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Preface

OVER the past three years, the world witnessed dramatic, far-reaching changes and consequences. The global credit crunch resulted in a historic financial crisis. A series of corporations—a number of them major icons of American capitalism—have collapsed into bankruptcy, forced into takeovers, or nationalized outright. Major companies now depend on cash injections from the government just to stay afloat, and capitalist governments all over the world are desperately seeking to shift the worst effects of the crisis onto one another. There is, however, one thing on which both the bosses and politicians agree: the working class must pay the costs of the crisis.

Job losses, unemployment, reductions in public funding for education, pay cuts, pension freezes, and home repossessions, are now all a painful reminder of the failings of capitalism to meet the needs of the many. Nevertheless, we did nothing to cause this crisis, so why should we be the ones who pay for it?

We urgently need to draw up a plan of action to resist this onslaught. What sort of organizations do we need? For what demands should we fight? What tactics should we utilize? Our class faces these crucial questions today. *A Workers' Answer to the Crisis* seeks to address them.

This program, nevertheless, reaches further. If we are to avoid decades more war, poverty, and exploitation, we must not only resist the bosses' attacks, we must link this resistance to the overthrow of capitalism and to the construction of a new, socialist world; thus, *A Workers' Answer to the Crisis* proposes a strategy that links our immediate struggles against the effects of the crisis to the socialist goal. This is not a manifesto of legislative reforms; it is a set of proposals for working-class action on the streets and in workplaces. Every demand included in this program addresses the immediate needs and interests of our class. Nothing we propose attempts any form of reconciliation with the capitalists or their political system; each one seeks to undermine their very ability to exploit us.

A Workers' Answer to the Crisis is the action program of the revolutionary, socialist organization, Workers Power. If you agree with it, then we sincerely urge you to join with us in the struggle to not only repulse the current social, political, and economic attacks of the bosses today but to fight for the creation tomorrow of a world free from exploitation and oppression, one based on co-operation between peoples, not competition, where resources and the products of labor are held and distributed in common to meet the needs and enrich the lives of all.

A Crisis of Capitalism: But Why Should Workers Pay the Price?

REVEALING itself as a mortgage crisis in 2007, with hundreds of thousands losing their homes, the breakdown in the global financial marketplace resulted in a credit crunch, one where banks stopped lending to companies and individuals. This ultimately led to the collapse of several major U.S. banks, which engaged in reckless speculation to inflate their profits. They “banked” these more than considerable returns during the “good times,” but now, with the onset of economic crisis, they want us to bail them out of the hole they dug for themselves.

In reality, the speculative finance-boom of the last fifteen years only served to mask the deeper, structural problems lodged within the core of the capitalist system. Since the 1970’s, in fact, global capitalism has suffered stagnant profit rates in almost all the primary sectors of the economy.

Even in the “richest” country in the world, in the last decade, it witnessed more and more Americans fall below the official poverty line, forcing U.S. workers to pay with their jobs, houses, and living standards. The only people seeing Obama’s “glimmers of hope,” are the bankers who made a mint off the government’s trillion-dollar bailout.

Obama and his administration propound that the recession is a result of not only irresponsible borrowing and lending by Wall Street but also by “Main” Street. Banks told us for years that rising income inequality was necessary to promote economic growth. The theory suggested that if the government supported the rich, then they would ultimately invest in new and existing businesses and, therefore, create jobs, which, in turn, would serve to increase employment generally; however, the supposed benefits for working-class Americans due to this “trickle-down” policy were proved neither empirically or statistically.

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, over the past 18 months the number of unemployed persons grew by about 8 million, letting the official unemployment rate climb to roughly a little over 10 percent. The unofficial rate, however, which includes workers seeking full-time work but cannot find such positions, or workers forced out of full-time into part-time work, is at least 1.5 times as high, reaching 15 per cent or higher. Half of the increase in both the numbers of unemployed and the unemployment rate occurred in the 4 months leading prior to March 2009.

The filing of foreclosure proceedings indicated the repossession of 2.3 million U.S. properties in 2008, up 225 per cent from 2006. The slashing of millions of peoples’ pensions by big businesses, along with cuts in hours and wages, is the preferred tactic of the bosses to ensure their weathering

of the economic storm at the expense of the vast majority of the working population.

Nevertheless, all around the world, workers are fighting back. Pockets of resistance are cropping up in Asia, Africa, Europe, and South America. Workers across the globe are standing up for their rights against the bosses; for the freedom to assemble in unions; for better working conditions; for fewer working hours; for the lowering of the prices for rice, wheat, and cooking oil against the big agro-corporations. Everywhere, workers are subjectively fighting for a system of production that embraces their own decisions and reflects their own needs, not one that benefits a select few.

Workers must draw one simple conclusion from all this, one the bosses will not like: if the profit system cannot survive without condemning the already poor to even greater poverty, without demanding a miserable life for pensioners and no hope for the youth, then the capitalist system has incontrovertibly run its course and must be put out of its misery. Its replacement with a new system, a system that can provide goods and services to all, that is what must be our aim. This system has a name: Socialism.

Measures to Bust the Capitalist Crisis

THE vulgar economists—those apologists of the capitalist system, whose job is to paint the exploitative and anarchic nature of Capitalism in a conspicuously favorable light—are now telling us that the worst effects of the crisis are, essentially, over, and that the economy is poised for a significant rebound. Yet this has not kept the bosses off the offensive. While the rate of first-time filers for unemployment may indeed be “softening” statistically, the number of unemployed and under-employed, i.e., people forced into part-time work, continues to grow.

The exploiters are taking this opportunity to claw back as many social and political gains earned by workers in struggle over the past several decades (i.e., benefits, securities, and wages), and they will continue to do so in the coming months and years. The bitter truth is that no worker will see any improvement in his or her conditions of existence so long as a concerted resistance by all workers to the attacks by the bosses fails to materialize. That is why we must oppose all job losses and workplace closures. Instead of cutting jobs, we need to reduce drastically the number of hours each individual spends working during the week at no loss of pay or allotment of benefits. Divide the work! It makes no sense for some people to work a 14-hour day while others can find no work at all. Labor unions, from the national down to the local level, should enforce and supervise the reduction of hours with no loss of pay and benefits on to the size of the workforce.

When faced with a job-site closure or mass layoffs, workers should strike and occupy their workplaces, calling for their expropriation and nationalization under workers' control. If the bosses cannot run their businesses properly, then they should move over and make way for those who can—us, the workers! We will have to draft a society-wide plan of production to meet the needs of all, not wasteful production done blindly under the anarchy of the market.

When the bosses and their government complain that they cannot afford to pay higher wages or employ more people, the answer is simple: we should demand to see their account books. Business secrecy has always betrayed workers; many of their claims, in fact, are just plain lies. Our aim is the expropriation of genuinely bankrupt businesses, to have them put under direct control of the workers employed.

We also need decent and affordable housing. State and locally owned property must be available to anyone who needs it. People who own their own homes and who are struggling with their mortgage payments need a moratorium that insists on the abolition of all mortgage interest. The nationalization under workers' control of both the mortgage lenders and the housing associations is necessary and important for the working class. Only in this way can we ensure decent and affordable housing for everybody.

The resulting recession has led to unprecedented deflation (falling prices). For most working-class people this means increased debt burdens and the writing down on the value of their pension programs by crisis stricken assurance companies. We call for the complete nationalization of all pension funds under workers' control with the State guaranteeing the value of the plans indexed to the rate of deflation. Household debts of workers should be cancelled and credit-provision companies nationalized.

To tackle deflation, we must seize control of the money supply—the central banks and main financial conglomerates—and force their complete nationalization. We can then prevent the transfer of capital abroad when the rich seek to escape the consequences of their ruinous policies.

The big private gas and electricity companies, routinely ripping us off, should be nationalized under workers' control—capping prices and keeping them down, so that working people do not have to bear the burden of unstable, soaring prices.

The Labor Unions and the Crisis of Working-Class Leadership

IT will take planning and organization to beat the bosses' attacks on our living standards. We need a strategy to not only beat off the capitalist

offensive but also to win a decisive victory over the profiteers. We need to get them off our backs for good!

This means three things: First, we have to begin organizing ourselves at every level—local, state, and federal—to deliver powerful, working-class solidarity action. Second, we have to organize within the labor unions and workplaces so that the weak-kneed union leaders cannot block effective action and negotiate contemptible deals with the bosses behind our backs. Lastly, it means breaking our unions away from the Democratic Party to form a new workers' party won to a program of social revolution.

As a first step, however, we need to restore the infrastructure of resistance starting in our workplaces and local communities. We must rebuild the system of workplace representatives or “shop stewards,” so that every sizable workplace has a committee or council of such representatives.

We need to rebuild local representative bodies, build new labor-movement assemblies, or committees of action. These bodies must be capable of mobilizing action in solidarity with any section of workers that decides to take on the struggle, debating the immediate concerns and other practical and political matters we face on the road to defeating the bosses' plans. In this way, we not only strengthen our struggles from below, we start to build up an alternative center of power in society: real centers of working-class planning and organization.

In this fight, we will find at best half-hearted leadership from the union presidents of the mega-unions and their federations, i.e., the AFL-CIO and Change to Win. At worst, we will get what we have witnessed far too often in past decades and today: humiliating climb-downs. In this way, the labor-union leaders dissipate the anger, disappoint the hopes, and spread demoralization until they can win a ballot for a paltry offer.

That is why we need to organize the rank and file in the unions, fighting with the leaders when they fight for us, but without and against them when they fall back and surrender. Just electing someone who says they are militant is useless unless we change the whole way we keep control of union officials. The rank-and-file workers must put current and future union officials under their control, paying them the average wage of the people they represent. They must be subject to regular election and instant recall by the members. A rank-and-file movement fighting for these policies could transform our unions into democratic, fighting organizations, ridding them permanently of the class-collaborationist bureaucrats, and making sure that leaders reflect the status of being servants of, not masters over, their constituents.

We can start this fight right now. It means building a movement of the rank and file pledged to democratizing the unions and recruiting millions of un-

organized workers, particularly in the service sector, into them—including immigrants, young people, and women. The unionization of service jobs creates possibilities for solidarity strikes, e.g., between the production and distribution sector, which could create a powerful bulwark of resistance to the attacks by the bosses.

This will set the foundation for the sort of militant actions we need: strikes, occupations of workplaces, mass demonstrations, and solidarity action. Moreover, this will help to create a new working class political party fighting to get rid of the capitalist system altogether and replace it with a socialist system under their control.

We have to support every section of workers, every action of local communities that says we will not bear the burden of the costs of the recession. Where there is strike action, we should campaign to escalate it, up to, and including, an all-out strike—not a strike fixed for just one day, but which demonstrates our unwillingness to go back to work until the employers meet our demands.

The unions must make provisions for strike funds, and they should be under the democratic control of the members, organizing solidarity campaigns to raise money for strikes. For strikes to be the most effective, we need to organize solidarity action across all the unions, defying anti-union laws whenever necessary. The bosses know solidarity action is the most effective way of winning, and that is the reason why they helped make it illegal. Nevertheless, mass defiance can win despite the laws (the police cannot arrest all the strikers!). Mass action can force the government to repeal them.

The Employee Free Choice Act (EFCA) is a start, and we should force the Obama administration and the Democrats to pass it in the face of the current corporate backlash. The EFCA, however, falls far short of what workers really need, and would ultimately leave many of the anti-union laws intact. We need the abolition of all the laws that effectively ban trade unionism and working-class activity. There should be a legal right to strike, to picket, and to take solidarity action in support of other workers whenever we think it is necessary to fight for our common interests. We need mass pickets and strikes. Furthermore, we need organized workers' defense guards in order to stave off any attack from the police and the military. The abolition of the anti-union laws, e.g., the Taft-Hartley Act of 1947, is an urgent task. The most effective way to force the capitalists off our backs is for millions to defy them in a huge all-out strike against job cuts and poverty pay.

Down with the so-called “War on Terror”

U.S. military spending is currently running at over 1 trillion dollars. That amounts to 44.4 percent of the nation’s tax allocation for the year—by far the largest portion of State funds. In comparison, the nation’s public schools will only get 52 billion, i.e., only 2.2 percent of tax allocation. To put all this in terms of a global perspective, the U.S. alone accounts for 41.5 percent of the world’s military spending; it spends as much on its military as the next 15 highest-spending nations combined.

The money that the capitalist government of the United States spends on its military should be a wake-up call to every American worker. If the government were really run “by the people and for the people,” then that money would go into helping workers who lost their jobs or are in need of financial assistance. The working class has gone far too long funding imperialist wars, providing countless individuals slaughtered on battlefields across the world in the interests of the bosses. We demand that not one more penny and not one more person should go on to help fuel the imperialist U.S. war machine.

The occupations in Iraq and Afghanistan are part of the “War on Terror”: a cynical drive by the U.S., British, and European Union monopoly capitalists to divide the world for the control of natural resources and markets. These occupied countries sit directly on or are near huge oil and natural gas reserves and or essential transit routes. Their next intended target, Iran, does as well.

The working-class answer is to avoid all double talk about “phased withdrawals” in which the generals simply redeploy troops from one battlefield to another. We must call for troops out now; bring all American troops home from abroad; end our involvement in N.A.T.O.—close all U.S. bases abroad; no to any future attack on Iran; jobs not bombs in America, Iraq, and Afghanistan; fund public services, not the armaments industry.

We fight for reparation provisions to all the countries devastated and ravaged by the imperialist armies of the United States, re-appropriating the vast sums of government funds usually handed over to the war profiteers and using them for the above purposes should be more than enough to cover such expenses.

We must oppose all imperialist wars, which are driven by the struggle to control the world’s resources and markets. Whatever excuses they might tell us about human rights, humanitarian missions, or restoring “democracy,” these are simply lies to cover up their real objectives.

We support the resistance struggle of the people against U.S. occupation forces around the world (i.e., in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Pakistan) and stand

for the defeat of U.S. troops. We support unconditionally the struggle for independence in all current U.S. colonies, e.g., Puerto Rico.

We are not frightened of the accusation of not supporting “our country:” this country is not yet ours and it will not be until the working class is in power here. Every socialist, every militant worker, must support the defeat of their own ruling class in reactionary wars like these. Our main enemy is at home.

On the home front of the War on Terror, the deliberate spread of racism and fear enabled the government to pass reactionary laws, e.g., the Patriot Act, which massively increased the power—national and local—of the government, of the police, and of the secret services.

We call for the repeal of all these measures, the release of all prisoners held without charges, and for no detention without a trial. This assault on our rights is just a tactic to make us live in fear while they harass people of Middle-Eastern origin. The extraordinary extension of police powers over recent years will be used by the State against the working class when we fight back together, just as it is used today to try to frighten people out of resisting.

Immigration and Racism

BY 2010, the U.S. is projected to reach 40 million “legal” immigrants. Since 2000, 1 million foreign-born people per year became American citizens, the majority being of Mexican, Filipino, and Indian origin. This past decade has seen extraordinary immigrant growth, surpassing the previous highest decade of 1901-1910 with the naturalization of some 8.8 million immigrants. “Illegal” immigration, as of 2000, has been estimated at 1.5 million foreign-born people every year joining the 7 to 23 million already residing in America, mainly whom have migrated from Mexico. Of these immigrants, 25.8 percent live in poverty, escalating from 3.2 million in 1990 to 9.2 million in 2006. Immigrants account for only 15 percent of the American labor force, yet nearly 7 million are unemployed.

Many times, illegal and legal immigrants of various ethnicities face animosity regardless of their citizenship status or years of residency. The encouragement of this tension—promoted in large part by the media and sections of the U.S. government—facilitated the intensification of border controls, and has become a staple of not only Republican but also Democratic administrations (e.g., the Obama administration).

Obama’s 2010 budget for strengthening customs and border protection reigns in at \$368 million dollars, while an additional \$286 million is reserved for the American Justice Department to use in investigations, ar-

rests, and prosecution of immigrants.

The function of racism is to obstruct working-class unity, to set workers against workers, and the long-term resident population against the latest arrivals. Most recently, as we have shown, this has taken the form of a media blitz against Muslims and Hispanics. Media pundits and politicians refer to them simply as “terrorists” or “phony asylum seekers.” Through the conveyor belt of the media system, i.e., through Sean Hannity, Lou Dobbs, Glenn Beck, and others, the consciousness of ordinary people is poisoned, making any newcomers scapegoats for the genuine ills of the capitalist system: unemployment, the driving down of wages, etc.

Immigrants are not responsible for unemployment, low wages, or the “degradation” of society: they are the greatest victims of these. They did not cause the economic crisis, nor are they responsible for “creating” any other problems in our society. The problems in our present society—and most recently, the economic crisis—were not caused by too many people but by capitalism. Instead of closing the borders or searching for some “non-racist” immigration control mechanism, we defend the democratic right of movement for all people, regardless of race, ethnicity, or national origin. Open the borders!

We fight for equal pay for immigrants and African-Americans. The workers’ movement must fight for a massive public-employment program, which offers decent and sustainable jobs to those in the African-American and immigrant communities where unemployment is disproportionately high relative to the rest of the country.

Defend and extend Affirmative Action programs!

We fight for full democratic rights for all immigrants regardless of their citizenship. This includes the right to vote, hold office, and to have access to all social and health services.

In the struggle for the rights of immigrants and African-Americans, an active and leading role of both is essential. Only by giving the directly affected a strong voice in the movement can we ensure that our demands as a whole address the immediate problems and needs of the oppressed themselves.

Equality must also be practiced with regard to the use of language: we call for the right of immigrants to use their mother language. Schools and universities must provide instruction and paperwork in requested languages to meet the needs of the vast array of different linguistic groups living throughout the country. Public services must provide written and verbal instruction in requested languages.

For the “illegal” immigrants already here, we call for amnesty and their right to remain for as long as they like with full citizenship.

Obama and his Homeland Security Secretary, Janet Napolitano, are moving ahead with the “border wall” separating Mexico from the United States as raids on immigrants continue. We demand the immediate reversal all of the previous and current administration’s initiatives on this matter. That means removing the National Guard from the border area and tearing down the wall that obstructs the free movement of people.

The “Minute Men”—a proto-fascist paramilitary group that harasses Hispanics and other national minorities—must be fought against whenever and wherever they rear their ugly heads. Their reactionary message only serves to poison working-class unity. That is why we fight and will continue to fight for a policy of no platform for fascists to promote their hateful and noxious demagoguery. In that sense, we also seek to drive organized fascists out of the workers’ movement by banning them from joining or participating politically within the unions.

In the event of violence perpetrated by fascists against workers or minority groups, we fight for the creation of community self-defense organizations that can resist and drive them out along with the police who ultimately take their side against workers, youth, women, and all those oppressed by capitalism.

Disarm the capitalist police and abolish them! They are the protectors of the right to own society’s wealth as private property (the right to exploit others). They follow the orders of the capitalists and are, therefore, not the solution to crime. By beating up demonstrators and repressing strikes, they only help create the poverty that is the root cause of crime. Self-defense groups—accountable to and controlled by the community—can defend our picket lines and demonstrations from police and fascist attacks. These groups can become the embryo of a genuine workers’ defense guard.

Young People

DUE to the economic crisis, young people have suffered above-average unemployment and below-average wages. Those seeking higher education are saddled with hikes in tuition costs and crippling debts. The youth are thrown out onto the streets by the closure of youth clubs and the selling-off of playing fields. They are bored to death with dead-end jobs in retail or call centers.

While social deprivation drives some young people to crime, to gang culture that can end in serious injuries and tragic deaths, the responsibility lies with the rulers in our society, not primarily with “dysfunctional families,” much less anti-social youth.

We are for a massive investment in services for young people: free sports

clubs and gyms, art, and music studios, where young people can bring out their full creativity and have fun in safety.

We are for a massive reduction in the price for cultural activity: file sharing must be legal so everybody can access free music, books, and art. Young people need to be involved in deciding what services they require and then running them democratically for themselves. Youth services and rights, decent jobs, and a real future are the real antidote to anti-social behavior, not more police controls and media headlines.

We fight for the right to vote at the age of 16 and for young people to organize a revolutionary youth movement under their own leadership to fight for their rights.

Students should not be burdened with years of post-graduate debt. All debt must be abolished along with all tuition fees and replaced with grants on which they can live. In short, we are for fully funded, free State education for all.

The majority of people—especially young people—incarcerated in the United States today are so because they were in violation of petty drug crimes—one million, or 50 percent, are African-American. Black youth are easy targets for the “War on Drugs.” As if unemployment were not bad enough, the African-American community must suffer the indignities of widespread police oppression, deployed by a system that refuses to acknowledge the relationship between drug activity and economic injustice. The “War on Drugs” is, in reality, a hypocritical, racist war on the poor in the U.S. and on the peasants of the developing world who, due in large part to the regulations of the World Trade Organization and other free-trade agreements, find it extremely difficult to grow and sell anything other than “illegal” substances.

To end this completely hypocritical and dysfunctional situation, socialists call for full legalization of all drugs and for them to be manufactured and distributed under a strict State monopoly. This will ensure those who suffer from drug addiction are no longer blamed for the violence engendered by drug gangs within poverty-stricken neighborhoods. To eradicate completely the drug problem, one must eradicate the reasons why people take and sell drugs in the first place.

Equal Pay for Women—and Real Liberation from Subsistence at Work and at Home

WOMEN still earn far less on average than men; they make 75.5 percent of what men typically earn. The workers’ answer is obvious: equal pay must mean raising women’s wages. This is the basis for real equality

and liberation.

We need to bring forward all equal pay claims and level up women's pay through strike action across the public and private sector, linking women's demands for justice to the overall fight against job losses and pay cuts.

Women are not just exploited at work—women workers experience a double burden. The women's liberation movement of the 1970s might have raised awareness of women's oppression in the home, but they still do most of the housework and are still treated as sex objects by men, subjected to belittling images and routine violence. Rape, for instance, remains terrifyingly common, and conviction rates for rapists are startlingly low. The right of women to control their bodies is still not established by law; the right to abortion is limited and under constant scrutiny and attack.

The liberation of women from discrimination and oppression is in the interest of the whole working class. The more the capitalists can divide us on pay, the lower they can hold down wages—the more unpaid work at home they can foist upon women, the cheaper it is to pay for our labor—the more they can divide men from women, the more they can prevent us fighting as a united class.

In the struggle against their oppression and in their fight for liberation, women themselves must come to the forefront of the movement. Their victory can be assured, however, only when working-class women shape the movement through their own conscious leadership. This means, of course, that they play—to an ever-increasing degree—a leading role within the highest levels in the struggle against the exploiters, i.e., within the unions, community organizations, and the workers' movement as a whole.

The working-class answer to the crisis is to link the fight for women's liberation to the resistance to the bosses' attacks today and to the fight for a socialist society. We should fight for equal pay by leveling up women's wages, free abortion on demand, and for a massive job-creating expansion of free 24-hour childcare facilities, nursery schools, education, cleaning, laundry, and cheap but quality restaurant services so that the burden of domestic labor is lifted off the shoulders of exploited women and borne by society as a whole.

Reclaim our Environment—Fight Climate Change!

THE destruction of the environment is growing every year. The emission of greenhouse gases, for example, through the burning of fossil fuels—in industry as well as through the massive expansion of reliance on private cars—poses a serious threat to our environment. The overconsumption of energy and resources, as well as the careless dumping of

toxic and other nuclear waste has reached a level in which it is no longer possible to ignore. We have to fight for sustainable energy production and the careful use of the world's resources before it is too late.

We fight for the nationalization of the energy companies under workers' control without compensation, combining them in order to draw up a renewable energy plan. There should be no expansion and reliance on any forms of environmentally damaging power. Instead, we should demand the redeployment of workers in environmentally sustainable production, on equal pay and conditions, and under the direction of the labor unions. In addition, there should be a massive expansion of jobs in alternative energy, in building flood defenses and affordable homes, and in clean-up programs to repair the damage caused by corporate polluters.

Obama openly favors the market-friendly policy, "cap-and-trade." Born out of academia, the policy provides factories and corporations with a specific amount of emissions certificates stating how much carbon emissions they are allowed to produce. These certificates can be traded between companies that produce more emissions and companies that produce less.

But "saving" the environment through logic of the free-market will not work. Firstly, since the certificates are based on the current production of emissions, it is clear that developing countries are highly disadvantaged. Secondly, it is less than clear whether the prices for these certificates will remain at their starting value. Very likely, through lobbying, the emission limits will be set so high that the prices for certificates plummet, therefore making the whole idea a futile undertaking.

The Energy Department is reviewing 19 applications for new nuclear power plants. From the \$787 billion of the recovery plan, \$50 billion is set aside for nuclear power; however, nuclear power is not as "clean" as is often proclaimed. Massive amounts of nuclear waste have to be dumped and the safety of nuclear reactors is anything but comforting. The Obama administration, for instance, has blocked the dumping of nuclear waste in Nevada's Yucca Mountain—but even this action begs the question of what to do with all the highly radioactive waste.

Nuclear power, as a means of energy production, must be phased out in favor of environmentally-friendly and sustainable methods of energy production like wind, wave, and solar power—all at the cost of the multi-national corporate polluters who are responsible for the current degradation of the global ecosystem in the first place. Only the workers of a nuclear facility, not private managers or government bureaucrats, can decide if a site is environmentally safe or not. In the event that it is not, the workers must have the authority to close it immediately before a disaster of unimaginable proportions is allowed to manifest.

Obama also supports the myth of “clean coal”; however, mining for coal and the burning of coal is never a clean operation. Firstly, the extraction of coal leaves huge devastated areas behind, and it changes the level of ground water. Secondly, the pollutants in coal, specifically mercury, do not vanish—they can either be blown into the atmosphere, remain in the water that was used to wash the coal, or they can combine with the remains of the burned coal. In all of these cases, burning any sort of coal, whether regular or “clean,” will result in the even heavier pollution of our environment.

What we need right now is a complete and irrevocable move away from fossil fuels and nuclear energy. We need to develop the technologies for efficient use of renewable energies and we need to re-adjust our consumption of energy. Furthermore, we call for international agreements to limit emissions without barring developing countries from achieving economic and infrastructural growth.

Only a globally planned economy under democratic workers’ control can ensure such an outcome. Without planning and the rationalization of energy consumption, the planet will inevitably be destroyed through the multi-national corporations’ drive to enhance their own profit margins—all at the immediate expense and survival of peoples of South-East Asia and the Oceanic regions. A globally planned economy directed at social justice and a sustainable environment can meet our needs. Nothing short of this will do.

For a Planned Economy to Meet the Needs of the Many, Not the Profit of the Few

WE need a radical new vision of how our society can and should run—where the people who work in and use industry can make decisions. We need a democratic plan of society, but we do not have to wait until we take control of the entire State and the economy to start the struggle for it. We can fight now for measures that systematically remove the market and replace it with rational and comprehensive planning. This way we can remove corporate greed and begin to run society for human need. We must fight for the nationalization of transport, gas, electricity, telecommunications, T.V., Internet companies, and other key industries—all run democratically, under workers’ control.

We must nationalize under workers’ control all the energy and the oil companies without compensation to the former private owners or shareholders. The re-appropriation of their profits along with the expropriation of the super-rich will go back into society to pay for services, pensions, amenities, and public infrastructure.

Nationalize all hospitals, drug companies, and medical suppliers under workers' control, paying particular attention to the advice of industry-specific workers; pay nothing in terms of compensation to the former owners or shareholders. Take action to remove control of all major banks and financial institutions from the financiers, and put them under strict workers' control to direct investment into socially useful public works and services that benefit all the currently exploited in society.

The banks should be nationalized without compensation and merged into a single, State Bank that channels investment where the working class can use it best. This State Bank would be an instrument for a rational organization of society; its central task would involve connecting wants to needs according to a democratic plan.

The Workers' Government

CURRENTLY the judges, the top government officials, generals, and security chiefs arbitrate partially between the workers and the employers, favoring the bosses. The State—with all the force of the courts, the police and, if need be, the army—protects the status quo, the property and rule of the capitalists.

The question is how to replace this capitalist state with a State that does defend the interests of the working people against a tiny parasitic minority. If we want a workers' government, we will have to create it ourselves from our own mass actions and with our own democracy. It will not come by quietly voting once every couple of years for uncontrollable representatives in Congress and an executive in the White House. The American government has proven itself repeatedly a farcical mockery of "the rule of the people"—once elected, the government does what the capitalist class wants it to, even in the face of mass opposition to its policies. Look at the war in Iraq for proof of how democratic our government is! In the end, they do what the oil companies and the military machine want.

Of course, as long as capitalism exists the working class should demand more democracy within the system. We should always fight for more rights, even though the capitalists will resist every step of the way. Members of Congress should be answerable to local mass meetings of their constituents and should be instantly recallable.

A real workers' government, however, will not come about through a process of democratic reforms from above; it can only arise out of mass workers' struggles. Only workers' struggles will pose the power question in a direct and progressive way.

This is where workers' councils become central. In all periods of gener-

alized class struggle, as we see in a period of recession, the creation of local assemblies by workers, the unemployed and young people must be a priority. Initially, they may start out simply as support committees around particular campaigns and political issues. However, in many ways, they represent a real way to change society—by creating democratic forums that allow people to directly discuss and decide the running of society. At high points, they can become councils of action, with delegates from every workplace and community. The key feature of such an arrangement will be that delegates will be subject to recall, so if they fail to do what the people who voted for them want, they can be repealed at a moment's notice.

Workers' councils arise in revolutionary situations—e.g., in Russia during 1905 and 1917 and in Bolivia today—where the masses fight for control of society. These councils are set up at times when the level of class struggle rises, posing the question of achieving working class political power point blank. Thus, links often develop to the creation of defense squads of the workers' movement against repression by the capitalists. The need of the citizens to defend themselves always arises when the State resorts to force to break them. Neither workers' defense squads nor workers' councils can be conjured out of thin air as a "good idea"; their embryonic form, however, arises in the course of struggle. Their development into institutions of working-class power, thus, requires conscious development by the vanguard of the revolutionary class.

A workers' government has its basis in the councils of the workers, small farmers, and soldiers, along with their reinforcement by a workers' defense guard. It would systematically take over the key levers of the economy and establish a socialist plan of production. Our goal must be the running of the economy for need, not private greed.

Every laborsaving device could reduce the working day and raise productivity. By renouncing all the capitalists' imperialist claims to foreign countries' markets and resources, by handing ownership of multi-national companies' operations in these countries over to the workers and peasants of said countries, by canceling the debt owed by the developing world to banks, and by publishing the secret treaties and deals of our military establishment with their allies and other regimes, we can make allies of the hundreds of millions of working people across the globe. We can work to spread the workers' revolution and socialism, aiming for the creation of a global-socialist federation of working-class states, eventually arriving at a classless, Stateless, communist future for the peoples of the world.

We Need a Revolution!

WHY do we need a revolution? We need it because the rich and the powerful will not allow us to implement even one of our major demands without a struggle. They will resort to violence first; we must be ready to counter that violence with mass force. That is the only way we can enforce the seizure of the capitalists' property and the destruction of their apparatus of repression, which, taken together, would mean the end of the capitalist system.

In the end, the American government is only one part of the power of the capitalist class. It is a democratic facade for a hidden dictatorship. The general staffs of the army, in the boardrooms of the multi-nationals, the private networks of the rich and powerful, this is where all the real decisions affecting our society stem.

The police, those who serve the interests of the authorities, must be disbanded and replaced with a workers' defense guard. Failure to do this is what destroyed progressive movements and well-intentioned governments in the past: for instance, in Spain in 1936 or Chile in 1973.

The question of the army—which our rulers would certainly have recourse to when the decisive moment arrives—is a practical issue the working-class movement must resolve if it is to achieve its own form of class power. The road to revolution must draw in the soldiers: ordinary soldiers in the army need rights and we must fight for them. They need the right to organize, to practice democracy, to elect their officers, and refuse to follow orders directed against the interests of the mass of the people. Ultimately, we are for the dissolution of the standing army in favor of an armed workers' defense guard that protects working people against counter-revolution and violence by reactionary elements.

We Need a New Party

THE achievement of all these things is impossible without the creation of a new working-class party, one that is prepared to struggle for power. Workers and young people must organize to build this party from the bottom up. This new party must be rooted in the unions, in workplaces, in schools and universities, and in working-class communities. Mass meetings and discussions must take place to agree on three things: Firstly, on its program; secondly, on its goals; lastly, on the method to apply in order to achieve those goals. All socialists, all revolutionaries, should argue for a revolutionary program that links our ongoing daily struggles to measures which challenge the profit motive and the market madness of capitalism: A program that directs struggles for workers' control in the factories and of-

fices into a general struggle for working-class power and for a revolutionary workers' government.

Around the world, workers are discovering that the old socialist and communist parties have given up the fight for the working class. For years, internationally these parties claimed that there was no alternative to the market, slashing welfare and workers' rights while favoring big business. Now they are bailing out the capitalists in making workers pay for the crisis. In response, the formation of left-wing splits and new parties are manifesting all across the globe. The rallying of these forces to the fight for workers' revolution and a program to win it is crucial in the coming months and years. Together we could form a new International—a Fifth International, a new world party of workers. That way we can fight the multi-national capitalists, stop them dividing us, oppose their bloody wars, and set out a vision of a different world based on co-operation—not the madness of the market.

This is what the Workers Power group and the League for the Fifth International is fighting for, shoulder to shoulder with their sister organizations in Great Britain, Austria, the Czech Republic, France, Germany, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and Sweden. We appeal to all workers and youth who support and agree with what we are saying to join us.

We Won't Pay for their Crisis!

Break from the Democrats—form a workers' party!

Fight for Socialism!

Unite in the struggle for a New, Fifth International!