effort! On the contrary: they want ever more privileges!

Governments have pledged to stay below +1.5°C, to maintain biodiversity, to achieve so-called “sustainable development” and to respect the principle of “common but differentiated responsibilities and capacities” in the ecological crisis, while producing ever more goods, using ever more energy. These combined promises will not be respected by capital. The facts show this: 33 three years after the Earth Summit in Rio (1992), the global energy mix is still completely dominated by fossil fuels (84% in 2020). The total production of fossil fuel has increased by 62%, from 83 000 Terawatt-hour (TWh) in 1992 to 136 000 TWh in 2021. Renewables add to the mainly fossil energy system, offering more capacities and new markets to capitalists.[2](#)

- With the energy crisis unleashed after the pandemic and deepened by the Russian imperialist war on Ukraine, all capitalist powers revived coal, oil, natural gas (including shale gas), and nuclear power.

- The promotion of artificial intelligence (AI) by Big Tech companies and capitalist governments poses a new threat. Data centres and crypto-mining already consume nearly 2% of the world’s electricity. This consumption will increase dramatically with the expansion of AI, which requires enormous amounts of energy and water. People’s lives will be affected in numerous ways. The capitalist use of AI threatens tens of

millions of jobs, degrades and undermines artistic and cultural creation, reinforces systemic racism, and accelerates the spread of far-right lies. Moreover, AI and data centres accelerate the frenzy of restless capitalism, which monopolizes people's attention, thus corrupting their free time and social connections.

- The main force historically responsible for climatic shift, US imperialism, has enormous means to fight against the catastrophe, but its political representatives criminally subordinate this fight to the protection of their world hegemony, when they do not simply deny the crisis.

- The measures big polluters implement under the label of "decarbonization" not only fail to address the magnitude of the climate crisis but also accelerate extractivism, mostly in the dominated countries, but also in the North and in the oceans, at the expense of both populations and ecosystems.

- This so-called "decarbonization" exacerbates imperialist land grabbing and exploitation of labour in the South, with the complicity of the local bourgeoisies (as illustrated by various projects using solar and wind energy in the territories of traditional communities, indigenous peoples, farmers and small-scale fishermen in the countries of the South as well as in "free zones", in order to produce "green hydrogen" for industries in developed countries).

- "Carbon markets", "carbon offset", "biodiversity compensations" and "market mechanisms" based on the understanding of nature as capital weigh on the least responsible, the poor, in particular indigenous people, racialized people and the peoples of the South in general.

Valid in theory, abstract concepts such as "circular economy", "resilience", "energy transition", and "biomimicry" become hollow formulas in practice as soon as they are used in the service of capitalist productivism. If there is no plan

implemented by society as a whole for the conversion of production, then technical improvements (e.g. to make energy production cheaper) have a rebound effect³: a reduction in the price of energy generally leads to higher energy and material consumption.

The right blames global warming and the decline in biodiversity on “galloping” population growth. In this way, they seek to blame the oppressed for the crisis and their own misery, in order to impose population control measures on them. In reality, high population growth rates are a consequence rather than a cause of poverty. Income security, access to food, education, healthcare, and housing, gender equality, and women’s empowerment all contribute to the demographic transition because mortality rates, and then birth rates, decline.

The capitalist fetish for accumulation prevents recognition of this truth. In the face of the climate crisis, the fetish will ultimately leave only two options: deploy sorcerer’s-apprentice technologies (nuclear, carbon capture/sequestration, geoengineering) or sacrifice billions of poor people in poor countries, saying that “nature” has so decided.

Politically, the impotence and injustice of green capitalism play into the hands of a fossil, conspiratorial, colonialist, racist, violently macho and LGBT-phobic neo-fascism, which is not put off by this second possibility. A sector of the wealthy is marching towards a huge crime against humanity, cynically betting that their wealth will protect them, letting the poor die.

World capitalism is not progressing gradually towards peace and sustainable development, it is going backwards and with great strides towards war, ecological disaster, genocide and neo-fascist barbarism.

In the face of this challenge, it is not enough to question the neoliberal regime and to revalue the role of the state. It would not even be enough to stop the dynamic of accumulation (an impossible goal under capitalism!). Global final net energy consumption must decrease radically – which means producing less and transporting less globally – while increasing energy consumption in poorer countries to meet social needs.

It is the only solution that makes it possible to reconcile the legitimate need of well-being for all, and the regeneration of the global ecosystem. Just sufficiency and just degrowth – ecosocialist degrowth – is a *sine qua non* condition of rescue.

Getting out of the productivist impasse is only possible under the following conditions:

- abandon “techno-solutionism”, that is, the idea that the solution will come from new technologies (their impact on energy and resources is often underestimated, or not taken into account). In an ecologically wise way, decide to use the means we have – they suffice to meet the needs of all;
- drastically reduce the ecological footprint of the rich to permit a good life for all;
- put an end to the free market in capital (stock markets, private banks, pension funds);
- regulate markets for goods and services;
- maximize direct relationships between producers and consumers at all levels of society, and the processes of evaluating needs and resources from the perspective of use values and ecological and social priorities;
- determine democratically what needs these use values must satisfy, and how;

- include, at the centre of this democratic deliberation, taking care of humans and ecosystems, careful respect for living things and for ecological boundaries.
- consequently, suppress useless production and useless transport, rethink and reorganize all productive activity, its circulation and consumption.

These conditions are necessary but not sufficient. Social and ecological crises are one. We must rebuild an emancipatory project for the exploited and the oppressed. A class-based project which, beyond basic needs, favours being over having. A project that profoundly changes behaviour, consumption, the relationship with the rest of nature, the conception of happiness and the vision that humans have of the world. An anti-productivist project to live better by taking care of living things on the only habitable planet in the solar system.

Capitalism has plunged humanity into such a bleak situation before, notably on the eve of the First World War. Nationalist hysteria gripped the masses and social democracy, betraying its pledge to respond to war with revolution, gave the green light to the greatest massacres in human history. Nevertheless, Lenin defined the situation as “objectively revolutionary”: only revolution could stop the slaughter, he said. History proved him right: the revolution in Russia and its tendency to spread forced the bourgeoisies to put an end to the massacre. The comparison obviously has its limits. The mediations towards revolutionary action are infinitely more complex today. But the same awakening of consciousness is necessary. In the face of the ecological crisis, an anti-capitalist revolution is even more objectively necessary. It is this fundamental judgement that must serve as a foundation for the elaboration of a programme, a strategy and a tactic, because there is no other way to avoid catastrophe.

The world we fight for

Our project for a future society articulates social and political emancipation with the imperative to stop the destruction of life and to repair as much as possible of the damage already done.

We want to (try to) imagine what a good life would be for everyone, everywhere, while reducing the consumption of matter and energy, taking into account differentiated responsibilities, and therefore reducing material production. It is not a question of giving a ready-made model, but of daring to think of another world, a world that makes us want to fight to build it by breaking with capitalism and productivism.

“Yes, it is bread we fight for, but we fight for roses too.”

A good life for all requires that basic human needs – healthy food, health, shelter, clean air and water – are met.

A good life is also a chosen life, fulfilling and creative, engaged in rich and equal human relationships, surrounded by the beauty of the world and human achievements.

Our planet (still) has enough arable land, drinking water, sun and wind, biodiversity and resources of all kinds to meet legitimate human needs while renouncing climate-damaging fossil fuels and nuclear power. However, some of these resources are limited and therefore exhaustible, while others, although they are inexhaustible, require for their human consumption materials that are exhaustible or even rare and whose extraction is ecologically damaging. In any case, as their use cannot be unlimited, we must use them carefully and sparingly, in an ecologically wise way.

Essential to our lives, they must be excluded from private appropriation, considered as common goods because they must benefit humanity as a whole both today and in the long term.

In order to guarantee these common goods over time, collective rules defining the uses but also the limits of these uses, the obligations to take care of or repair, must be drawn up.

Because a mangrove is not cared for in the same way as an icecap, a wetland in the same way as a sandy beach, a tropical forest in the same way as a river, because solar energy does not obey the same rules, does not impose the same material constraints as wind or water power, the elaboration of rules can only be the fruit of a democratic process involving those immediately concerned, workers and inhabitants.

Our common good includes all the services that allow us to respond in an egalitarian way, and therefore free of charge, to the needs of education, health, culture, access to water, energy, communication, transport, etc. They, too, must be managed and organized democratically by the whole of society.

Services that deal with people and the care they need at the different stages of life break down the separation of public and private, all the while respecting the privacy of all, and end the assignment of women to these tasks by socializing them, i.e. by making them the business of the whole of society. These services for social reproduction are essential tools, among others, to fight patriarchal oppression.

All these decentralized, participatory, community-based “public services” form the basis of a non-authoritarian social organization.

On the scale of society as a whole, democratic ecological planning allows people to reappropriate the major social choices relating to production, to decide, as citizens and users, what to produce and how to produce it, what services must be provided, and the acceptable limits for the use of material resources such as water, energy, transport, land, etc. These choices are prepared and enlightened by collective deliberation processes that rely on the appropriation of

knowledge, whether scientific or derived from the experience of populations, on the self-organization of the oppressed (women's liberation movements, racialized peoples, people with disabilities, etc.) to push back the barriers to development and to continue the conscious fight against discrimination and oppression.

This global economic and political democracy is articulated with multiple decentralized collectives/committees: those that allow decisions to be taken at the local level, in the city or neighbourhood, on the organization of public life and those that allow workers and producers to control the management and organization of their workplace, to decide on the way to produce and therefore to work. It is the combination of these different levels of democracy that allows cooperation and not competition, a management that is fair from an ecological and social point of view, fulfilling from a human point of view, at the level of the workplace, the company, the branch ... but also of the neighbourhood, the city, the region, the country and even the planet!

All decisions on production and distribution, on how we want to live, are guided by the principle: Decentralize as much as possible, coordinate as much as necessary.

Taking charge of one's life, and participating in social collectives, requires time, energy, and collective intelligence. Fortunately, the work of production and social reproduction only takes a few hours a day.

Production is exclusively devoted to the satisfaction of democratically determined needs. Production and distribution are organized in such a way as to minimize the consumption of resources and to eliminate waste, pollution and greenhouse gas emissions. It constantly aims at sobriety and "programmed sustainability" (as opposed to the programmed obsolescence of capitalism whether planned or simply due to the logic of the race for profit). Producing as close as possible to the needs

that are to be met allows for a reduction in transport and a better understanding of the work, materials and energy required.

Thus, agriculture is ecological, small-scale and local in order to ensure food sovereignty and the protection of biodiversity. Processing workshops and distribution channels ensure that most of the food is produced in short circuits.

The energy sector based on renewable sources is as decentralized as possible to reduce losses and optimize sources. Activities related to social reproduction (health, education, care of the elderly or dependent persons, childcare, etc.) are developed and enhanced, taking care not to reproduce gender stereotypes.

Although work occupies less time, it occupies an essential place because, together with nature and by taking care of it, it produces what is necessary for life.

Self-management of production units combined with democratic planning allows workers to control their activity, to decide how to organize work and to question the division between manual and intellectual work. This deliberation extends to the choice of technologies according to whether or not they allow the work collective to control the production process. Giving pride of place to concrete, practical and real knowledge of the work process, to collective and individual know-how, and to creativity, makes it possible to design and produce robust goods that can be dismantled and repaired, reused and, if necessary, recycled, and to reduce the consumption of materials and energy from manufacture to use.

In all areas, the conviction of doing something useful and the satisfaction of doing it well are combined. As for tedious tasks, everyone pays attention to reducing the load and difficulty. However, there remains an essential part which is performed by everyone in turn.

A large part of material production, because the volume is greatly reduced, can be deindustrialized (all or part of clothing or food) and artisan skills, in which everyone could be trained, should be better valued.

Liberating labour from alienation allows us to abolish the boundary between art and life in a kind of "luxury communism". We can keep or share tools, furniture, a bicycle, clothes ... all our lives, because they are ingeniously designed and beautiful.

Being rather than having

"Only that which is good for all is worthy of you. Only that is worthy of being produced which neither privileges nor demeans anyone." (A. Gorz)

Freedom lies not unlimited consumption, but in chosen and understood self-limitation, defined against consumerist alienation. Collective deliberation makes it possible to deconstruct artificial needs, to define "universalizable" needs – i.e. not reserved for certain people or certain parts of the world – which must be satisfied.

True wealth does not lie in the infinite increase of goods – having – but in the increase of free time – being. Free time opens up the possibility of fulfilment in play, study, civic activity, artistic creation, interpersonal relationships and with the rest of nature.

So we are opening the way to a lot of activity because we have time to think about it and because we can do it keeping care for people and the rest of nature at the centre.

The places where we live, each space in which we socialize, belong to us for building other interpersonal social relationships. Freed from land speculation and the car, we can rethink the use of public spaces, bridge the separation between the centre and the periphery, multiply recreational,

meeting and sharing spaces, restoring nature to cities with urban agriculture and community market gardening, restoring biotopes embedded in the urban fabric... And beyond that, implement a long-term policy aimed at rebalancing urban and rural populations and overcoming the opposition between town and country in order to reconstitute liveable, sustainable human communities on a scale that allows for real democracy.

Our desires and emotions are no longer things to be bought and sold, the range of choices is greatly enlarged for everyone, everyone can develop new ways of having sexual relationships, of living, working and raising children together, of building life projects in a free and diverse way, respecting each person's personal decisions and humanity, with the idea that there is no one possible option, or one option better than the others. The family can stop being the space for the reproduction of domination, and stop being the only possible form of collective life. We can thus rethink the form of parenthood in a more collective way, politicize our personal decisions about motherhood and parenthood, reflect on how we consider childhood and the role of the elderly or disabled, the social relations we establish with them, and how we are able to break the logic of domination that we have internalized, inherited from previous societies.

We are building a new culture, the opposite of rape culture, a culture that recognizes the bodies of all cis and trans women, and their desires, that recognizes everyone as subjects capable of deciding about their bodies, their lives and their sexualities, that makes it visible that there are a thousand ways of being a person and of living and expressing our gender and sexuality.

Sexual activity that is freely consented to and enjoyable for all who take part in it is its own sufficient justification.

We must learn to think about the interdependence of living beings and develop a conception of the relationship between

humanity and nature that will probably resemble in some respects that of indigenous peoples, but will nevertheless be different. A conception in which the ethical notions of precaution, respect and responsibility, as well as wonder at the beauty of the world, will constantly interact with a scientific understanding that is both ever more refined and ever more aware of its incompleteness.

Our transitional method

From our analysis of capitalism and specifically the policies of the ruling class in relation to ecological dangers and climate change, it follows:

First, that there is a need for an overall alternative and a social plan based on production and reproduction oriented towards the satisfaction of human needs and not towards profits (producing use values rather than exchange values). Adjusting this or that screw within the system without changing the mode of production will not avert or even significantly mitigate the crises and catastrophes we are facing and those to come, due to the permanence of the capitalist system. One of the important tasks of revolutionary politics is to convey this insight.

The understanding of the need for global revolutionary change is a task that cannot be solved directly and without difficulty in practice. That is why, second, it is important to combine the presentation of the global perspective with putting forward immediate demands for which mobilizations can really be developed or promoted.

Third, it must be emphasized that people cannot be convinced by argument alone. To win people to turn away from the capitalist system, to encourage them to resist, successful struggles are needed that give courage and demonstrate that partial victories are possible.

And fourth, successful struggles require better organization.

This is always true in principle, but today – in times when trade unions have in many parts of the world largely disappeared politically and the left is fragmented – it is important to promote practical cooperation in a non-sectarian way, especially among the anti-capitalist left, and at the same time to support workers in their self-organization.

On the one hand, time is pressing if we do not want to go beyond crucial tipping points and see global warming accelerate beyond control. On the other, the vast majority of people are not ready to take up the fight for a different system, i.e. to overthrow capitalism. This is partly due to a lack of knowledge of the overall situation, but more to a lack of perspective on what the alternative could or should look like. What is more, the social and political relationship of forces between the classes does not exactly encourage confrontation with the rulers and the profiteers of the capitalist social order.

However, a programme that wants to reform capitalism or overcome it piecemeal (especially if directed from above) also has no chance of success. Reforms that accept the rules of the capitalist system are unable to confront the challenges of the ecological crisis. And gradual changes in the economy and state have never led to a change of system. The owners and profiteers of capitalism will not peacefully watch as their wealth is confiscated and their way for enrichment is deprived of its basis bit by bit.

Time is short, and there is the need for urgent measures. Some opponents of ecosocialism argue for mild reforms “because we cannot wait for world revolution”. Well, partisans of ecosocialism do not propose to wait! Our strategy is to begin NOW, with concrete transitional demands. It is the beginning of a process towards global change. These are not separate historical stages, but dialectical moments in the same process. Each partial or local victory is a step in this movement, which reinforces self-organization and encourages

the fight for new victories.

In the upcoming class struggles – a basis for the battle of hegemony involving broader layers of the working class, the youth, women, indigenous peoples etc. – it must become clear that ultimately there is no way around a real change of system and the question of power. The ruling class must be expropriated and its political power overthrown.

For an anticapitalist transitional programme

The transitional method was already suggested by Marx and Engels in the last section of the *Communist Manifesto* (1848). But it is the Fourth International that gave it its modern meaning, in the *Transitional Programme* of 1938. Its basic assumption is the need for revolutionaries to help the masses, through the daily struggle, to find the bridge between present demands and the socialist programme of the revolution. This bridge should include a system of transitional demands, stemming from today's conditions and from today's consciousness of wide layers of the working class; the aim being to lead social struggles towards the conquest of power by the proletariat.

Of course, revolutionaries do not discard the programme of the traditional old "minimal" demands: they obviously defend the democratic rights and social conquests of the workers. However, they propose a system of transitional demands, which can be appropriately understood by the exploited and the oppressed, but at the same time directed against the very bases of the bourgeois regime.

Most of the transitional demands mentioned in the programme of 1938 are still relevant today: sliding scale of wages and sliding scale of hours; worker's control of the factories; open the "secret" business accounts; expropriation of private banks; expropriations of certain groups of capitalists; among others. The purpose of such proposals is to unite the broadest

possible popular masses in struggle around concrete demands that are in objective contradiction with the rules of the capitalist system.

But we need to update our programme of transitional demands, in order to take into account the new conditions of the 21st century, in particular the new situation created by the ecological crisis and the imminent danger of catastrophic climate change. Today these demands must have a socio-ecological and, potentially, an ecosocialist nature.

The aim of ecosocialist transitional demands is strategic: to be able to mobilize large sections of urban and rural workers, women, youth, victims of racism or national oppression, as well as unions, social movements and left parties in a struggle that challenges the capitalist system and bourgeois rule. These demands, which combine social and ecological interests, must be considered as necessary, legitimate and relevant by the exploited and the oppressed, according to their given level of social and political consciousness. In the struggle, people become conscious of the need to organize, to unite and to fight; they also begin to understand who is the enemy: not only local forces, but the system itself. The aim of transitional eco-social demands is, thanks to the struggle, to enhance the social and political consciousness of the exploited and the oppressed, their anti-capitalist understanding, and, hopefully, an ecosocialist revolutionary perspective.

Some of these demands have a universal character: for instance, free and accessible public transport. This is both an ecological and a social demand, and it contains seeds of the ecosocialist future: public services vs market, and free vs capitalist profit. However, their strategic significance varies according to the society and the economy. Ecosocialist transitional demands must take into account the needs and aspirations of the masses, according to their local expression, in the different parts of the world capitalist

system.

Main lines of an ecosocialist alternative to capitalist growth

Satisfying real social needs while respecting ecological constraints is only possible by breaking with the productivist and consumerist logic of capitalism, which widens inequalities, harms the living and “ruins the only two sources of all wealth – the Earth and the workers” (Marx). Breaking this logic implies fighting for the following lines of action. They form a coherent whole, to be completed and broken down according to national and regional specificities. Of course, in each continent, and in each country, there are specific measures to be proposed in a transitional perspective.

Against disasters, public prevention plans adapted to social needs, under popular control

Some effects of the climate catastrophe are irreversible (rising sea levels) or will last for a long time (heatwaves, droughts, exceptional precipitation, more violent tornadoes, etc.). Capitalist insurance companies do not protect the popular classes, or (at best) protect them poorly. Faced with these scourges, the wealthy talk only of “adaptating”. “Adaptating” to warming, for them, serves 1) to divert attention from the structural causes, for which their system is responsible; 2) to continue their harmful practices focused on maximum profit, without worrying about the long term; 3) to offer new markets to capitalists (infrastructure, air conditioning, transport, carbon compensation, etc.). This technocratic and authoritarian capitalist “adaptating” is in fact what the IPCC calls “maladaptation”. It increases inequalities, discrimination and dispossession. It also increases vulnerability to rising temperatures, with the risk of seriously jeopardizing the very possibility of adaptation in the future, especially in poor countries. To capitalist

“maladaptation” we oppose the immediate demand for public prevention plans adapted to the situation of the popular classes. They are the main victims of extreme meteorological phenomena, especially in dominated countries. Public prevention plans must be designed according to their needs and their situation, through dialogue with scientists. They must encompass all sectors, in particular agriculture, forestry, housing, water management, energy, industry, labour legislation, health and education. They must be the subject of broad democratic consultation, with the right of veto of the local communities and work forces concerned.

Share the wealth to take care of humans and our living environment, free of charge

Quality health care, good education, good care for young children, a dignified retirement and a care system that respects dependency, accessible, permanent and comfortable housing, efficient public transport, renewable energy, healthy food, clean water, internet access and a natural environment in good condition: these are the real needs that a civilization worthy of its name should satisfy for all humans, regardless of their skin colour, gender, ethnicity or beliefs. It is possible to achieve this while significantly decreasing the global strain in our environment. Why have we not got this? Because the economy is tuned to induce consumption created as an industrial byproduct by capitalists. They consume and invest ever more for profit, appropriate all resources, and transform everything into commodities. Their selfish logic sows misfortune and death.

A 180° about turn is required. Natural resources and knowledge constitute a common good to be managed prudently and collectively. The satisfaction of real needs and the revitalization of ecosystems must be planned democratically and supported by the public sector, under the active control of the popular classes, and by extending free access as much as possible. This collective project must harness scientific

expertise to its service. The necessary first step is to fight inequalities and oppression. Social justice and a good life for all are ecological demands!

Expand commons and public services against privatization and marketization

This is one of the key aspects of a social and ecological transition, in many areas of life. For instance:

- **Water:** The present privatization, wasteful consumption and pollution of water – rivers, lakes and subterranean – is a social and ecological disaster. Water scarcity and floods due to climate change are major threats for billions of people. Water is a common good, and should be managed and distributed by public services, under the control of consumers. Landscapes and cities should be made permeable to water and able to store water to avoid massive flooding.
- **Housing:** The basic right of all people to decent, permanent and ecologically sustainable housing cannot be guaranteed under capitalism. The law of profit entails evictions, demolitions and criminalization of those who resist. It also entails high energy bills for the poor and subsidized renewables for the rich. Public control of the real estate market, lowering and freezing of interest rates and profits of the banks, a radical increase in good, public, social and cooperative housing, a public process of climate insulation of houses and a massive programme of building energetically autonomous houses, are first steps of an alternative politics.
- **Health:** The results of the Covid-19 pandemic are crystal clear: privatization and cuts in the care sector fragilize the popular classes – in particular children, women and the elderly – and are strong threats to public health in general. This sector must be refinanced massively and the whole played into the hands of the collective. Investments priority must be in front-line medicine. The pharma industry must be

socialized.

- Transport: Individual transport in capitalism privileges private cars, with dire health and ecological consequences. The alternative is a large and efficient system of free, accessible public transport, as well as a great extension of pedestrian and cycling areas. Commodities are transported great distances by trucks or container ships, with enormous gas emissions; reductions in wasteful consumption and relocalization of production and transport of goods by train are immediate necessary measures. Air transport should be significantly reduced. No air traffic for distances less than 1,000 km where operational rail systems exist.

Take the money where it is: Capitalists and the rich must pay

A global transition strategy worthy of the name must articulate the replacement of fossil fuels by renewable energy sources, protection against the already perceptible effects of climate change, compensation for losses and threats, assistance for reconversion (in particular guaranteed income for the workers concerned) and the repair of ecosystems. Between now and 2050 this needs several trillion dollars. Who should pay? Those responsible for the disaster: multinationals, banks, pension funds, imperialist states and the rich of the North and South. The eco-socialist alternative requires a broad programme of tax reform and radical reduction of inequalities to take the money from where it is: progressive taxation, the lifting of banking secrecy, a register of land assets, taxation of assets, exceptional single tax at a high rate on inherited wealth, elimination of tax havens, abolition of tax privileges for companies and the rich, opening of company account books, capping of high incomes, abolition of public debts recognized as "illegitimate" (without compensation, except for small investors), compensation by rich countries for the cost of renouncing exploitation of fossil resources by dominated

countries (e.g. the Yasuni Park project). Above all, genuine ecosocialist democratic planning is not possible without the public socialization of banks. "Credit for the common good" means definitively eliminating profit in determining interest rates and transaction margins, supporting the public and popular function of credit, and guaranteeing the public and cooperative role of banks.

No emancipation without anti-racist struggle

Racial oppression is a structural and structuring element of the capitalist mode of production. It accompanied the primitive accumulation of capital through colonization, the slave trade, and slavery. The forced displacement of millions of Africans, their commercialization in the Americas, and the exploitation of their labour ensured the enrichment of Europeans and still guarantees their privileges today.

Racism manifests itself centrally as a mechanism of oppression of sectors of the working class, the reservation of specific positions and socially determined access for whites (the supposedly universal subject) and for people perceived as racialized. It shapes social relations, reinforcing and complicating the mechanisms of bourgeois exploitation and wealth accumulation. Diversity that deviates from the norms of whiteness is transmuted into oppression.

Building a new world free from all oppression and exploitation requires a head-on struggle against racism. This is a central task of ecosocialist strategy. We must break with the genocidal logic against non-white groups and strengthen the anti-prison struggle against mass incarceration, imposed in particular through the liberal tactic of the so-called war on drugs.

The fight against police militarization must be at the heart of anti-racist struggle, as must access to decent living conditions in general. It is necessary to combat all austerity

policies, which primarily and increasingly affect non-white people. They structure the environmental racism that unequally distributes the deadly consequences of capitalist production. It is necessary to confront all fiscal austerity policies, which deepen the precariousness of life for the working class as a whole and fall mostly and more heavily on non-white people. They structure environmental racism which, in this climate emergency, distributes the deadly consequences of capitalist production unevenly.

Freedom of movement and residence on Earth! Nobody is illegal!

The ecological catastrophe is a growing driving force for migration and displacement of populations. An annual average of 21.5 million people were forcibly displaced by weather-related events between 2008 and 2016. Most of them are poor people from poor countries who are displaced within their own countries or in poor neighboring countries. Climate migration is expected to surge in coming decades: 1.2 billion people could be displaced globally by 2050. Unlike asylum-seekers, "climate refugees" do not even have any status. They bear no responsibility for the ecological catastrophe but the capitalist system, which is responsible, condemns them to swell the ranks of the 108.4 million people worldwide who were forcibly displaced in 2020 as a result of persecution, conflict, violence, human rights violations. The basic rights of these people are under constant attack: the right to be protected against violence; to have enough water and food; to live in a safe house; to keep their family united; to find a decent job. A growing number of them (4,4 million, probably much more) are even considered stateless by the UNHCR. All this is contrary to the most basic justice. It feeds the fascists who scapegoat the migrants and dehumanize them. This is a huge threat for the democratic and social rights of all. As internationalists, we fight for restrictive policies against capital, not against migrants. We oppose the building

of walls, confinement in centres, the building of camps, expulsions, deportations, and the racist rhetoric. Nobody is illegal on Earth, everybody must have the right to move and to leave everywhere. The borders must be open to all those who flee their country, whether it is for social, political, economic or environmental reasons.

Eliminate unnecessary or harmful economic activities

Stopping the climate catastrophe and the decline of biodiversity necessarily requires a very rapid and significant reduction in net energy consumption at the global level. This discipline is unavoidable. First steps include drastically reducing the purchasing power of the rich, abandoning fast fashion, advertisement and luxury production/consumption (cruises, yachts and private jets or helicopters, space tourism, etc.), scaling down mass-produced meat and dairy and ending the accelerated obsolescence of products, extending their lifespan and facilitating their repair. Air and maritime transport of goods should be reduced drastically by relocation of production, and be replaced by train transport whenever possible. More structurally, energy constraint can only be respected by reducing economic activities that are useless or harmful as quickly as possible. The main productive sectors to consider are: arms production, fossil energy and petrochemicals, extractive industry, non-sustainable manufacturing, the wood and pulp industry, personal car construction, planes and shipbuilding.

Food sovereignty! Get out of agribusiness, industrial fishing and the meat industry

These three sectors pose serious threats to the climate, human health and biodiversity. Dismantling them requires measures at the level of production but also significant changes at the

level of consumption (in developed countries and among the rich in all countries) and in our relationship with living things. Proactive policies are needed to stop deforestation and replace agribusiness, industrial tree plantations and large-scale fishing with small farmer agroecology, ecoforestry and small-scale fishing respectively. These alternatives consume less energy, employ more labour and are much more respectful of biodiversity. Farmers and fisherfolk must be properly compensated by the community, not only for their contribution to human food but also for their ecological contribution. The rights of first peoples over the forest and other ecosystems must be protected. Global meat consumption must be drastically reduced, particularly in countries and among social classes that consume too much meat. The meat and dairy industry must be dismantled and a diet based mainly on local vegetable production be promoted. By doing that, we put an end to the abject treatment of animals in the meat industry and to industrial fishing. Food sovereignty, in line with the proposals of Via Campesina, is a key objective. It requires radical agrarian reform: the land should go to those who work it, especially women. Expropriation of big landowners and capitalist agribusiness who produce goods for the world market. Distribution of land to peasants and landless peasants (families or cooperatives) for agro-biological production. Abolition of old and new genetically modified crops in open field and elimination of toxic pesticides (starting with those whose use the imperialist countries prohibit but whose export they authorize in the dominated countries!).

Coexist with living things, stop the massacre of species

Respect for non-human life is fundamental to preserving the conditions for reproduction and evolution of the human species. Production methods must take into account relationships with other living things from the very beginning. Immediate action must be taken against the

patenting of living things, the destruction of wetlands, and the exploitation of the seabed. Although partial and insufficient in the long term, the expansion of wildlife conservation areas must be encouraged, provided it does not lead to further social injustice, particularly to the detriment of indigenous peoples and rural communities.

Popular urban reform

More than half the world's population now lives in increasingly large cities. At the same time, rural regions are becoming depopulated, ruined by agribusiness and mining, and increasingly deprived of essential services. So called "developing countries" have some of the largest megacities on the planet (Jakarta, Manila, Mexico City, New Delhi, Bombay, Sao Paulo, and others), a growing number of homeless people and slums where millions of human beings (around Karachi, Nairobi, Baghdad...) survive and work informally in undignified conditions. It is one of the most hideous wounds left by capitalist development and imperialist domination. In addition to violence, heat waves make survival increasingly difficult in slums and poor neighbourhoods, especially in humid climates. The ecosocialist alternative demands the launch of a vast social housing construction programme accompanied by a popular urban reform that changes the organization of large cities, designed in cooperation with homeless associations. This has to be combined, on the one hand, with labour legislation that protects workers and, on the other, the attraction of agrarian reform, in order to initiate a movement of rural counter-emigration.

Socialize energy and finance without compensation or buyback to get out of fossil fuels and nuclear power as quickly as possible

The energy multinationals and the banks that finance them want to exploit every last tonne of coal, every last litre of oil, every last cubic metre of gas. They initially hid and denied

the impact of CO2 emissions on climate change. Now, in order to continue to exploit these resources despite everything, and while soaring prices ensure them gigantic surplus profits, they promise all kinds of phony techniques (greenwashing, exchange of “polluting rights”, “emissions offsetting”, “Carbon capture, sequestration and utilization”) and promote nuclear energy as “low carbon”. Have no doubt: these profit-hungry groups are taking the planet from climate catastrophe to cataclysm. At the same time, they are at the forefront of capitalist attacks on the working classes. They must be socialized by expropriation, without compensation or buyback. To stop the social and ecological destruction, to determine our future collectively, nothing is more urgent than constituting public services of energy and credit, decentralized and interconnected, under the democratic control of the people.

Open the “black box” of data centres, socialize Big Tech

Data centers owned by Big Tech companies consume increasing amounts of energy and water. They are “black boxes”: what happens there is covered by trade secrets. In addition to the fact that these centres power surveillance capitalism, create algorithms for targeted advertising, and artificially generate new needs, a growing part of their activity involves supporting AI. This “black box” must be opened. People must be able to control energy usage and decide which functions are socially useful and which are not. Big Tech and social media giants must be socialized and democratically managed to create truly public digital spaces.

For liberation and the self-determination of peoples; against war, imperialism and colonialism

We defend an internationalist programme based on social justice, and an ecosocialist transition led by liberating and collective forces, and peace among peoples, confronting

oppressive policies. We oppose NATO and other military alliances, which drive the world towards new inter-imperialist conflicts. We fight against increases in military budgets, for the dismantling of manufacturing and stocks of all nuclear, chemical and bacteriological armament and cyber weapons, for dismantling of all private military companies. Weapons must not be commodities; their use must be under political control for the purposes of defence and protection against aggression.

The sole road to peace is through the victorious struggles for the right to self-determination, the end of occupation of lands and ethnical cleansing. As internationalists, we are in solidarity with the oppressed people fighting for their rights, notably in Palestine and in Ukraine.

Guarantee employment for all, ensure the necessary retraining in ecologically sustainable and socially useful activities

Workers engaged in wasteful and harmful fossil fuel activities, in agribusiness, big fishing and the meat industry should not pay the price of capitalist management. A green job guarantee must be instituted to ensure their collective retraining, without loss of income, in the activities of the public plan to meet real needs and restore ecosystems. This green jobs guarantee will overcome the legitimate fears of the workers concerned. Thus, there will be an end to the cynical instrumentalization of these fears by the capitalists, in the service of their productivist/consumerist interests. On the contrary, the green jobs guarantee will encourage and motivate workers in condemned sectors to train and mobilize to actively take charge of carrying out the plan, in dialogue with the public benefiting from it, by investing their knowledge, their skills and their experience in an activity rich in meaning, emancipatory, truly human because concerned with the lives of future generations.

Work less, live and work better, live a good life

Radically reducing energy consumption by eliminating useless and harmful production/consumption logically has the effect of reducing the time of salaried social work. This reduction must be collective. Capitalist waste is of such magnitude that its suppression will undoubtedly open up the concrete possibility of a very significant reduction in weekly working time (about a half-day's work) and a significant lowering of the retirement age. This trend towards reduction will be partly offset by the necessary reduction in work rhythms and increase in social and ecological reproduction work necessary to take care of people (including by socializing part of the domestic work carried out for free mainly by women) and ecosystems. Democratic planning will be essential for the articulation over time of these movements in various directions. The ecosocialist break with capitalist growth implies a double transformation of work. Quantitatively, we will work much less. Qualitatively, it will create the conditions for making work an activity of the good life – a conscious mediation between humans (therefore also between men and women), and between humans and the rest of nature. This deep transformation of work and life will more than compensate for the changes in consumption affecting the best paid layers of the working class, mainly in the developed countries.

Reduce, reuse, recycle

The concepts of product life cycle, recycling, repair, and circularity are essential. Their consistent application requires production focused on meeting real human needs. However, the production of organic and solid waste is an unavoidable reality of life in society. It is therefore essential to have adequate means for its disposal, treatment, and reuse. Therefore, alongside drastically reducing consumption, it is necessary to implement adequate methods for treating organic waste (such as composting) and to develop techniques for recycling and reusing solid waste, based on the

knowledge accumulated by science and workers collectively organized in waste collection and recycling. Ecosocialist policies will promote the adequate collection and treatment of hospital, contaminated, and toxic waste, aiming for the lowest possible socio-environmental impact.

Guarantee the right of women to control over their own bodies and a life without violence

Humanity will not be able to consciously manage its relationship to the rest of nature without consciously managing its relationship to itself, that is to say its own biological reproduction, which passes through the body of women. It is not by chance that patriarchal attacks on women's rights are intensifying everywhere: these attacks are an integral part of political projects that seek to establish strong powers at the service of the rich and the capitalists. They are most often carried out in the name of a reactionary "pro-life" ideology, which incidentally denies anthropogenic climate change. But, alongside these reactionary forces, there are also technocratic currents that blame the ecological crisis on "overpopulation" and thereby attempt to impose authoritarian policies of birth control. Faced with these two types of threats, we maintain that no morality, no higher reason, even ecological, can be invoked to deny women their elementary right to control their own fertility. The denial of this right is consubstantial with all other mechanisms of domination, including "human domination" over the rest of nature, for the benefit of patriarchy and its current capitalist form. Human emancipation includes the emancipation of women. This implies as a priority that women must have free access to contraception, abortion, education on how to use them, and reproductive care in general. This also involves the fight against all forms of physical, psychological, social or medical violence against women and LGBTQI+ people.

Knowledge is a common good: Reform of the education and research systems

Knowledge is a common good of humankind. Implementation of the ecosocialist emergency programme has a crying need for decolonized and decapitalized knowledge, embodied by numerous and competent teachers and researchers in all disciplines. For reform of the education system, expansion of public schools and universities, an end to discrimination in education, of which girls are particularly victims in certain countries. For recognition and integration of indigenous knowledge and know-how. Deep reform of research in order to put an end to its submission to capital. Research to be directed primarily towards repairing ecosystems and meeting the needs of the working classes, and determined in consultation with them.

Hands off democratic rights! Popular control and self-organization of struggles

Powerless to curb the ecological catastrophe it has created, the ruling class is toughening its regime, criminalizing resistance and picking on scapegoats. Its policies pave the way for nihilistic, nationalist, racist and macho neo-fascism. Faced with the bourgeoisie unmasked, ecosocialism raises the flag of extending rights and freedoms: right of association, of demonstration, right to strike; free election of parliamentary bodies in a multi-party system; a ban on private financing of political parties; legalization of popular initiative referendums; abolition of non-democratic institutions (such as an autonomous Central Bank); prohibition of private ownership of major means of communication; abolition of censorship; a fight against corruption; dissolution of militias serving leaders; respect for the rights and territories of indigenous communities and other oppressed peoples, etc. Ecosocialism is a societal alternative that requires the broadest democracy. It is being prepared now through the democratic self-organization of popular struggles and the demand, at all levels, for transparency and popular

control, with the right of veto.

Foster a cultural revolution based on respect for the living and “love for Pachamama”

A radical break with the ideology of human domination of nature is essential for the development of both an ecological and a feminist (an ecofeminist) culture of “caring” for people and the environment. The defence of biodiversity, in particular, cannot be based solely on reason (the human interest properly understood): it requires just as much empathy, respect, prudence and the kind of global conception that the first peoples sum up by the phrase “love of Pachamama”. Maintaining this global conception or reacquiring it – through struggles, artistic creation, education and production/consumption alternatives – is a major ideological challenge in the ecosocialist struggle. Western modernity has systematized the idea that human beings are divine creatures whose mission is to dominate nature and instrumentalize animals, which are reduced to the rank of machines. This non-materialist conception, intimately linked to colonial and patriarchal dominations, is completely disqualified today by scientific knowledge. We are part of the living Earth; human life would be impossible in the absence of the network of life on this planet.

Self-managed ecosocialist planning

The ecosocialist transition needs planning. In particular, the transformation of the energy system (exit from nuclear and fossil fuels, energy savings and development of renewables) needs to be planned. Contrary to what is often claimed, planning is not contradictory to democracy and self-management. The disastrous example of the countries of so-called “really existing socialism” shows that self-management is incompatible with authoritarian, bureaucratic planning, imposed from above in contempt of all democracy. What does democratic ecosocialist planning mean? Concretely, that the

whole of society will be free to democratically choose priorities for production and the level of resources which must be invested in education, health or culture. Far from being “despotic” in itself, democratic ecosocialist planning is the exercise of freedom of decision-making of the whole of society, at all levels, from local to national to global. It is a necessary exercise to free oneself from “economic laws” and “iron cages” that are alienating and reified within capitalist and bureaucratic structures. Democratic planning associated with the reduction of working time would be a considerable step forward for humanity towards what Marx called “the kingdom of freedom”: the increase in free time is in fact a condition for the participation of workers in the democratic discussion and self-management of the economy and society. Ecosocialist democratic planning is about key economic choices and not about local restaurants, grocery stores, bakeries, small stores, craft businesses. Likewise, it is important to emphasize that ecosocialist planning is not in contradiction to the self-management of workers in their production units. Self-management therefore means democratic control of the plan at all levels – local, regional, national, continental and planetary, since ecological issues such as climate change are global and can only be addressed at that level. Ecosocialist democratic planning is opposed to what is often described as “central planning” because decisions are not taken by a “centre” but determined democratically by the populations concerned, according to the principle of subsidiarity: responsibility for public action, when necessary, must be allocated to the smallest entity capable of solving the problem itself.

Material global degrowth in the context of uneven and combined development

There will be no national solution. A just ecosocialist alternative can begin in one country but its full implementation requires the abolition of capitalism at the

global level. From now on, the exploited and the oppressed therefore need a consistent anticapitalist, anti-imperialist, anti-racist and internationalist strategy, aiming at a global outcome. This strategy must articulate the struggles that unfold in very different contexts. It means that the main lines of an ecosocialist programme breaking with capitalist growth have general relevance but they apply differently in different countries. Some demands are more important in some countries than others, according to their place in the uneven and combined development of capitalism under imperialist rule.

After centuries of slavery and colonial plunder, the populations of so-called “developing” countries are victims of a new monstrous injustice. While their responsibility for greenhouse gas emissions is small, almost nil in the poorest countries, the climatic shift caused by two hundred years of imperialist capitalist growth places 3.5 billion women, men and children in the front line of catastrophes that are hitting them harder and harder.

The populations of the dominated countries have the basic right to access dignified living conditions. Imperialist governments, international institutions and the governments of the peripheral countries themselves claim that capitalist growth will enable people in the South to “catch up” with the standard of living of the developed capitalist countries. All it would take is “good governance” to “adjust” societies to the needs of the global market. But this is a dead end, as shown by the fact that inequalities continue to grow (between countries and, more and more, within countries), while the “carbon budget” compatible with 1.5°C is vanishing rapidly.

In reality, the imperialist model of development keeps the dominated countries in a neocolonial position of subordination, as suppliers of raw materials and low-cost labour power, producers of plant and animal goods for export, places for storing waste – among others carbon sinks appropriated by capitalists for their profit – and the chief

victims of the ecological crisis. Added to this now are the scandalous policies of developed countries to pay dominated countries to play the role of border police. The local corrupt “elites” carry a major responsibility. Instead of promoting an alternative development, based on alternative social values, they have come to serve imperialism.

The discourse of the “the South catching up with the North” is a chimera, a smokescreen to conceal the continuation of capitalist and imperialist exploitation, which widens inequalities. With the increase in ecological disasters, this discourse is losing all credibility.

The multipolar world of the BRICS is not an alternative to imperialism, as shown by the politics of Russia and China, the two main leaders of this bloc. Their autocratic leaders do not oppose the imperialist and oppressive practices of “classic” Western imperialism – they want to have the same rights. Likewise, what they object to is not the gap between rights and realities in the practices of Western societies, it is the rights themselves (of workers, women, LGBTQ+, etc.). Putin wants to rebuild a colonial empire by force and coercion. Taking advantage of the huge fossil fuels reserves, he seeks alliances with oil monarchies, other dictatorships and powerful interests in the energy and crime industry to prolong the exploitation of fossil fuels as long as possible. The Chinese Communist Party claims to show the countries of the South that they can escape domination and develop by entering the New Silk Roads, but its project of global capitalist hegemony is one of the main drivers of ecological destruction and accumulation by dispossession.

Now is not the time for “catching up” but for planetary sharing. The great mass of the working people, of women, of youth, of the ethnic minorities in the “North” and in the dominated countries are victims of climate change. According to scientific analysis of current climate policies, the richest 1% will emit even more CO₂ by 2030; the poor 50% will

emit a little bit more but remain largely under the level of individual emissions compatible with 1.5°C; the intermediate 40% will support the greatest part of the emissions reduction (with the proportionally greatest effort imposed on low incomes in rich countries). This is the basis for an international struggle for justice and equality. The meagre carbon budget still available must and can be shared according to historical responsibilities and capacities, not only between countries but more and more between social classes. Mineral resources and the wealth of biodiversity must be harvested carefully, according to the real needs of all.

The capitalists of the imperialist countries are by far the most responsible for the ecological crisis and they must pay the consequences. The bill must be paid, too, by countries like the “oil monarchies”, Russia, and China, although their historical responsibility is not the same. The industrialized countries of the “North” – Europe, North America, Australia, Japan – must make the greatest efforts in terms of a rapid degrowth in useless and/or harmful productions. They are also responsible for giving the dominated countries access to alternative technologies, and to provide funding for an ecological transition and real reparation for the loss and damage. The abolition of patents must allow the peoples of the South to freely access technologies that can meet real needs without using even more fossil energy.

To satisfy their needs, the people in dominated countries need a development model radically opposed to the imperialist and productivist one, a model that prioritizes public services (health, education, housing, accessible transport, sewage, electricity, drinking water) for the mass of the population, and not the production of goods for the world market. This anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist model expropriates the monopolies in the sectors of finance, mining, energy, agribusiness, and socializes them under democratic control.

Especially in the poorer countries, the necessity to meet the

needs of the population will require increased material production and energy consumption over a period of time. Within the framework of the alternative development model and other international exchanges, the contribution of these countries to global ecosocialist degrowth and respect for ecological balances will consist of:

- Imposing just reparation on imperialist countries.
- Cancelling the conspicuous consumption of the parasitical elite.
- Fighting ecocidal megaprojects inspired by neoliberal capitalist policies, such as giant pipelines, pharaonic mining projects, new airports, offshore oil wells, large hydroelectric dams and immense tourist infrastructures appropriating natural and cultural heritage for the benefit of the rich.
- Ecological agrarian reform to substitute industrialized agro-business.
- Refusing the destruction of biomes by breeders, palm oil planters, agribusiness in general and the mining industry, “forest compensation” (REDD and REDD+ projects) as well as “fishing agreements” which offer fishery resources to industrial fishing multinationals, etc.

Through their struggles, the popular classes of the dominated countries can contribute in a decisive way by engaging the exploited of the whole world in this path, the only one compatible with both human rights and with terrestrial limits.

Against the tide, make the struggles converge to break with capitalist productivism. Seize the government, initiate the ecosocialist rupture based on self-activity, self-organization, control

from below, and the broadest democracy

The economy, the state, the politics of the bourgeoisie and its international relations are deeply affected by the eco-social impasse in which capitalist accumulation and imperialist plunder have plunged humanity. Around the world, the exploited and the oppressed are gripped by deep anguish.

Movements of resistance are developing against the tide. Even in extremely difficult contexts, people stand up for their social, democratic, anti-imperialist, ecological, feminist, LGBTQI, anti-racist, indigenous, and peasant rights. Significant struggles have been waged and sometimes remarkable victories have been won: the Yellow Vest movement and the movement to defend pensions in France, the ecosocialist struggle of the GKN factory workers in Italy, the struggle of the auto workers union in the United States, the closure of a copper mine owned by First Quantum in Panama in 2023, the victory of the Indian peasants against the Modi government, the victory of the “zadists” in France against the airport of Notre-Dame-des-Landes, the victory of women in the fight for abortion in Argentina, and of the Sioux in the United States against the XXL pipeline... But the enemy is on the offensive and many struggles are defeated. Our task, as activists of the Fourth International, is to help organize and extend the struggles, bringing our ecosocialist and internationalist perspective to bear.

While the history of the labor movement is rich in struggles for workers' health and environmental protection, the productivism of the hegemonic forces of the left, parties and trade unions, is a serious obstacle on the road to an ecosocialist response commensurate with the objective situation. Most of the leaderships have abandoned any anti-capitalist perspective. Social democracy and all other variants of reformism have become social-liberal, their only ambition being to bring some social correction to the market within the limits of the neoliberal framework. Most

leaderships of the big trade union organizations limit themselves to accompanying neoliberal policies with the illusion that capitalist growth will improve employment, wages and social protection. Instead of organizing an awareness of the ecosocial impasse, these policies of class collaboration deepen it and conceal its gravity.

Fortunately, some political forces and trade union currents – notably in Europe, the United States and Latin America – are beginning to distance themselves from productivism and neoliberalism. In the trade unions, activists aware of the ecological challenge have advanced the concept of a “just transition”. Social democracy and ITUC trade union leaders have hijacked this in the direction of supporting productivism and business competitiveness. The dominant class is expert in manipulation. This is how “just transition” has joined “sustainable development” in the discourse of governments that trample on justice and organize unsustainability.

In the “developed” capitalist countries, the ranks of the traditional forces have been reinforced by the green parties. It took four decades for the vast majority of these parties to join the layer of the political managers of capitalism. Their pragmatism based on the individual responsibility of consumers is extended in civil society by numerous environmental associations. It has allowed social democracy and traditional labour leaderships to disguise their class collaboration in defence of the “lesser social evil” in the face of ecotaxes and other so-called “realistic” solutions of “neither left nor right” ecology.

In other parts of the world, although still in a minority, ecosocialism is beginning to gain an influence on social movements and the radical left. Some important local experiences – in Mindanao, Rojava, and Chiapas, among others – have affinities with the ecosocialist perspective. However, capitalist growth still falsely appears to most as the only way to improve social conditions.

Given the depth of the crisis and disarray, there is a real risk of seeing a growing tendency in sectors of the working classes to sacrifice ecological objectives on the altar of development, job creation and increased income. This trend would only accelerate the catastrophe of which these same classes are already the first victims and would deepen the loss of legitimacy of the unions. It would also create fertile ground for neo-fascist attempts to greenwash racist, colonialist and genocidal projects. The migrants fleeing their devastated lands are the main targets of these hate campaigns.

The socialist project is deeply discredited by the record of Stalinism and social democracy. It is from struggles that we must reinvent an alternative, not from dogmas.

Who is today on the front lines of the real ecosocial movement? Indigenous peoples, youth, peasants, racialized people who pay a heavy price for the social and ecological destruction. In these four groups, women play a decisive role, in connection with their specific, ecofeminist demands, for which they fight and organize themselves autonomously.

The international peasant alliance Via Campesina offers numerous examples that demonstrate that it is possible to combine the defence of the rights of poor peasants and indigenous peoples, the fight against extractivism and agro-industry, the fight for food sovereignty and the preservation of ecosystems with feminism.

The vast majority of wage-workers is absent or standing back from anti-productivist struggles. Some then infer that the class struggle is outdated, or must be waged by an "ecological class" that exists only in their imagination. But stopping the catastrophe is only possible by revolutionizing the mode of production of social existence. This revolution is not possible without the active and conscious participation of producers, who also form the majority of the population.

Others, on the contrary, deduce that it is necessary to wait for the moment when the mass of workers in struggle for their immediate socio-economic demands will have reached the level of consciousness that allows them to participate in the ecological struggle on a "class line". However, how would the level of consciousness of the mass of employees integrate ecological issues in time if no major social struggle comes to shake up the productivist framework within which they, increasingly on the defensive, spontaneously raise their immediate socio-economic demands? Moving beyond the productivist framework requires a logic of public initiative and planning of the necessary reconversions, with guaranteed employment and income.

The class struggle is not a cold abstraction. "The real movement that abolishes the current state of things" (Marx) defines it and designates its actors. The struggles of women, LGBTQI people, oppressed peoples, racialized peoples, migrants, peasants and indigenous peoples for their rights are not simply adjacent to the struggles of workers against the exploitation of labour by the bosses. They are part of the living class struggle.

They are part of it because capitalism needs the patriarchal oppression of women to maximize surplus value and ensure social reproduction at a lower cost; needs the discrimination against LGBTQI people to validate patriarchy; needs structural racism to justify the looting of the periphery by the centre; needs inhuman "asylum policies" to regulate the industrial reserve army; needs to submit the peasantry to the dictates of junk food-producing agribusiness to compress the price of labour power; and needs to eliminate the respectful relationship that human communities still maintain within themselves and with nature, to replace it with its individualistic ideology of domination, which transforms the collective into an automaton and the living into dead things. In particular, indigenous peoples and traditional communities

are at the forefront of the struggle against the destructive domination of capitalism over their bodies and territories. In many regions, they are even the vanguard of new revolutionary movements of the subaltern classes. Therefore, we recognize that they are a fundamental part of the revolutionary subject of the 21st century.

All these struggles and those of workers against capitalist exploitation are part of the same fight for human emancipation, and this emancipation is only really possible and worthy of humanity in the awareness of the fact that our species belongs to nature while at the same time having, because of its specific intelligence, the responsibility, now unavoidable and vital, of taking care of it. Such is the strategic implication arising from the fact that the destructive force of capitalism has ushered the planet into a new geological era.

This analysis is the basis of our strategy of convergence of social and ecological struggles. Whenever possible, this convergence should also be coordinated at the international level through democratic forums. The struggle is global, and our movement must be too.

This convergence of struggles should not be limited to the search between social movements, or between apparatuses of social movements, for the greatest common denominator in terms of demands. This conception can imply the disregard of certain demands of certain groups – to the detriment of the weakest among them – that is to say, the opposite of convergence.

The convergence of social and ecological struggles includes all the struggles of all social actors, from the most seasoned to the most hesitant. It is a process of dynamic articulation, which raises the level of consciousness through action and debate, in mutual respect. Its goal is not the determination of a fixed platform but the constitution of the unity in combat of the exploited and the oppressed around concrete

demands opening a dynamic aiming at the conquest of political power and the overthrow of capitalism in the whole world.

In practice, the ecosocial convergence of struggles implies above all that those sectors most aware of ecological threats address themselves to the sectors most aware of social threats, and vice versa, in order to overcome together the false capitalist opposition between the social and ecological.

In this approach, the defence of an eco-unionism that is both class struggle and anti-productivist plays an essential role, based on the concrete concerns of workers for the preservation of their health and safety at work and on the role of whistle-blowers about [\[1\]](#) the damage to ecosystems and the danger of production that they are best placed to play.

As ecosocialist activists, we encourage resistance in the workplace through strikes and all initiatives that promote the organization and control of workers. We work to strengthen mobilizations by combining the extension of strikes, building ever greater demonstrations, by promoting all forms of self-organization and self-protection in the struggle against repression, as well as its popularization to counter the lies of the dominant media and the government apparatus.

We are also inspired by forms of civil disobedience, from blocking sites to boycotting rent payments, which have also proven their effectiveness.

Experiences from struggles help to feed the strategic debate.

Anti-productivist struggles are diverse, but generally their starting point is very concrete, often local, in opposition to new transport infrastructure (motorway, airport, etc.), commercial or logistical infrastructure, extractivist infrastructure (mines, pipelines, mega-dams, etc.), the grabbing of land or water, the destruction of a forest or a river, etc. It is, first, the threat to daily life, to livelihoods and health that mobilizes people, not a

generalizing discourse. By confronting political decision-makers, capitalist groups and the institutions that protect them, by forging alliances between actors with different histories and commitments, the struggle becomes more and more global and political.

These combinations of struggles anchored in a specific territory with a precise objective and general combat exist throughout the world and form a new political reality which may be called "Blockadia".

The formation of an ecosocialist class consciousness also implies a convergence in struggles in which (young) scientists can contribute by using and sharing their knowledge (agronomic, climatic, naturalist).

Strike committees, community health centres, company takeovers, land occupations, self-managed living spaces, repair workshops, canteens, seed libraries, etc., allow the experimentation of a social organization free of capitalism. They allow those who are deprived of political and economic power to experience their collective power and intelligence. Contradicting the illusions about possibly bypassing or simply adjusting the system, they sooner or later come up against the state and the capitalist market, showing that it is impossible to do without political power and the necessary overthrow of the system. In industrialized countries, the general political strike will be a decisive instrument. However, by establishing, even temporarily, another legitimacy that is popular, democratic and based on solidarity, the concrete alternatives allow the oppressed to become aware of their own power and to work towards the construction of a new hegemony.

More globally, the construction of self-organized organs of popular power is at the heart of our strategy.

The systemic crisis of "late capitalism" dominated by transnational finance nurtures both a disgust in the face of

the phenomena of the decay of the bourgeois regime and a feeling of helplessness in the face of the profound deterioration, both quantitative and qualitative, of the balance of power between classes. In this context, the question of government takes on increased importance. The seizure of political power by the working classes is a prerequisite for the implementation of a plan initiating a policy of rupture. At the same time, recent years have shown the deadly illusions of political projects which exploit popular aspirations, channel mobilizations, even stifle them in the name of realpolitik, and thus strengthen the far right.

There is no shortcut. An ecosocialist strategy of rupture involves the struggle for the formation of a popular power, fighting for a transition plan, emanating from the self-activity, control, and direct intervention of the exploited and oppressed at all levels of society. No consistent measures against exploitation, oppression, and the destruction of ecosystems can be imposed without a balance of power based on this self-organization. Self-emancipation is not only our goal; it is also a strategy for overthrowing the established order.

New institutions must be built to deliberate, to decide democratically, to organize production and the whole of society. These new powers will have to confront the capitalist state machine, which must be broken. The overthrow of the social order, the expropriation of the capitalists, will inevitably come up against the violent, armed response of the ruling classes. Faced with this violence, the exploited and the oppressed will have no choice but to defend themselves, it will be a question of democratically self-organizing legitimate violence while refusing virilism and substitutionism.

Everything depends on the outcomes of the struggles. No matter how deep the disaster, at every stage, the struggles will make the difference. Within them, everything depends on the ability

of ecosocialist activists to organize in order to orient themselves in practice according to the compass of a historically necessary option. Reflecting and acting, building struggles and tools of struggle, comparing experiences and learning from them: the international implementation of this immense task requires a political tool, a new International of the exploited and oppressed. Through this Manifesto, the Fourth International expresses its readiness to help meet this challenge.

[Adopted by the World Congress February 2025](#)

Notes

1 We use the term “Global South” to describe dependent countries, dominated countries, and peripheral countries in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. We use all these expressions to refer to the same reality. We do not include in the Global South countries like China, Russia, the oil monarchies, or substantially autonomous middle powers like India, etc., which occupy a specific place in the global capitalist system of domination and cannot be considered “dominated”.

2 Terawatt-hour (1 TWh = 1 billion kWh). This energy unit is used to measure the electricity production of a power plant (a few TWh) or a nation state. A kilowatt hour is equivalent to a steady power of one kilowatt running for one hour and is equivalent to 3.6 million joules or 3.6 megajoules.

3 This rebound effect is also known as “Jevons’ paradox”.

ACR has joined the Fourth International

As part of our ongoing commitment to revolutionary ecosocialism, AntiCapitalist Resistance has joined the Fourth International (FI). With the growth of the authoritarian populist right, the collapse of the biosphere and rapid global warming, the worsening global crisis means that we must get organised across borders. From solidarity with the Kazakh uprising in 2022, the conflicts in Palestine and Ukraine to building links with ecosocialists in numerous countries through the Global Ecosocialist Network, internationalism is at ACR's heart. Being an isolated group in England and Cymru/Wales was not part of our perspectives – we need a practical internationalism, not just fine words on a page.

Some of our members were already in the Fourth International through their affiliation with Socialist Resistance, one of the founding organisations of ACR. After several internal discussions within ACR, we agreed to apply for membership as a section together with comrades in Scotland. The International agreed upon this at its 18th World Congress, held in Belgium at the end of February.

The Fourth International was set up by revolutionary Leon Trotsky and his allies in 1938. It is named the Fourth International because there had been three others before. The First International (1864-1876) was led by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels and brought together working class organisations and revolutionaries worldwide. The Second (Socialist) International was founded in 1889 and brought together mass socialist parties like the Labour Party in Britain and the German SDP. This international split at the start of World War One when the different national parties supported their capitalist classes in the war. The Third (Communist) International was set up in 1919 after the Russian

Revolution to collect revolutionaries in sympathy with the ideas of the Bolsheviks, who set up communist parties worldwide dedicated to getting rid of capitalism.

The Third International politically degenerated during the 1920s and 30s after Stalin took power in Russia, becoming bureaucratically dominated by the Soviet state and subordinated to Stalin's foreign policy goals. Trotsky and his sympathisers attempted to challenge this by forming a new, fourth international, which was in the tradition of revolutionary socialists who opposed both capitalism and Stalinism and who fought for consistent internationalism.

ACR is itself a product of the regroupment of different socialists from different traditions, so we are not expecting all our members to defend every historic position that the FI has taken. We join the FI because of its clear commitment to ecosocialism as a strategic approach to the crisis of the modern age and its openness to help regroup revolutionary Marxists and other class struggle activists.

At the same World Congress, the FI admitted the MES in Brazil, an organisation from a different revolutionary background, and admitted Solidarity in the USA as a full section. Fraternal relations with Socialist Action were ended due to their pro-Moscow position around the Ukraine war.

ACR is represented in the international leadership of the FI, and we are keen to deepen our connections with ecosocialist revolutionaries worldwide and learn from their struggles. We will work for wider regroupment and to build mass revolutionary organisations that can make a difference in the late capitalist hellscape we live and struggle in.

The Fourth International has also published [a report of the Congress here](#). You can get the resolutions and other documents from the Congress at [this link](#).

Originally posted on 10th March 2025 at

Socialist strategy and the party

[The question of how socialists should organise is a perennial one, not least due to the on-going fragmentation of the left. More recently, the threat of the far-right globally, has focussed the attention of a number of groups and individual activists on the urgent necessity of creating a popular and credible left alternative. In Scotland, where there is every likelihood of Nigel Farage's Reform party gaining a substantial number of seats in the Holyrood elections in 2026, there is the beginning of a new discussion about how socialists might organise going forward, drawing on both the positive and negative experiences of the past. Supporters of Ecosocialist.scot are keenly involved in these discussions, drawing on the experiences of [Fourth International](#) around revolutionary regroupment and the building broad class-struggle parties internationally. As a contribution to this discussion we are reprinting this talk by socialist scholar and activist Gilbert Achcar. In it, Achcar outlines the history of socialist organisations from the time of Marx and Engels to the present day, exploring the proposition that 'the communists do not form a separate party opposed to other working-class parties' as well as analysing the experiences of the Second International and of Bolshevism. Above all, Achcar warns us against fixating on some timeless organisational model, encouraging us to recognise the centrality of democracy to our socialist project and the need to adapt organisational forms to the specific social, historical and technological

circumstances that we find ourselves in. Ecosocialist.scot, 20th February 2025]

Below is the transcript of a talk titled “Marxism, socialist strategy, and the party” by Gilbert Achcar (1), which was delivered to the South African initiative, [Dialogues for an Anti-capitalist Future](#). Here, Achcar traces conceptions of the party from Marx to the present and its implications for socialist strategy today. This transcript has been revised, edited and completed by Gilbert Achcar. The original video recording of the talk can be found [here](#).

Thank you for inviting me to address this meeting. It’s a great opportunity for me to discuss these issues with comrades from Africa, the continent where I was born and raised as a native of Senegal.

The topic defined by the organizers is quite broad: “Marxism, socialist strategy, and the party.” These topics are all in the singular, although they cover a plurality of cases and a wide variety of situations. There are many “Marxisms,” as everyone knows, each brand believing it is the only real, authentic one. And there are certainly many possible socialist strategies, since strategies are normally elaborated according to each country’s concrete circumstances. There can’t be a global socialist strategy that would be the same everywhere and anywhere. Likewise, I would say, there is no single conception of the party that is valid for every time and country. Strategic and organizational issues must be related to local circumstances. Otherwise, you get what Leon Trotsky aptly called “bureaucratically abstract internationalism,” and that always proves very sterile. Let us bear this in mind.

I will discuss a few conceptions that were developed in the course of Marxism’s history since our discussion adheres to a Marxist framework. And I’ll try to reach a few conclusions drawing lessons from the now long experience of Marxism.

Marx and Engels, the Communist Manifesto, and the First International

We may date the birth of Marxism as a combined theoretical and practical political orientation back to the Manifesto of the Communist Party that came out in 1848. That's a long history, which compels us to reflect upon the huge change in conditions between our present twenty-first century and the time when Marxism was born. Marx and Engels did show a lot of flexibility from the very beginning, however, starting with this founding document of Marxism as a political movement. The section on the communists' relation to the other working-class parties is well known, and quite important and interesting because it frames the kind of political thinking related to the emerging Marxist theory, which was still in its very initial phase. It is an early expression of the Marxist perspective and, as such, it is not perfect, to be sure. But it is a very important historical document in drawing out a new global political perspective. Conceived as a political "manifesto," it is very much related to action.

In it, we read those famous lines, "In what relation do the communists stand to the proletarians as a whole? The communists do not form a separate party opposed to the other working-class parties." This, of course, isn't to say that the communists do not form a party of their own, since the document's title itself is Manifesto of the Communist Party. In fact, a more accurate translation of the German original would have been: "The communists are no special party compared to the other working-class parties." ("Die Kommunisten sind keine besondere Partei gegenüber den andern Arbeiterparteien.") What is actually emphasized here is that the Communist Party is not different from the other parties of the working class. As for what is meant by "other working-class parties," this is clarified a few lines later, but the

idea that the communists are not “opposed” to them is explained right after.

“They,” the communists that is, “have no interests separate and apart from those of the proletariat as a whole.” In other words, the communists do not form a peculiar sect with its own agenda. They fight for the interests of the entire proletarian class. They are an integral part of the proletariat and fight for its class interests, not for interests of their own. That’s a very important issue, indeed, because we know from history that many working-class parties came to be detached, as blocks of particular interests, from the class as a whole. History is full of such instances.

So, the communists have no interest separate and apart from those of the proletariat as a whole. No sectarian principles of their own, which would be separate from the aspirations of the class. What is distinctive then about the communists? “They are distinguished from the other working-class parties by this only”—two points follow:

1. The internationalist perspective or the understanding that, “In the national struggles of the proletarians of different countries, [the communists] point out and bring to the front the common interests of the entire proletariat.” This idea of the proletariat as a global class with interests that are independent of nationality (“von der Nationalität unabhängigen Interessen”) is a distinguishing feature of the communists in the Manifesto.

2. The pursuit of the ultimate goal of the working-class struggle, which is the transformation of society and the abolition of capitalism and class division. In the various stages of the struggle against the bourgeoisie, the communists represent this long-term perspective. They always keep in mind the ultimate goal, and never lose sight of it by getting bogged down in sectional struggles or partial demands.

These are the two distinctive features of the communists as a section of the working class, as a group or party within the working class, fighting for the interests of the whole class. This bears both practical and theoretical implications. On the practical level, the communists constitute “the most advanced and resolute section of the working-class parties of every country.” They are the most resolute in political practice in that they always push the movement forward, toward further radicalization. On the theoretical level, thanks to their analytical perspective, the communists have a broad, comprehensive understanding of the various struggles. That’s at least the role they wish to play.

“The immediate aim of the communists is the same as that of all other proletarian parties.” This renewed emphasis on commonality is important, the idea that we, the communists—and that’s Marx and Engels writing here—are but one of the proletarian parties, not the only proletarian party. The sectarian claim to constitute the only party of the working class and that no other party represents the class is definitely not the conception that is upheld here.

And what is the immediate aim of the communists that is shared with the other proletarian parties? It is a good indication of what Marx and Engels meant by other proletarian parties. That aim is “the formation of the proletariat into a class, the overthrow of the bourgeois supremacy, and the conquest of political power by the proletariat.” These goals define what the two authors meant by proletarian parties. And they shed light onto the initial sentence that says that “the communists do not form a separate party opposed to the other working-class parties” (or a special party compared to the others). By working-class parties, Marx and Engels meant all parties that fight for these goals: the political formation of the class, the overthrow of bourgeois rule, and the conquest of political power by the proletariat.

Beyond this, what the political biography and writings of Marx

and Engels clearly show is that they held no general theory of the party; they were not interested in elaborating such a general theory. I believe that it is because of the point I started with: that the party is a tool for the class struggle, for the revolutionary struggle, and this tool must be adapted to different circumstances. There can't be a general conception of the party, valid for all times and countries. The class party is not a religious sect patterned on the same model worldwide. It is an instrument for action that must fit the concrete circumstances of each time and country.

This adaptation to actual circumstances was constantly at work in Marx's and Engels's political history, from their early political engagement with a group that they quickly found to be too sectarian—a group that was closer to the Blanquist perspective—to the more elaborate view that they expressed in 1850 in light of the revolutionary wave that Europe had witnessed in 1848. In a famous text focused on Germany, the Address of the Central Committee to the Communist League, the two friends described the communists as implementing exactly the approach that they had outlined in the Communist Manifesto, striving to push forward the revolutionary process and advocating the organization of the proletariat separately from other classes.

For this purpose, they called for the formation of workers' clubs. They had in mind the precedent of the French Revolution, in which political clubs such as the Jacobins were key actors. They advocated the same for Germany in 1850, but this time as proletarian clubs (forming what we would call today a mass party) whose tactic should consist in constantly outbidding the bourgeois or petite-bourgeois democrats. The proletarian party should do so in order to push the revolutionary process forward, turning it into a continuous process: "permanent revolution" is the term they used in that famous document.

Marx and Engels afterwards spent several years without being

formally involved in a political organization, until the founding of the First International in 1864. The role they saw for themselves at that time was to act directly at the international level, rather than getting involved in a national organization. The First International brought together a broad range of currents. It was anything but monolithic, including what we would today call left-wing reformists, along with anarchists and, of course, Marxists. The anarchists themselves mainly consisted of two different currents: followers of the French Proudhon and followers of the Russian Bakunin. Thus, a variety of tendencies and workers' organizations joined the First International, the official name of which was the "International Workingmen's Association" in the archaic language of the time.

The First International culminated with the Paris Commune. We have been celebrating this year the 150th anniversary of the Paris Commune, the uprising of the Parisian laboring masses, workers, and petite-bourgeoisie, that started on March 18, 1871 and ended in bloody repression after about two and a half months. This tragic outcome brought the International to an end after a sharp increase in factional infighting, as happens very often in times of setback and ebb.

The Second International, Social Democracy, Lenin and Luxemburg

The next stage was the emergence of German social democracy, which Marx and Engels followed very closely from England. One of the famous texts of Marx is the Critique of the Gotha Programme, which is a comment on the draft program of the Socialist Workers' Party of Germany before its founding convention in 1875.

Later on, after Marx's death in 1883, the Second International was founded in the year of the first centenary of the French Revolution in 1889. Engels was still active; he would die six

years later. Marx and Engels, thus, contributed to very diverse types of organization during their lives. Consider the Internationals, First and Second: the Second involved mass workers' parties that were quite different from the groups involved in the First, and it comprised a narrower range of political views. Although it was quite open to discussion, the anarchists were unwelcome in its ranks. The Second International was based on mass workers' parties engaged in the whole range of class struggle forms, from trade union to electoral, struggles that had become increasingly possible to wage legally in most European countries by the end of the nineteenth century.

These workers' parties involved in mass struggle emerged against the backdrop of a critique of Blanquism, which is the idea that a small group of enlightened revolutionaries can seize power by force, by way of a coup, and reeducate the masses after seizing power. This perspective, which grew out of one of the radical currents that developed from the French Revolution, had been strongly criticized by Marx and Engels as illusory and counterposed to their deeply democratic conception of revolutionary change.

Since the time of Marx and Engels, Marxism has gone through various avatars, as we know, but the most dominant in the twentieth century was indisputably the Russian model. More specifically, it was the variant of Marxism developed by the Bolshevik faction of the Social Democratic Workers' Party of Russia, a section of the Second International. After the party's split in 1912, both wings—Bolshevik and Menshevik—remained affiliated to the International, which soon went into crisis with the onset of World War I in 1914.

Russian conditions, of course, were quite exceptional compared to those of France or Germany, or most other countries where there were large sections of the International. Russia was ruled by tsarism, a very repressive state that allowed no political freedoms, except for brief periods. The Russian

revolutionaries had to work underground most of the time, hiding from the political police.

It is in light of these very specific conditions that the birth of Leninism as a theory of the party must be considered. It was born at the very beginning of the past century, its first major document being Lenin's *What Is To Be Done?* (1902). This book offered a conception of organization and struggle that was very much the fruit of the circumstances that I described: the underground party of professional revolutionaries acting in a "conspiratorial" manner, which was the only way revolutionaries could operate under the circumstances of that time in Russia.

And yet, when we examine the evolution of Lenin's thinking on the matter, we see that after the Revolution of 1905, he modified his perspective towards a better appraisal of the potential of spontaneous radicalization of the working-class masses. Whereas he had initially insisted that the workers' spontaneous inclination is bound to remain within the limits of a trade-unionist perspective, he realized after 1905 that the working-class masses could, at moments, be more revolutionary than any other organization—including his own!

Yet, this did not resolve the dispute that unfolded before 1905 between Mensheviks and Bolsheviks about the conception of the party: How large should the party's membership be? What conditions should there be for membership? Should all party members be fully engaged in day-to-day political activity, or should membership include dues-paying supporters, regardless of their level of active involvement? That discussion heated up in 1903. But when the party split years later, in 1912, the most serious divergence was political—the attitude toward the liberal bourgeoisie—rather than organizational. This explains the attitude of someone like Trotsky, who was very critical of the party conception expressed in *What Is To Be Done?*, while still being politically closer to the Bolsheviks. Hence, his conciliatory stance toward both wings after 1912, since he

agreed and disagreed with each of them on different issues.

During that same period, Rosa Luxemburg was actually more critical of the German Social Democratic Party than Lenin was. Whereas Lenin regarded the party as a model and key inspiration, Rosa Luxemburg was the most prominent left-wing critic of the party's leadership. She, too, was critical of Lenin's conception of the party, because she held a fundamental belief in the revolutionary potential of the working-class masses and their ability to outflank the social-democratic party's leadership in revolutionary times.

This brief, and only partial, overview suffices to show that there existed a complex variety of conceptions of the workers' party and its role. This fact makes it all the more important to consider the different conditions of the different countries in which the holders of these views were based. The Bolshevik party turned into a big, mass party in 1917. In the course of the radicalization and the revolutionary process that year, the party won over a big section of Russia's working class, and other components of the Russian Revolution's social base: soldiers, peasants, and others. In order to absorb the ongoing mass radicalization, the party opened its ranks widely. We see here at work the flexibility of organizational form that is necessary in order to adapt to changing circumstances.

The formula "democratic centralism," which is usually attributed to Leninism, did not actually come from Lenin. It summarizes the organizational functioning of German social democracy, indicating the combination of democracy in debate and centralism in action. It wasn't meant to prevent discussion. On the contrary, emphasis was placed on the democratic half of the expression. Even under the harsh conditions of Tsarist Russia, there was always a lot of discussion, open disputes, and creation of organizational factions within each wing of the Social Democratic Workers' Party of Russia. Discussions came into the open within Russia

itself when conditions changed in 1917.

It was only later—in 1921, in context of the difficult conditions resulting from the civil war—that factions were prohibited in the Communist Party (the heir to the Bolshevik wing of the Social Democratic Workers' Party), a decision which proved to be a fatal mistake. It didn't solve any problem, but was used by one faction of the party, one group within its leadership, in order to take full control of the party and get rid of any opposition. That was the beginning of the Stalinist mutation.

In 1924, Stalin redefined Leninism and enshrined it into a set of dogmas. This included a very centralistic and undemocratic conception of the party: the cult of the party and its leadership, the iron discipline, the banning of factions and, therefore, of organized discussion within the party. There, the conception of the party as the instrument of the "dictatorship of the proletariat" is spelled out, a view alien not only to Marx and Engels, but even to a book like Lenin's *State and Revolution* (1917), in which the party is not even mentioned in the definition of that dictatorship (this, in some way, is actually a problem, as the book should have discussed the rights and role of parties after the revolution). But the key point is that this idea—that the party embodies the dictatorship of the proletariat—also became part of what was predominantly regarded as Leninism at that time.

Gramsci, War of Position and Maneuver

In the same way that various avatars of Marxism developed, there have been various Leninisms: that of the Stalinists, which I have just described, and other Leninisms, especially among groups that call themselves Trotskyist. Some of the latter were actually quite close to the Stalinist version; on

the opposite side, we find someone like Ernest Mandel, the Belgian Marxist, whose Leninism is quite close to Rosa Luxemburg's perspective.

A highly interesting reflection that developed after the Russian Revolution is that of Antonio Gramsci, the famous Italian Marxist. In considering the events that unfolded in Europe, he emphasized the difference between Russia's conditions and those of Western Europe. We get back here, again, to our starting point: the circumstances, the concrete situation of each country and region. In Western Europe, liberal democracy went along with bourgeois "hegemony." The bourgeoisie, in order to rule, did not rely on force alone, but also on the consent of a popular majority.

And that major difference must be taken into account, rather than simply copying the Russian experience. Under typical Western conditions, the workers' party must strive to build a counter hegemony, that is, to win over the support of the majority in breaking away from bourgeois ideological domination. It must wage a war of position under liberal democratic conditions that allows the party to conquer positions within the bourgeois state itself through elections. That war of position is a prelude to a war of maneuver, a distinction borrowed from military strategy. In a war of position, an armed force entrenches itself in positions and strongholds, whereas in a war of maneuver, troops are set in motion to occupy the enemy's territory and break its armed force. Thus, under typical Western conditions, the workers' party should envisage a protracted war of position while being ready to shift to a war of maneuver, if and when this is required.

A Materialist Conception of the

Party, the Internet

Let me add to all this what I would call a materialist conception of the party. For Marxists, the starting point in assessing social and political conditions is historical materialism: a given society's forms of organization tend to correspond to its technological means. This axiom can be extended to all forms of organization: they normally adapt to material conditions. That is indeed the case for the management modes of capitalist firms. The same goes for revolutionary organization: its type and form very much depend on the means it uses to produce its literature, which are in turn determined by the available technology and political freedoms. Thus, if a party mainly relies on the underground printshop, it is necessarily a conspiratorial organization that requires a high degree of centralization and secrecy. If it can print its literature openly and legally, it can be an open, democratic organization (if it is conspiratorial by choice, rather than necessity, it is usually more of a sect than a party). This brings us to the internet as a major technological revolution in communication. The belief that this technological change should not affect the conception of the party is the unmistakable sign that the latter has become a religious-like dogmatic organization.

Nowadays, all forms of organization are very much conditioned by the existence of the internet. That is why networking has become a form of organization much more widespread than it could ever be before. Networking made possible by virtual networks, such as social media, can also facilitate the constitution of physical networks. Thanks to the internet, a much more democratic way of functioning is possible, in both information sharing and decision making. You don't need to bring people from very long distances to meet physically every time you need to hold a democratic discussion and decide.

The potential of the internet is huge, and we are only at the

beginning of its use. It feeds the strong aversion to centralism and leadership cults that exists among the new generation. I believe it is rather healthy that such defiance exists among the new generation, compared to the patterns that prevailed in the twentieth century.

Networking is very much the order of the day. It started early on with the Zapatistas who advocated this kind of organization in the 1990s. A major embodiment today is the Black Lives Matter (BLM). This movement began a few years ago, mostly as a network around an online platform and a shared set of principles. Local chapters only commit to the general principles of the movement, which has no central structure: just horizontal networking without a leading center; no hierarchy, no verticality. It is very much a product of our time that wouldn't have been possible on such a scale before modern technology. It's a good illustration of the materialist understanding of organization.

Networking is also at work in another recent major development, which occurred on the African continent, in Sudan. The Sudanese Revolution that started in December 2018 has witnessed the formation of Resistance Committees, which are local chapters mostly active in urban neighborhoods, each one of them involving hundreds of members, mostly young people. In every major urban zone, there are dozens of such committees, with hundreds of participants each. Tens of thousands of people are organized in that way in key urban areas. They function quite like BLM: common principles, common goals, no central leadership, intensive use of social media. They didn't take their inspiration from BLM, though. They are, rather, a product of the time, a product of the aforementioned aversion to centralized experiences of the past and their sad outcomes, combined with the new technology.

This, however, does not cancel the need for the political organization of the like-minded, of people who—like the communists of the Communist Manifesto—share specific views and

want to promote them. But the qualitatively higher degree of organizational democracy allowed for by modern technology similarly applies to such parties of the like-minded.

[Marxist revolutionaries] should aim at building a working-class mass party and eventually leading it—if and when they manage to convince the majority of their views. That's also why they should join mass, working-class, anticapitalist parties when these exist, or else contribute to building them.

To wrap up, the key point I made at the beginning is that the type of organization depends on the concrete conditions of the place where it is to be built. Time and place are decisive, in addition to the technological dimension. It is very important to avoid falling into the sectarianism of self-proclaimed "vanguard parties." Vanguard is a status that must be acquired in practice, not proclaimed. To truly be a vanguard, you must be regarded as such by the masses.

Marxist revolutionaries who wish to build a vanguard party should regard themselves, as in the Communist Manifesto, as part of the broader class movement involving other organizations of different types. They should aim at building a working-class mass party and eventually leading it—if and when they manage to convince the majority of their views. That's also why they should join mass, working-class, anti-capitalist parties where these exist, or else contribute to building them. It is not by building a self-proclaimed "vanguard party" and recruiting members to its ranks one by one that you build a mass party. It doesn't work like this. Moreover, socialism can only be democratic. It's banal to say it, but it means that you can't change society for the better without a social majority in favor of change. Otherwise, as history has shown us so tragically, you end up with the production of authoritarianism and dictatorship. And that comes with a huge price.

My final point is about the necessity of democratic vigilance against the corrosive effects of bourgeois institutions and

bureaucratic tendencies. Not all countries in the world, but most of them, are countries where it is currently possible to engage in the war of position described by Gramsci, which includes a struggle within elective institutions of the bourgeois state. This is to be combined with a struggle from without, of course, through trade unions and various forms of class struggle, such as strikes, sit-ins, occupations, demonstrations, and so on.

In the course of the war of position, revolutionaries are confronted with the corrosive effects of bourgeois institutions, because elected officers can be affected by the corruptive power of capitalism. The same can be said of the corruptive power of bureaucracy, which is at play within trade unions and other working-class institutions. Revolutionaries should remain vigilant against these inevitable risks and think of new ways to prevent this corrosive effect from prevailing. That's also a key part of the lessons of history that we must keep in mind.

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Source: [Tempest](#).

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