Organising Committee
for the Reconstitution of the Fourth International (OCRFI)

MANIFESTO
OF THE SECOND INTERNATIONAL
CONFERENCE OF THE OCRFI
1 to 3 November 2017, Saulx les Chartreux (France)

1 – Workers, activists and youth around the world: the Second International Conference of the Organising Committee for the Reconstitution of the Fourth International (OCRFI) has just been held from 1 to 3 November 2017 in Paris (France), attended by delegates and fraternal observers from 30 countries (1). As you know, the Fourth international was born in 1938, under the direct impulsion of Leon Trotsky. It was born as a consequence of the crises of the labour movement. It was born as the continuity of the First International of Marx and Engels, of the Second International that succeeded it, and of those within the Second International who refused to follow the leaders of social democracy who capitulated when faced with the imperialist war of 1914. It was born as the continuity of those who, together with Lenin and Trotsky, took action to allow the working class to seize power in 1917 and who subsequently founded the Third International. It was born out of the struggle of those who, together with Leon Trotsky, refused to follow Stalin in his policy of strangling the world revolution in the name of the fallacious theory of socialism in one country, the corollary of which was the establishing of terror against the working class in the USSR, and the transformation of the Communist parties into instruments of domination by the bureaucracy over the world labour movement. It was born out of the struggle of those who, together with Leon Trotsky, rejected the Stalinist course of stifling workers’ democracy and eliminating social ownership, which at the end of the last century resulted in precipitating the collapse of the USSR, delivering it up to pillage and acts of destruction by all kinds of mafias connected to the speculators and the multinationals.

2 – The organisations, groups and militant activists that constitute the OCRFI form part of that continuity. In more recent times, their roots lie in the struggle of the majority of the French section, which in 1950-1953 stood up together with Pierre Lambert against the disintegration of the Fourth International, a consequence of a broad sector of its international leadership in practice going over to the side of the Stalinist bureaucracy at the time of the workers’ uprising in East Berlin and then the Hungarian Revolution of the workers’ councils. Against liquidationist Pabloism, together with Pierre Lambert we affirmed then that the class struggle remains the driving force of history, that more than ever the working class needs independent organisations (parties and trade unions), and that the central task is still to build the revolutionary party in order to help the working class pave its way to victory. In the years that followed, we refused to follow those who claimed that the page of October 1917 had been turned, that there was no longer any reason to build independent working-class organisations, that on the contrary it was necessary to dissolve the organisations that had been constituted by the workers as part of their class struggle, to dissolve them into the “Indignados” movement, into Podemos, into France Unbowed, Occupy Wall Street, and so on.

3 – The Organising Committee for the Reconstitution of the Fourth International was born in 2016, out of the resistance struggle waged over several years within the leadership of the Fourth International reproclaimed in 1993, against a sector that had abandoned the perspective of the world revolution and increasingly aligned themselves with the counter-revolutionary apparatuses, even to the point of supporting class-collaborationist governments such as in South Africa, even to the point of supporting those who claim that the class struggle is no longer on the agenda in France or elsewhere (2). Abandoning the tasks of the world revolution, relaying inside the
Fourth International the pressures on the world labour movement following the collapse of the USSR to have it accompany the survival of capitalism rather than fighting back against it, those failed leaders came up against the resistance – at every level of the Fourth International and its sections – of the militant activists and organisations that had remained faithful to the programme. They then tried to prohibit free discussion within the Fourth International itself. It is in these conditions that we formed the Organising Committee for the Reconstitution of the Fourth International, the First Conference of which took place in Turin (Italy) in February 2016, with its Second Conference taking place in Paris in November 2017. Because for us, the programme of the Fourth International is on the agenda more than ever.

4 – Our International Conference has been held in a context of war which is tending to spread on every continent: Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, Central African Republic, Mali, etc. When there is not a war underway, there is the threat of war against Venezuela, Korea and Iran. Throughout the world, on every continent, the peoples are in the throes of wars launched by the big capitalist powers with the aim of appropriating their natural resources: oil, gas, uranium, diamonds. Everywhere, wars are carving up nations and tearing them apart, setting the peoples against each other. Wars are throwing tens of millions of men women and children onto the roads of exodus, condemning them to utter destitution, if not rape, slavery and often death on the road to exile. Not since the end of the Second World War has the world reached such a degree of barbarism. This wave of barbarism has a class meaning. For their part, working people, the youth, the peoples, industrial workers and rural workers, have no interest whatsoever in war. War is the natural offspring of a capitalist system based on the unrestricted exploitation of labour-power. This is why the necessary response is for the workers and peoples to unite and stand together to say “Down with war! Down with exploitation!”. It is on this ground that the supporters of the Fourth International are fighting back.

5 – The spread of wars that threaten the survival of humankind has not come out of nowhere: it is the product of the dead-end reached by the capitalist system based on private ownership of the means of production. This system reached its highest point more than a century ago, its imperialist stage, which Lenin defined at the time as being the stage when capitalism had definitively entered the path of decay. Who will dare to claim that this is not the case now, in the early 21st century? Our Conference has taken place in 2017, ten years after the outbreak of the big crisis in 2007, the so-called “subprime crisis”. Today, once again, Wall Street and the world’s main stock exchanges are breaking record after record. At what price? At the price of the destruction of millions of jobs in industry and the service sectors. At the price of the rights and guarantees of the working class being put into question on every continent, at the price of the growing impoverishment of whole populations, deprived of any resources and of public services, and often reduced to begging.

The ruling class is directing its apparatus of repression against the mobilisation of the working class. This involves not only the militarisation of police forces but also the undermining of basic democratic rights such as the right to assembly, the right to demonstrate and free speech. At that price, the capitalist class has managed in ten years to re-establish – and even increase – its profit margins. But the means by which it has sought to overcome its crisis are the very same means that are preparing a new crisis.

6 – Ten years after the 2007 crisis, a new crisis is maturing, one that is more serious and even more devastating than the preceding one. The rivers of capital released by the central banks on the pretext of boosting the economy (“quantitative easing”, i.e. the creation of artificial money) are only boosting...speculation. In a single week at the start of October 2017, the value of shares quoted on the world’s stock exchanges increased by US$800 billion, resulting in a global equity market capitalisation of US$88 trillion, more than the world’s GDP! This decaying system is only maintaining itself thanks to a mountain of debt that is growing continuously. Today, the total debt – accumulated by States, businesses and households – represents twice the value of the global production of goods and services. In the United States, total household debt is higher than in 2008, when the banking system was collapsing. In China, international finance capital has encouraged the bureaucracy’s government to establish an economic stimulus programme that is entirely financed by debt, in order to compensate for the slowdown in the world economy: corporate debt in China has doubled in 10 years, while the country’s total debt has increased by 70 per cent. In Europe, corporate debt has grown by 40 per cent in 10 years. To this gigantic mass of debt can be added the debt contracted through shadow banking, the unregulated financial sector which alone represents more than the value of a year’s global production. Once again, the means used to overcome the effects of one crisis are preparing the conditions for the crisis that will follow, on an even greater scale. This was already the case with the 2007 crisis, which was the deferred result of the policy of low interest rates implemented in order to damp down
the crisis of 2001 (the dot-com bubble). That is how each crisis of the capitalist system finds expression in a mass destruction of the existing productive forces, and simply prepares the crisis that will follow, on an even greater scale.

7 – The succession of economic, financial and monetary crises at increasingly shorter intervals is the result of the very nature of capitalism’s imperialist stage, in which it is no longer able to guarantee the growth of humankind’s productive forces. On the contrary, for its survival this system resorts – to a level never seen before – to forces that destroy the productive forces, especially the arms industry and the war industry, the internet economy, speculation and the increasing recourse to debt. It is the very nature of imperialism that makes any recovery in the world economy impossible. Temporary breaks occur within the very framework of what the capitalist leaders themselves call “secular stagnation”. But in reality, there is no secular (i.e. indefinite, as opposed to cyclical or short-term) stagnation. Because, as Marx wrote, the distinctive feature of capital is being “money in process, and, as such, [becoming] capital”. In the time of decayed imperialism – when the possibility for unlimited (socialised) growth in the production of commodities meeting the basic needs of humankind comes up against (private) capitalist relations of distribution – the “reproduction of capital on a progressively increasing scale” is fed by the destruction of the main productive force: the producers’ labour-power and its value crystallised in wages, collective guarantees, social welfare systems, qualifications, and all the labour gains. But since the destruction of the main productive force also means the destruction of the main consumption power, this contradiction will only be resolved through the socialisation of the main means of production and exchange, allowing the producer class to regulate the production of consumer goods in relation to social needs rather than profit. This has a name: socialism.

8 – Opened by October 1917, the 20th century was marked by numerous attempts to put an end to the failed capitalist system that is dragging humankind to ruin. On every continent, through its class struggle the working class repeatedly set out on the path to overthrow capitalism, the path of the seizure of power by the representative bodies of the exploited and oppressed masses, bodies appointed, mandated and supervised by them. As part of this movement, the working class found itself and finds itself facing obstacles raised by those whose function is to protect the existing social order at all costs – by the traditional leaderships of the labour movement that emerged from the Second and Third Internationals, or by movements defining themselves as “societal” or “populist” that reject any reference to class and thrive on the ruins of previous movements. For our part, we affirm on the basis of the facts that the developments in the world situation at the start of the 21st century fully confirm the programme on which the Fourth International was constituted, the Transitional Programme. It is in keeping with this programme that we want to contribute towards resolving the crisis of the revolutionary leadership of the working class, upon which depends the solution to the crisis of humankind.

9 – No recovery whatsoever is possible for the capitalist system based on private ownership of the means of production. So-called attempts at reforms are, at best, doomed to fail and to prepare the ground for future defeats of the working class; at worst – and this is often the case – they are the framework for “dislocation” plans and other “round tables” through which the leaders of the labour organisations are invited to participate in the destructive programmes dictated by the capitalist class. The independence of the working class calls for breaking with imperialism and its institutions everywhere: breaking with the IMF, the World Bank and the UN, breaking with regional institutions like the European Union, and with the North American Free Trade Treaty (NAFTA) and all the “free trade” treaties. The working class must – everywhere and in full independence – fight against all forms of subordination to imperialism, beginning with refusing to service the public debt that is not the debt of the peoples, a debt which – from Africa to Latin America and the United States, from Europe to Asia – is nothing more than a tool for pillaging the peoples.

10 – The choice set out in the past by Rosa Luxembourg, “socialism or barbarism”, is of burning relevance today. Barbarism is already taking place. Only the working class, rallying all of the oppressed layers around it, is capable of leading the fight to prevent barbarism. It can only do so if the envisaged perspective is the socialisation of the means of production, of pooling all of the means of production and all of the produced wealth in the service of the whole of humankind. It is in line with this perspective that the fight to protect the independence of the working class can and must be organised. This is the perspective on which the organisations and sections of the Fourth International, taking action for its reconstitution within the framework of the OCRFI, are fighting back.

11 – Why, throughout the world in the centenary of 1917, have the organisations belonging to the OCRFI
organised, or are organising, initiatives designed to open the discussion on the relevance today of October 1917?

For us, the relevance today of October 1917 is the relevance of Lenin’s analysis of imperialism as having entered the path of decay of the capitalist system; it is the relevance today of the fight to break with the bourgeoisie; it is the understanding that in the imperialist epoch, unachieved democratic demands in the dominated countries will not be achieved by national bourgeoisies that are definitively submissive to world imperialism, but by the working class building around itself the broadest possible anti-imperialist united front (including potential sectors of the bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie which from time to time seek to struggle for the nation’s sovereignty, on the condition that this anti-imperialist united front is placed under the leadership of the workers’ movement), which in all circumstances entails the independence of the working-class party; it is the refusal to participate in any popular front-style coalition that chains the working-class organisations to the chariot of the bourgeoisie; it is the affirmation that only the working class, building its own organs of power – soviets, workers’ councils – is capable of establishing the workers’ Republic and the free union of workers’ republics at the level of whole continents, and beyond that, the universal Republic of workers’ councils. The relevance today of October 1917 is the relevance of the struggle for workers’ emancipation as part of the continuity of the First, Second, Third and Fourth Internationals. It is therefore the relevance of the fight for the Fourth International and its reconstitution, which flows from an understanding of the international character of the class struggle, of which only the form is national. Under the flag of the Workers’ International, it falls to us, in forms that are appropriate to each national situation, to work towards the building of genuine workers’ parties, class-based parties that are independent from the bourgeoisie and its institutions.

12 – Organising for itself and by itself, the wealth-producing class holds the key to the emancipation of the whole of humankind, opening up a perspective for the emancipation of all of society’s oppressed and exploited layers. It is the working class’s struggle that will allow a positive response to be given to the legitimate demand of the nations oppressed by imperialism for freedom, for emancipation, for sovereignty. It is within and along with working class’s struggle that the mobilisation of women and working women throughout the world for equal rights will reach its successful culmination. It is within and along with working class’s struggle that the youth’s legitimate aspiration for a future, for freedom, for jobs, for education can find a response that matches their needs. It is through and along with the movement by the working class that the questions posed today by the survival of its environment will find a response and a solution. Faced with the destruction being wrought by decaying imperialism, humankind will only find a solution by setting out on the path of socialising the means of production, allowing the organisation of production in relation to humankind’s needs rather than profit, along with measures to protect the human race that go hand-in-hand with rapidly developing the productive forces, countering the theories of “degrowth” which, in the guise of defending the environment, promote the destruction of the productive forces in line with the demands of the capitalist class, which bears the main responsibility for the threats posed to humankind.

13 – Over the course of its age-old class struggle on every continent and in every country, in forms that vary according to the national conditions, the working class has won gains, rights and guarantees through struggle. It has inserted its own proletarian institutions – trade unions, mutual societies, collective welfare bodies – into the cracks of bourgeois society. At each stage, its class struggle has led it to seek to make use of its traditional organisations to organise its independent struggle and to defend its old gains. Faithful to Trotsky’s formulation, that “whoever does not defend the old gains will not make new ones”, the Fourth International considers it its duty to help the working class to use its traditional organisations to fight back, to help it defend the independence of its organisations and each and every one of its gains.

14 – “The historical crisis of humankind comes down to the crisis of the revolutionary leadership”: this crucial affirmation of the founding programme of the Fourth International has been fully confirmed in the early 21st century. Throughout the world, governments led by parties with their historical roots in the workers’ movement – parties originating from the Second International, socialist and social-democratic parties, ones emerging from Communist Parties – and petty-bourgeois parties or petty-bourgeois nationalists put in power due to the exploited and oppressed masses’ aspiration to do away with the direct representatives of the capitalist class, are nevertheless taking charge of the programmes dictated by the capitalist class. The break-up of the USSR – the bureaucratically degenerated result of the October 1917 Revolution – speeded up this process. We have seen this in the cases of several European governments with the full participation of Socialist and Communist Parties, acting as architects for the dismantling of labour gains and social gains. We have seen this in Latin America, particularly in Brazil, where the Lula/Dilma governments continued to service the debt demanded by the capitalists and the bankers. Regarding Venezuela, our unconditional defence of Venezuela and its government against the threats by imperialism do not
make us forget that the Chavez and Maduro governments have continued to service the debt. We have also seen the Tsipras government in Greece, elected and mandated to break with the IMF, the World Bank and the European Commission, ultimately deciding to implement the Troika’s murderous plans against the masses. And we can see the government in South Africa, which was put in power following the end of the Apartheid regime, handing the country over to the multinationals and refusing to give land to the Black majority that was dispossessed of its land. It is very broadly for this reason that, throughout the world over the last 25 years, the situation of the labouring masses has continuously worsened; their gains have been put into question one after the other while wars have continued to spread. And where the traditional parties of the capitalist class are directly in power, they owe their survival to the direct participation in “grand coalition” governments of parties with their origins in the labour movement, as was the case recently in Germany, or to the support of those parties without direct participation, as is the case in Spain.

15 – The dominant feature of the situation remains the willingness of the masses to fight back: “The orientation of the masses is determined, on the one hand, by the objective conditions of decaying capitalism, and on the other by the treacherous policies of the old workers’ organisations. Of these two factors, the first, of course, is the decisive one: the laws of history are stronger than the bureaucratic apparatuses.” (Transitional Programme) The fact is today that, from the big labour strikes and demonstrations in Spain, Portugal, Greece and France, to the Palestinian Revolution that continues, 70 years after the partition of Palestine, to stand up for the right to land and the right to a nation; from the townships of South Africa, where the Black workers and their families are occupying the land and demanding that it be given to the Black majority, embodying the struggle for the Black Republic; to China, where the workers, seeking to organise their independent trade unions, are defending themselves as a working class, and hence are also defending the gain which social ownership still represents, and which the Chinese working class does not want to see delivered up to imperialist pillage and dismantling; on every continent, in every form, despite the blows suffered, despite the treachery of the old leaderships, the situation is marked by the inexorable and continuous upsurge of the masses of industrial workers, rural workers and youth as they seek to win new rights and to defend their old gains through struggle. The struggle of the Fourth International forms part of this concrete, practical movement, the movement of the maturing revolution. It is the struggle of Black people in the US who refuse to accept the murders committed by the police, not only because Black lives matter, but because they demand an end to the system of oppression inherited from slavery. It is the struggle of the people of Haiti against the occupation-pillage by the UN – and so on.

16 – As we celebrate the 100th anniversary of the October 1917 Revolution, faithful to the struggle of the Bolsheviks against the Provisional Government and to the programme of the Fourth International, we reaffirm that the Fourth International has no place in any Popular Front or in any alliance that results in the parties whose roots lie in the labour movement participating alongside bourgeois parties in government coalitions that are subject to the institutions of the capitalist class, and taking responsibility for government programmes that strike blows against the working class. To the Popular Front and class collaboration, we counterpose the workers’ united front, and in the dominated countries, the anti-imperialist united front for the nation’s sovereignty and democracy. No support of any kind for governments that service the foreign debt, no support of any kind for governments that privatise, no support of any kind for governments that implement anti-worker programmes!

17 – As supporters of the Fourth International, we are convinced that its programme – which is nothing other than the synthesis of the programme and the experience of the workers’ movement over the course of almost two centuries, and which forms part of the continuity of the First, Second and Third Internationals – is more relevant than ever. However, we do not claim that tomorrow’s mass revolutionary Workers’ International, or the revolutionary parties capable of helping the masses to pave the way to victory in each country, will be built in the form which is currently taken by the sections of the Fourth International or of the OCRFI. This is why, whilst fighting tirelessly to defend the programme of the Fourth International and to build sections of the Fourth International, our activity in each country aims to help towards regrouping in the appropriate form all those activists who are committed to class independence and who are taking action for political representation of the working class that is faithful to its interests. This is why, internationally, we are part of the Mumbai Conference and of the International Workers Committee Against War and Exploitation – For a Workers’ International, within which, alongside activists of all political tendencies, we take action for class independence.
Workers, activists, youth: it is on this line that we call on you to organise in each country under the banner of the Fourth International, to build and strengthen its sections affiliated to the OCRFI in order to lay the foundations for the reconstitution of the Fourth International, the indispensable tool for the working class’s victory!

Adopted unanimously by the conference.

Endorsed by:

**Azania/South Africa**: Ashraf Jooma, National Secretary, Azanian section of the 4th International (AS-FI); Scelo Mthembu, Secretary of Labour (AS-FI); Musa Kunta, Political Commissar (AS-FI); Mandla ka Phangwa, National Coordinator (AS-FI), on behalf of the Azanian section of the 4th International (AS-FI)

**Belgium**: Socialist Internationalist Organisation, Belgian section of the 4th International

**Benin**: Ray, for the Trotskyist Liaison Committee of Benin (CLTB)

**Belarus**: Belarusian delegation

**Brazil**: Internationalist Communist Organisation (OCI, Brazilian section of the OCRFI)

**Britain**: British supporters of the OCRFI

**Burundi**: Burundian section of the 4th International

**Canada**: Paul Nkunzimana, on behalf the Trotskyist Liaison Committee of Canada

**Chile**: Chilean Trotskyist Group

**United States**: Socialist Organizer, section of the 4th International in the United States; Mya Shone, supporter of the OCRFI

**France**: Internationalist Communist Tendency, French section of the 4th International (member of the OCRFI)

**Germany**: Max Schumacher, Internationale Arbeiterkorrespondenz, German section of the OCRFI; Günter Rex, Internationale Arbeiterkorrespondenz, German section of the OCRFI

**Greece**: Andreas, editor of Ergatika Nea

**Haiti**: Berthony Dupont, Haïti Liberté

**Hungary**: Supporters of the 4th International

**India**: Spark group

**Italy**: Italian section of the 4th International

**Morocco**: Supporters of the OCRFI in Morocco

**Mexico**: Laura Alejandra Rivera Arrizu (OCRFI-Mexico); Raul Calleja Lacorti (OCRFI-Mexico); Luis Carlos Haro (OCRFI-Mexico)

**Pakistan**: Pakistani section of the 4th International

**Peru**: Internationalist Socialist Group, Peruvian section of the OCRFI

**Portugal**: “A Internacional” group

**Rumania**: Constantin Cretan (in his personal capacity); Ileana Cretan (in her personal capacity); Ion Somonescu (in his personal capacity)

**Russia**: Russian delegation

**Serbia**: Jacim Milunovic, labour activist

**Switzerland**: Wolfgang Eichenberger, guest from Switzerland

**Togo**: Steve, Togolese activist of the 4th International

**Tunisia**: Tunisian delegation

**Turkey**: Sosyalizm

**Zimbabwe**: Mafa Kwanisai Mafa, National Coordinator, Memory Rudo Mpandawana, Treasurer, Zimbabwe section of the 4th International

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(1) Representatives of five other countries willing to participate in the Conference were unable to attend in person.

(2) See the document published in *The Internationale* Issue No.6, approved by the Second International Conference of the OCRFI.