**THE INTERNATIONAL SITUATION**

**Resolution carried as amended – ACR conference 31 January 2021**

1. **The International Situation**
	1. The January 6 semi-insurrectional attempt by Bush supporters to overturn the result of the US Presidential election – an event against the backdrop of hundreds of thousands of US dead in the pandemic – confirms important elements of the analysis of world politics we have made in the A\*CR.
	2. Trotsky noted that “the situation in every country is a unique crystallisation of the elements of the world crisis” This has never been truer than today, when crisis is piled upon global crisis in a deadly combination which threatens the future of humanity.
2. **The Global Crisis**
	1. Since the beginning of 2020 we have analysed an interrelated crisis of the chronic economic instability combined with the pandemic and the overarching environmental crisis. Each of these intersecting processes is the outcome of, or has been dramatically intensified by, decades of neoliberalism. They are leading to chronic social collapse and destitution for millions, as well growing political polarisation, in which until important events in 2020 (see below) the wind was in the sails of the hard right. They are leading to chronic social collapse and destitution for millions, as well growing political polarisation, in which until important events in 2020 (and d since) the wind was in the sails of the hard right.
	2. It is 30 years since Frances Fukuyama predicted growing affluence and the worldwide victory of liberal democracy as a consequence of the defeat of Communism— and now the balance sheet of that prediction is in. It was wrong on every count. Neoliberalism, the domination of finance capital, has massively accelerated capitalism’s tendency to crises of overaccumulation. Financial crashes, each bigger than the last, has followed periods of debt-based expansion, and have created huge increases inequality and class, gender and racial oppression. While hundreds of millions have become poorer and more insecure, the rich have become massively richer.
	3. The consequence has been worldwide political polarisation. But as a result of the multiple defeats of the working class since the 1980s, this polarisation has over the past decade resulted in a surge in support for far right and fascist forces, especially since the financial crash of 2007-8 and the subsequent crushing or marginalisation of popular protests movements in Greece, the Arab world, Spain, the United States, Britain and many other countries. As discussed below, while the electoral defeat of Donald Trump and a resurgence of struggle in a number of countries, marks a pause in the surge of the far right, it has not ended it. Trump is temporarily pushed back, but Trumpism— with or without Trump personally—has not gone away in the United States. Neither have far right racist and xenophobic forces on a world scale. They are waiting in the wings for new opportunities to win governmental power.
	4. The climate crisis is now accelerating towards numerous tipping points. The failure of neoliberal capitalism to take meaningful action to stem this crisis results from the centrality of fossil fuel companies in the world economy and the short termism of neoliberalism in general. Neoliberal governments that are climate change deniers are planning vast new investments in coal mining and other fossil fuel industries.[[1]](#endnote-1)
	5. The UN December 2020 report noted that the richest 1% of the world’s population have double the carbon footprint of the bottom 50%/ —in Britain the top 1% are responsible for 11 times the carbon emissions of the bottom 50%. The richest 10% of the world are responsible to 95% of greenhouse gas emissions. These figures show that the climate crisis can have no long term solution outside the destruction or capitalist lifestyles, in particular their addiction to air travel, but also to SUVs and luxury consumption in general. The world needs a green new deal, but one without capitalist lifestyles in particular.
	6. While the international capitalist economy recovered from the 2007-8 recession of the back of massive debt expansion, this was always unsustainable and a new crisis was long predicted by Marxists. That crisis has come in the form of a pandemic, occasioning the worst economic crisis for 300 years. But this pandemic is a direct result of the environmental crisis, as capitalist farming methods and unsustainable urbanisation has broken down the barriers to the spread of forest pathogens. Covid-19 is not the first pandemic of the neoliberal era and it will not be the last. New deadly pandemics can only be suppressed by the development of sustainable farming and by boosting health systems in the Global South.
	7. The course of the pandemic has shone a spotlight on the failings of neoliberalism. The most right-wing governments which have most egregiously prioritised the needs of business – in the US, Britain, India and Brazil – have fared the worst in terms of infections and deaths. Millions have been thrust into poverty and destitution by the effects of the economic shut down. While vaccines will certainly hep, only Zero Covid strategies at a national and international level will finish the pandemic.
3. **Refugee and the migration ‘crisis’**
	1. Neoliberal globalisation has restructured world labour markets in a way that has forced up to two billion people into being destitute outsiders, forced to becoming refugees and asylum seekers, or those who faced continued waves of starvation, health crises, environmental catastrophes, persecution and violence in their own lands. This is the underlying source of the ‘refugee crisis’, intensified by the consequences of imperialism’s wars. The roll-call of countries from which refugees in Europe come sounds like a roll call of war—Iraq, Syria, Libya, Afghanistan. Economic collapse in Central America propels hundreds of thousands to the US border. The ‘illegal’ status of these people is a form of discipline and control of migrant labour, as these refugees are pulled into and expelled from the workforce at the whim of employers and governments.
	2. The movement of migrants and refugees, people fleeing war and poverty, has been seized by the far right as a central issue in the culture wars. Whether it is armed militias patrolling the US border with Mexico, anti-Muslim marches in Germany or Lega ministers in the Italian government purposefully trying to kill refugees in the Mediterranean, this is the front line of the war for the future. The EU's immigration policies are hypocritical, and the erection of borders around Hungary and Greece to prevent the westward movement of people proves that. Absolute solidarity with migrants and refugees and a continuous critical intervention around the use of racist border controls is essential.
4. **Attack on democracy**
	1. Violent militarised borders are just one aspect of a deeper shift. Faced with deeper radicalisation of the working class and oppressed more generally as more people become desperate, it propels neo-liberal governments to seek harsher methods of social control more generally. In a process referred to by some theorists as the ‘Global Police State’, police forces are militarised, democratic spaces for protest and struggle are closed down, and war itself becomes a huge focus of the profitable theft of state resources in a process referred to as ‘militarised accumulation.’ Militarised accumulation is deeply embedded in the hi-tech sector, as well as defence industries proper.
	2. In the aftermath of the 2007-8 financial crisis, more and more political representatives of capital realised that while repressive actions against popular movements were needed, alternative political projects were also needed to funnel the mass disaffection with the neoliberal elite. This crisis of legitimacy of mainstream neoliberal politicians was clearly seen in the defection of millions of Democrat voters from the Hilary Clinton campaign in 2016. This disgust with the politicians seen as representing the bankers crated the space for a surge of far right and fascist forces, seen in such diverse phenomena as the election of Trump, the re-election of Modi, the Brexit vote, the election of Bolsonaro and tens of thousands of armed militias on the streets of the Unbitted States. In the US we can see how hard right national politicians have formed a synergetic alliance with the street militias of the right. But it remains the case that in present conditions, the strength of modern police and paramilitary applauses and the weakness of the workers movement, mass fascist street fighting forces play only a subsidiary, auxiliary role. Modern fascists of the Salvini and Le Pen type prefer the ballot box—for the moment. However the interplay between the neoliberal right, police forces and the fascists is complicated, as the example of the United States shows. The fascist militias and street fighters can be pushed aside but come to the fore again as the crisis worsens.
5. **Far right’s toxic brew - racism, homophobia and misogyny**
	1. 2021 started with an attempted coup in the US by fascist and far-right forces. Shocking but it was expected that the far right would attempt some kind of intervention around the election after Trump was defeated. The invasion of the Capitol was inchoate, badly organised and clearly not thought through, nevertheless it proves how emboldened the far right and fascist forces are. They see themselves as the shock troops of a global backlash against the gains of the post war era, Social Democracy, the new left, the gains around social liberation. The fascists and far right are armed and lethal, shooting BLM protesters, slaughtering young left wingers in Norway, murdered a Labour MP in Britain, the attack on the Tree of Life synagogue and several Mosques around the world, the uncovering of a massive network of neo-Nazis in the German special forces. In addition, the fascists are joining in anti-vax and anti-lockdown protests, easily merging their message with lunatic conspiracy theories, which alas have mass support (eg QAnon).
	2. An important factor in the rise of far-right has been creation a ‘culture war’ that presents “the natural order of gender, sexuality and the family” as under threat from ‘Gender Identity’. Since around 2012 there has been campaigns against, sexual education, LGBTQ+ rights and reproductive rights that have utilised this concept in Croatia, Italy, Lithuania, Poland, Russia, Slovakia and Slovenia. The ‘war on gender' has also become powerful force in the Americas: It is thought to have been decisive in the failure of the peace referendum in Columbia; in Brazil it aided the election of the Fascist President Jair Bolsonaro and it was utilised by Trump in run up to his election as President of the United States. As Trump election demonstrates this cultural war has had success even in countries with a strong Feminist movement, including inroads in place like Germany, France and Britain. ‘Gender ideology’ is a straw doll argument that selectively draws on and mangles, Feminist, Marxist, and Queer Theorists thought. ‘Gender Ideology’ is a weak concept but makes for powerful politics. It speaks to the anxiety of the age and promotes the return of the “tradition” family as an answer to economic and emotional insecurity. Initial targets have been lesbian, gay, bisexual, and particularly transgendered people. This has included: the denial to health services; abolition of basic civil rights; the declaration of ‘non-LGBT’ areas; rounds ups and imprisonment of LGBT people; and systemic state violence. However, the ‘logic’ of the ‘war on gender’ inevitably reinforces and amplifies all women’s oppression.
	3. All the elements of the crisis together with the rise of the far right have combined into an assault on the position of women. The pandemic has demonstrated the importance of women’s traditional labour in keeping he economy functioning, e.g. care workers, cleaners, nurses. However, the pandemic has hit young women particularly hard in hospitality and retail work, and those working in the informal sector. In addition women bear the primary responsibility for social reproduction hence are forced into part time and self employment, and multiple jobs. Low wages and income, and precarious labour has thrown women into destitution.[[2]](#endnote-2)
	4. Lockdown has intensified an epidemic of violence against women. As the UN reports: “Since the outbreak of COVID-19, emerging data and reports from those on the front lines, have shown that all types of violence against women and girls, particularly domestic violence, has intensified.”
	5. In Poland, in Latin America and in Lebanon, women have been in the forefront of the democratic struggle. In India, Spain and elsewhere there has been a truly mass women’s movement against sexual violence. Women in struggle are the foundation of the new wave of feminism, not the attempts of the UN, business institutions and NGOs to reduce feminism to female entrepreneurship through micro-finance and similar initiatives.
6. **Campaign against socialism**
	1. We have noted that since the 2008 crash development of the Occupy! movement in September 2011, the ideological campaign against socialism has been ratcheted up internationally, and in the United States in particular. This represents a sure grasp by political representatives of capital about where the global alternative to permanent capitalist crisis lies. In the Presidential election campaign, accusing the Democrat candidates of being socialists was an important Republican tactic, in particular among the Cuban, Venezuelan and other Latino populations in Florida. Miami was swamped with leaflets showing pictures of Joe Biden juxtaposed with images of Fidel Castro and Hugo Chavez, twin hate figures of the Latin American right.
	2. But the campaign against socialism was more than just rhetorical hyperbole. The primary campaigns of Bernie Sanders, a self-identified socialist and the rise of the DSA, have popularised the idea of socialism—albeit really social democracy— among many people in the United States, particularly the youth. This is very different in different countries of course, depending on the general particular cultures: it would be difficult to find many socialists in democratic movements in previously Stalinist states. Revolutionaries of course have to pick up this campaign and use it as the opportunity to explain what socialism really is, in particular the impossibility of democracy with a socialist transition.
7. **Fightback and its enemies**
	1. In 2020 a series of developments showed the continuing potential for radicalisation and mass fightback against neoliberalism and the authoritarian right. The Black Lives Matter movement, aimed at racism and the police—two key pillars of the bourgeois order in the United States—struck a chord worldwide, and was supported by many millions in the United States itself. The youth and multiracial character of the BLM mobilisations, and the resistance to the paramilitary attempts to crush them, was highly significant for the future. Although Joe Biden is a right-wing mainstream neoliberal, the mobilisation of the Black vote to elect him was highly influenced by the BLM movement. In a very refracted way, the electoral defeat of Donald Trump represented mass rejection of the racist, anti-working class and misogynistic character of the Trump regime.
	2. Events in Latin America in the last few months of 2020 revealed the extraordinary resilience of popular movements and the Left on that continent. In Chile the referendum to remove the constitution that enshrines privatisation by law was won with a massive 80% vote. In Peru the huge mobilisation of workers and youth brought down two presidents in a week, although how this will play out for the Left on a governmental level is not yet clear. And in Bolivia the left-of-centre MAS (Movement towards Socialism) was returned to power, a clear repudiation of the coup that forced Evo Morales from office.
	3. In Poland the mass mobilisation of women against the new and even more repressive anti-abortion law, has opened up a first mass breach with the hard-right government. In France there has been a re-mobilisation of the Left and the unions against the government’s new security law, with hundreds of thousands on the streets. At the same time the truly giant revolt of poor farmers in India is a rebellion against Modi’s further neoliberalisation of agriculture, favouring agribusiness at the expense of poor farmers.[[3]](#endnote-3)
	4. The green shoots of rebellion can also be seen in the Hong Kong movement against Beijing and of course repeated actions by Extinction Rebellion and similar environmentalist movements. All these movements are characterised by the pivotal role of young people. It is not just that the ’68 generation being pushed aside, that’s a decades old story, but the ’78, ’88 and even ’98 generations as well­—something with crucial implications for the Left.
	5. None of these green shoots of rebellion should blind us however to the difficult social and political context in which they take place. The pandemic makes organising more difficult, neoliberal governments are still firmly in power around the world, and the hard right and fascists have not suffered a decisive defeat. Overcoming the historic defeats of the world workers movement wild take long time. Nonetheless the depth of the social and political crisis opens up the possibility of explosive rebellions of the working class and oppressed. The ‘yellow vest’ movement in France shows that, depending on national circumstances, the far right can attempt to take the leadership of such rebellions
	6. The last twenty years have demonstrated the extreme difficulty involved in trying to build alternative movements and parties of the militant left. On the one hand mass left formations and leaderships have come under ferocious attack from the bourgeoisie and its media outriders—popular left leaders like Bernie Sanders and Jeremy Corbyn are clear examples. On the other hand the ideological weakness and organisational brittleness of broad left parties and currents has facilitated right-wing attacks, and in some cases led directly to capitulation. Syriza in Greece and Podemos in Spain are striking examples. The fundamental principle of not managing austerity for the bourgeoisie has been ignored in these cases.
	7. The collapse of the Corbyn project revealed an incomprehension of the nature of the forces ranged against it, and in particular the impossibility to building a long-term compromise with the right wing of the Labour Party. In the present complex situation it is impossible to give any general formula for building the strongest possible forced of the class struggle and revolutionary left. Whatever the precise tactics, no project will succeed without a revolutionary core that can act as the political and organisational backbone of the movement.
	8. For a healthy regeneration of the workers movement and revolutionary left international it is important to ensure that the principles of socialist democracy, of the working class as a revolutionary subject, of critical analysis is to the fore. The existence of China as a 'challenger' to US imperialism has made a warmed over Maoism attractive to some people. This has practical consequences in terms of solidarity with the Uyghurs and what kind of vision of socialism people are promoting
8. **Internationalist Tasks**
	1. A key factor in the present period is the struggle for democracy. Everywhere that mass movements of rebellion arise, they come up against legal or paramilitary repression. Neoliberal capitalism is incompatible with democracy. The fight for democracy encompasses today the right to organise and demonstrate, the right to strike, the right to free expression including on social media, and the freedom to engage in political activity and social protest free from the fear of police violence, torture, surveillance and other forms of harassment. The current global right-wing backlash necessarily involves very broad alliances with a range of political forces and social movements around key principles of democracy and social rights.
	2. Revolt against the predations of neoliberalism often take the form of demands and movements for national self-determination. This can arise in the context of oppressed and/or occupied nations (Kashmiri, Kurdistan, Palestine), or where self-determination is mainly an assertion of political rights, because the right of nations to self-determination is a fundamental democratic question. The merging of demands for national self-determination with social rebellion is complex/ For example in Scotland there is no question that growing support for independence demonstrates a mass rejection of Tory neoliberalism, something strongly on view in the 2014 Radical Independence Campaign.
	3. Whether this leads to demands for independence or autonomy cannot be determined by Marxists in advance. It is a matter for the popular movement itself. For example the main force fighting for Kurdish national self-determination, the PKK, no longer calls for an independent Kurdish state, but for local and regional autonomy. In Scotland and Catalonia the demand for independence is clearly the form that the democratic movement for self-determination is taking.
	4. In the epoch of neoliberal globalisation and the growing menace of what some have called a Global Police State, hiving off international l tasks to a subordinate role doesn’t work. The fight to defend asylum seekers and refugees is simultaneously a national and international question. The struggle for climate justice is also a manifestly international task. And the battle for Zero Covid and freedom from pandemics is also an internationalist task, not just because of our solidarity with the people of the Global South, but because pandemics have to be shut down globally if they are not to recur.
9. **Generational renewal**
	1. International perspectives are pointless without the forces to fight for them. The basic dilemma was explained by WI Robinson on his report of the first BLM march in Los Angeles - very big, very militant, very young and very multiracial. And with hardly any visible input from the Left at all. Generational renewals a task for the revolutionary left everywhere. For us it is the question of questions. The A\*CR aims to be part of this necessary and healthy renewal of the internationalist socialist left and workers movement. We set ourselves the goal of popularising revolutionary socialist ideas among people in struggle, especially the youth alongside active campaigning and solidarity with all those fighting capitalism, racism and global warming.
1. https://www.mining.com/yancoal-gets-green-light-massive-expansion-australian-mine/ [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2020/09/covid-19-gender-inequality-jobs-economy/ [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. https://thewire.in/agriculture/farmers-democratic-mass-action [↑](#endnote-ref-3)