A Better World – Programme of the Worker-communist Party

Posted on November 8, 2021

A Better World
Programme of the Worker-communist Party

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Social and Intellectual Basis of Worker-communism

A better world

To change the world and to create a better one has always been a profound aspiration of people throughout human history. It is true that even the present-day so-called modern world is dominated by fatalistic ideas, religious as well as non- religious, which portray the present plight of humanity as somehow given and inevitable. Nevertheless the actual lives and actions of people themselves reveal a deep-seated belief in the possibility and even the certainty of a better future. The hope that tomorrow's world can be free of today's inequalities, hardships and deprivations, the belief that people can, individually and collectively, influence the shape of the world to come, is a deep-rooted and powerful outlook in society that guides the lives and actions of vast masses of people.

Worker-communism, first and foremost, belongs here, to the unshakable belief of countless people and successive generations that building a better world and a better future by their own hands is

both necessary and possible.

Freedom, equality, prosperity

Clearly, everyone's image of an ideal world is not one and the same. However, throughout human history certain ideas have always come to the fore as the measures of human happiness and social progress, so much so that they are today part and parcel of the political vocabulary worldwide as sacred principles. Freedom, equality, justice and prosperity are the first among them.

Precisely these ideals form the intellectual foundations of worker-communism. Worker-communism is a movement for changing the world and setting up a free, equal, human and prosperous society.

Class struggle: proletariat and bourgeoisie

However, worker-communists are not a bunch of utopian reformers and heroic saviours of humanity. Communist society is not a fantastic design or recipe conceived by well-wishing know-alls. Worker-communism is a social movement arising from within modern capitalist society itself, a movement that reflects the vision, ideals and protest of a vast section of this same society.

The history of all societies to date has been a history of class struggle. An uninterrupted, now open and now hidden, struggle has been going on between exploiting and exploited, oppressor and oppressed classes in different epochs and societies. This class

struggle is the chief source of social change and transformation.

Earlier societies were built on a complex hierarchy of classes and strata. Modern capitalist society, however, has greatly simplified class divisions. For all the variety of occupations and the extensive division of labour in it, the present society as a whole is organised around two main opposing class camps: workers and capitalists, proletariat and bourgeoisie.

The opposition of these two camps is, at the most fundamental level, the source of all the multiplicity of economic, political, intellectual and cultural conflicts going on in the existing society. Not only society's political and economic life, but also the cultural, intellectual and scientific life of humanity today – areas which appear to be independent domains standing above and independent of classes – bear the imprint of this central alignment in the modern capitalist society. The camp of the proletariat, of workers, for all the variety of thoughts, ideals, tendencies and parties in it, represents the will to change the system in favour of the oppressed and the poor. The camp of the bourgeoisie, again for all its various strands of thought, political parties, thinkers and leaders, stands for the preservation of the status quo and the protection of the capitalist system and the economic and political power and privileges of the bourgeoisie, in the face of workers' drive for freedom and equality.

Worker-communism emerges out of this class struggle. It belongs to the camp of the proletariat. Worker-communism is the revolutionary movement of the working class for overthrowing the capitalist system and creating a new society without classes and exploitation.

Worker-communism

However, not only freedom and equality, but even the ideal of abolishing classes and exploitation are not unique to worker- communism. These goals have been the watchword of

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other movements and other oppressed classes in earlier societies too. What distinguishes worker-communism as a movement is the fact that it emerges in opposition to capitalism, i.e. the latest and most modern class system. Worker-communism is the social movement of the proletariat, a class that is itself a product of capitalism and modern industrial production, and the main exploited class in this system. It is a class that lives by the sale of its labour power and has no other means of making a living but its labour power. The proletariat is not a slave, not a serf, not an artisan; it is neither owned by anyone, nor does it own its means of production. It is both free and forced to sell its labour power in the market to capital.

The principles and social ideals of worker-communism derive from a criticism of the economic, social and intellectual foundations of capitalism. This is a criticism from the standpoint of the wage-earning working class in this society, and thereby thorough and revolutionary. The working people's conception of freedom, equality and human happiness is, and has always been in previous societies, inevitably a reflection of the existing social relations and of their own position vis- a-vis production and property. The slave's conception of freedom did not go much beyond abolition of slavery, and the serf's and urban artisan's conception of equality could not be anything more than equality in property rights. But with the rise of the proletariat, as the great mass of producers free from any form of ownership of means of production, a class whose economic bondage and exploitation is precisely based on its legal freedom, the concept of freedom and equality changed fundamentally. The proletariat cannot set itself free, without society as such being set free from class divisions and private ownership of means of production. Equality is not just a juridical notion, but also, and fundamentally, an economic and social one.

With Marxism the proletarian criticism of capitalism and the worker-communist movement and social outlook which had emerged with the Industrial Revolution, attained immense coherence clarity and theoretical vigour. The worker-communist movement has since been inseparably linked with Marxism and the

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Marxist critique of political economy of the capitalist society.

Worker-communism is a social movement that came into existence with the rise of capitalism and the wage-earning working class, and represents the deepest and most universal working- class criticism of capitalism and its ills. The objectives and practical programme of this movement are based on the Marxist critique of the foundations of contemporary capitalism, i.e. the last, most modern and most advanced form of class society.

Worker-communism is not a movement separate from the working class. It has no interests apart from those of the working class as a whole. What distinguishes this movement from the other workers' movements and parties is that, firstly, in the class struggles in various countries it champions the unity and common interests of the workers of the entire world, and, secondly, in the various stages and fronts of workers' struggles it represents the interests of the working class as a whole. Thus, worker-communism is the movement of the most advanced section of the working class which understands the ultimate goal and the conditions and pre-requisites of victory and tries to rally the various sections of the working class.

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A Better World – Part One – 2

Capitalism

A balance-sheet

The capitalist system is behind all the ills that burden humanity today. Poverty, deprivation, discrimination, inequality, political repression, ignorance, bigotry, cultural backwardness, unemployment, homelessness,

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economic and political insecurity, corruption and crime are all inevitable products of this system. No doubt bourgeois apologists would rush to tell us that these have not been invented by capitalism, but have all existed before capitalism, that exploitation, repression, discrimination, women's oppression, ignorance and prejudice, religion and prostitution are more or less as old as human society itself. What is being covered up here is the fact that, firstly, all these problems have found a new meaning in this society, corresponding to the needs of capitalism. These are being constantly reproduced as integral parts of the modern capitalist system. The source of poverty, starvation, unemployment, homelessness and economic insecurity at the end of the 20th century is the economic system in place at the end of the 20th century. The brutal dictatorships, wars, genocides and repressions that define the life of hundreds of millions of people today draw their rationale from the needs of the system that rules the world today and serve specific interests in this world. Women's oppression today is not the result of medieval economy and morality, but a product of the present society's economic and social system and moral values.

Secondly, it is the bourgeoisie and the capitalist system itself that continually and relentlessly resists people's effort to eradicate and overcome these ills. The obstacle to workers' struggle to improve living conditions and civil rights is none other than the bourgeoisie and its governments, parties and apologists. Wherever people rise in the poorer regions to take charge of their lives, the first barrier they face is the armed force of the local and international bourgeoisie. It is the bourgeoisie's state, its enormous media and propaganda machinery, institution of religion, traditions, moralities and educational system which shape the backward and prejudiced mentalities among successive generations. There is no doubt that it is capitalism and the bourgeoisie who stand in the way of the attempt by millions of people, driven to the edges and more or less clear about the outlines of a society worthy of human beings, to change the system.

Today at the end of the 20th century, at the height of capitalism's globalization and in the midst of the greatest technological

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revolutions, humanity finds itself in one of the most critical periods of its history. Bare physical survival has become the main challenge for millions of people, from the impoverished countries of Africa and Asia to capital cities of the West. For the more backward countries, the hope of economic development has now been totally shattered. The dream of economic growth has given way to the permanent nightmare of famine, starvation and disease. In the advanced Europe and the USA, following years of recession, the miserable promise of 'growth without employment' holds the same nightmarish prospect for tens of millions of working-class families. Around the world, war and genocide are wreaking havoc. Massive intellectual and cultural U-turns are in progress: from the resurgence of religious fanaticism, male-chauvinism, racism, tribalism and fascism to the collapse of the individual's rights and status in society, to the abandoning of the life and livelihood of millions, old and young, at the mercy of the free market. In most countries, organised crime has become a permanent fact of life and an integral part of society's economic and political functioning. Drug addiction and the growing power of criminal networks engaged in the production and trafficking of drugs is now a major unsolvable international problem. The capitalist system and the primacy of profit have exposed the environment to serious dangers and irreparable damages. Bourgeois thinkers and analysts do not even claim to have an answer to these problems. This is the reality of capitalism today, boding a horrifying future for the entire people of the world.

Foundations of capitalism

The present society is no doubt complex and sophisticated. Billions of people are in continuous interaction in elaborate arrays of economic, social and political relations. Technology and production have acquired gigantic dimensions. Humanity's intellectual and cultural life, just as its problems and difficulties, are broad and diverse. But these complexities only keep out of sight

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simple and comprehendible realities that make up the economic and social fabric of the capitalist world.
Like any other class system, capitalism is based on the exploitation of direct producers – the appropriation of a part of the product of their labour by the ruling classes. The specific character of every social system in different historical epochs lies in the particular way in which this exploitation in each system takes place. Under slavery not only the slave's product but he himself belonged to the slave- owner. He worked for the slave-owner, and in return was kept alive by him. In the feudal system the peasants either handed over part of their produce to the feudal lord, or performed certain hours of forced and unpaid labour. Under capitalism, however, exploitation has quite different bases.

Here the main producers, i.e. the workers, are free; they don't belong to anyone, are not appendages of any estate, they are in bondage of any lord. They own and control their own body and labour power. But workers are also 'free' in yet another sense: they are `free` from the ownership of means of production, and so in order to live, they have to sell their labour power for a certain length of time, in exchange for wages, to the capitalist class – i.e. a small minority that own and monopolise the means of production. The workers have to then buy their means of subsistence – the goods they themselves have produced – in the market from the capitalists. The essence of capitalism and the basis of exploitation in this system is the fact that, on the one hand labour power is a commodity, and, on the other hand the means of production are the private property of the capitalist class.

Without living human labour power that sets instruments of labour to work and creates new products, the existence of human society, the very survival of human beings and satisfaction of their needs, is inconceivable. This is true of any system. But in capitalism labour power and means of production are shut off from each other by the wall of private property; they are commodities and their owners must meet in a market. On the face of it, the owners of these commodities enter into a free and equal transaction: the worker sells his/her labour power for certain periods, in exchange for wages, to the capitalist, i.e. the owner of the means of production; the

capitalist employs this labour power, uses it up and makes new products. These commodities are then sold in the market and the revenue begins the production cycle anew, as capital.

However, behind the apparently equal exchange between labour and capital lies a fundamental inequality; an inequality which defines the lot of humanity today and without whose elimination society will never be free. With wages, workers only get back what they have sold, i.e. the ability to work and to show up in the market once again. By its daily work the working class only ensures its continued existence as worker, its survival as the daily seller of labour power. But capital in this process grows and accumulates. Labour power is a creative power; it generates new values for its buyer. The value of the commodities and services produced by the worker at any cycle of the production process is greater than the worker's total share and that portion of the products which goes into restoring the used up materials and wear and tear. This surplus value, taking the form of an immense stock of commodities, belongs automatically to the capitalist class, and increases the mass of its capital, by virtue of the capitalist class's ownership of the means of production. Labour power in its exchange with capital only reproduces itself, while capital in its exchange with labour power grows. The creative capacity of labour power and the working class's productive activity reflects itself as the birth of new capital for the capitalist class. The more and the better the working class works, the more power capital acquires. The gigantic power of capital in the world today and its ever-expanding domination of the economic, political and intellectual life of the billions of inhabitants of the earth is nothing but the inverted image of the creative power of work and of working humanity.

Thus, exploitation in capitalist society takes place without yokes and shackles on the shoulders and feet of the producers- through the medium of the market and free and equal exchange of commodities. This is the fundamental feature of capitalism which distinguishes it in essence from all earlier systems.

The surplus value obtained from the exploitation of the working class is divided out among the various sections of the capitalist class

essentially through the market mechanism and also through state fiscal and monetary policies. Profit, interest and rent are the major forms in which the different capitals share in the fruits of this class exploitation. The competition of capitals in the market determines the share of each capitalist branch, unit and enterprise.

But this is not all. This surplus pays whole cost of the bourgeoisie's state machinery, army and administration, of its ideological and cultural institutions, and the upkeep of all those who, through these institutions, uphold the power of the bourgeoisie. By its work, the working class pays the cost of the ruling class, the ever-increasing accumulation of capital and the bourgeoisie's political, cultural and intellectual domination over the working class and the entire society.

With the accumulation of capital, the mass of commodities which make up the wealth of bourgeois society grows. An inevitable result of the accumulation process is the continual and accelerating technological progress and rise in the mass and capacity of the means of production which the working class sets in motion in every new cycle of the production process. But compared to the growth in society's wealth and productive powers, the working class continually gets relatively poorer. Despite the gradual and limited increase, in absolute terms, in the workers' standard of living, the share of the working class from the social wealth declines rapidly, and the gap between the living conditions of the working class and the higher living standards that is already made possible by its own work widens. The richer the society becomes, the more impoverished a section the worker forms in it.

Technological progress and rise in labour productivity mean that living human labour power is increasingly replaced by machines and automatic systems. In a free and human society this should mean more free time and leisure for all. But in capitalist society, where labour power and means of production are merely so many commodities which capital employs to make profits, the substitution of humans by machines manifests itself as a permanent unemployment of a section of the working class which is now denied the possibility of making a living. The appearance of a reserve army of workers who do not even have the possibility of selling their

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labour power is an inevitable result of the process of accumulation of capital, and at the same time a condition of capitalist production. The existence of this reserve army of unemployed, supported essentially by the employed section of the working class itself, heightens the competition in the ranks of the working class and keeps wages at their lowest socially possible level. This reserve army also allows capital to more easily modify the size of its employed work force in proportion to the needs of the market. Massive unemployment is not a side-effect of the market, or a result of the bad policies of some government. It is an inherent part of the workings of capitalism and the process of accumulation of capital.

Periodic economic crises with catastrophic economic and social consequences are an inevitable feature of the capitalist system. These crises spring essentially from a fundamental contradiction within the accumulation process itself: while labour is the source of surplus value and profit, the accumulation process and the inevitable technological progress constantly diminish the ratio of labour power to means of production. The surplus value that is produced, even if it grows in absolute terms, cannot normally keep pace with the growth in the capital advanced. By the material laws of the accumulation process itself, therefore, the rate of profit has an inevitable tendency to fall. The ceaseless activity to offset this tendency and maintain the rate of profit, especially through intensifying exploitation and reducing the share of the working class from the social wealth – paid in the form of wages, public services, etc. – is the daily business of the capitalist class, its various governments, and the large corps of bourgeois economists, managers and experts worldwide.

Nevertheless, the inner contradictions of capital and the tendency of the rate of profit to fall, assert themselves periodically and throw the whole economic system into a deep crisis. Periods of stagnation and crisis are not only signs and symptoms of the intensification of capital's internal contradictions, but also the practical mechanism for their alleviation and the reconstruction of capital. Competition among different sections of capital grows and many are driven to bankruptcy. The weaker capitals are knocked out, improving the conditions of profitability for those who remain. On the other hand, the capitalist class and its states embark on a wide-scale offensive on

workers' living standards. The ranks of the unemployed swell and the exploitation of the whole working class intensifies.

Capital emerges from every crisis more centralised. Thus the next crisis takes on wider and deeper dimensions and gives rise to a more severe competition and conflict in the capitalist class. Each new crisis makes an ever more comprehensive reconstruction of capital necessary. Equally, the prospects for society each time grow darker and more terrifying.

The consequences of the capitalist system's contradictions and crises are not confined to the economic sphere. Devastating global and regional wars, militarism and military aggressions, autocratic and police states, stripping people, and especially workers, of their civil and political rights, rise of state terrorism, resurgence of the extreme Right and of religious, nationalist, racist and anti-woman groups and trends – these are the realities of contemporary capitalism especially in periods of crisis.

State and political superstructure

Bourgeois analysts portray the state as a necessary institution for the administration of society in the common interest of all; an institution supposedly embodying the collective will of the people and enforcing their combined power. We are told that the existing laws are a collection of self-evident natural principles, accepted by all, which the state guarantees and puts into force. Representing the state as an autonomous body standing above antagonistic class interests is a cornerstone of bourgeois ideology. This idea is more entrenched among people in advanced Western countries which have had more stable parliamentary systems. But even in the less developed countries, despite the existence of autocratic and police states and the public's distrust of the existing states, the idea of the necessity

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of the state is not questioned, and viewing the state as an institution responsible for the management of society is just as deeply rooted. The expansion of the economic role of states, and, particularly, state intervention in the domain of public services and economic management and control, over the past few decades, has greatly strengthened these illusions.

The truth is that the state is the most important instrument of the ruling class to hold the exploited masses in subjugation. Historically, the emergence of the state has been the result of the appearance of exploitation and division of society into exploiting and exploited classes. For all the complexity in the structure of present-day states, the state, as before, is an apparatus of coercion, with the army, courts, and prisons making up its foundations. The state is the organised coercive power of the ruling class. It is an instrument of class rule. Any state, whatever its form and outward appearance – a monarchy or a republic, parliamentary or despotic – is the instrument of dictatorship of the ruling class or classes.

In all systems, even in the most brutal slaveries of ancient times where the class character of the state was unconcealed, the ruling class has always needed to give some form of legitimacy to its state. Monarchy and dynastic rule, reign of aristocracy, divine rule and theocracy, are all forms in which such legitimacy has been sought. In capitalist society, a society based on market, and where worker and capitalist are portrayed as ‘free’ agents entering into a voluntary and equal contract, the right to vote, the parliament and the electoral system are the chief forms of gaining legitimacy for the class rule of the bourgeoisie. On the surface, the state is an instrument of political rule by all the people formed by their own direct vote. Certainly, from a historical viewpoint, the right to vote and parliament are important gains in the struggle of the working people to promote their civil rights. It is also clear that life in a liberal bourgeois system is far more tolerable than life under a military or autocratic regime. But these forms cannot conceal the class nature of the modern state. Even in the most advanced, stable and free parliamentary systems the working people have very little chance of influencing state policies and actions. Parliamentary system employs relatively less open and brutal violence and lets government

positions alternate among different sections of the ruling class through periodic general elections. It has thus managed to ensure the unquestionable rule of the whole bourgeoisie over society's political and economic life. Parliamentary democracy is not a mechanism for people's participation in political power. It is a means of legitimizing the rule and dictatorship of the bourgeois class.

Culture, ideology, morality

Flagrant exploitation, discrimination and disenfranchisement of people on such monstrous scales, could obviously not last without the victims themselves submitting to it and rationalizing it in their minds. To paint this state of affairs as legitimate, natural and eternal, and to intimidate people into submission is the task of the intellectual, cultural and moral superstructure in this society. The cultural and intellectual arsenal of the bourgeoisie against freedom and liberation is enormous. In part this is a legacy of antiquity, now polished up and adapted to the needs of bourgeois society. All shades of religions, prejudices, tribalism, racism and male-chauvinism have throughout history served as so many intellectual and cultural weapons in the hands of ruling classes to hold down and silence the working people. And in our day all of these, in new forms and capacities, are summoned to protect bourgeois property and bourgeois rule from the menace of working peoples' awareness and consciousness.

But bourgeois society's own additions to this collection of intellectual and cultural artillery are much more extensive and efficient. In this society, self-interest and competition, i.e. the rationale behind the capitalist's behaviour in the market, are portrayed as human nature as such and sanctified as exalted human values. Here the relations among people are a reflection and an extension of the relations among commodities. People's worth and status are measured by

their relation to ownership. The bourgeoisie broke up the local and narrow arrangement of the old society and organised nation- states. Tribalism and parochialism gave way to modern bourgeois nationalism and patriotism as the heaviest ideological yoke ever put on the shoulders of the working people.

The ruling ideas in every society are the ideas of ruling class. But the extent of intellectual, cultural and moral domination and control of the bourgeoisie over the life of society today is unprecedented in history. The scientific, technical and industrial revolutions of the past couple of centuries and the powerful mechanism of the market, which transcends all national, tribal, political and cultural barriers, have provided the bourgeoisie with enormous possibilities for safeguarding its ideological rule and spreading it on a world scale.

Just as in the sphere of production of goods, so in the sphere of production of ideas humanity's creative power has turned into a weapon against itself. The many innovations and advances of the twentieth century, which have revolutionised literary and artistic forms and means of mass communication and opened up new fields of cultural activity, have above all paved the way for a constant bombardment of millions of people with bourgeois ideas in more elaborate, subtle and effective forms. The information technology and satellite TV networks introduced over the past two decades, which have greatly facilitated the task of information gathering and transfer across the globe, have in the hands of the bourgeoisie turned into a monstrous machinery of misinformation, indoctrination and provocation. The mass media and show business, in themselves among the most profitable sectors for capital, have taken over a large part of the traditional role of family, religion and even the repressive organs of the state, and play an increasing role in preserving the existing ideological balance in society, spreading the ideas and values of the ruling class, indoctrinating and controlling minds, intimidating and atomizing people and countering critical ideas and tendencies in society. These institutions and the modern forms of thought- control are pillars of political stability in bourgeois society, particularly in times of crisis, uncertainty and popular unrest.

Struggle against the dominant reactionary ideas has always been a

permanent component of the class struggle of workers and a crucial task of the worker-communist movement.

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Social Revolution and Communism

The free communist society

It is easy to see how the capitalist world is a world that is upside down. The relations among commodities form the basis of the relations among people. The daily work of billions of people to build the world manifests itself as the growing domination of capital over their lives. The motivating aim of economic activity is not satisfaction of people's needs, but profitability of capital. Scientific and technological progress, which are the key to human welfare and well-being, translate in this system into even more unemployment and impoverishment for hundreds of millions of workers. In a world that has been built through cooperation and collective action, it is competition that reigns. The economic freedom of the individual is merely a guise hiding his inescapable compulsion to appear in the labour market each and every day. The political freedom of the individual is a cover for his actual rightlessness and lack of political influence, and a means of legitimizing the political rule and the state of the capitalist class. Law is the will and interest of the ruling class made into rules binding for all. From love and compassion to right and

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justice, from art and creativity to science and truth, there is no concept in this capitalist world that does not bear the imprint of this invertedness.
This inverted world must be put right side up. This is the task of-worker-communism. It is the aim of workers' communist revolution.

The essence of communist revolution is abolition of private ownership of the means of production and their conversion into common ownership of the whole society. Communist revolution puts an end to the class division of society and abolishes the wage-labour system. Thus, market, exchange of commodities, and money disappear. Production for profit is replaced by production to meet people's needs and to bring about greater prosperity for all. Work, which in capitalist society for the overwhelming majority is an involuntary, mechanical and strenuous activity to earn a living, gives way to voluntary, creative and conscious activity to enrich human life. Everyone, by virtue of being a human being and being born into human society will be equally entitled to all of life's resources and the products of collective effort. From everyone according to their ability, to everyone according to their need – this is a basic principle of communist society.

Not only class divisions but also the division of people according to occupation will disappear. All fields of creative activity will be opened up to all. The development of each person will be the condition of development of the society. Communist society is a global society. National boundaries and divisions will disappear and give way to a universal human identity. Communist society is a society free of religion, superstitious beliefs, ideology and archaic traditions and moralities that strangle free thought.

The disappearance of classes and class antagonisms makes the state superfluous. In communist society the state withers away. Communist society is a society without a state. The administrative affairs of the society will be managed by the cooperation, consensus and collective decision-making of all of its members.

Thus it is in the communist society that the ideals of human freedom

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and equality are truly realised for the first time. Freedom not only from political oppression but from economic compulsion and subjugation and intellectual enslavement. Freedom to enjoy and experience life in its diverse dimensions. Equality not only before the law but in the enjoyment of society's material and intellectual wealth. Equality in worth and dignity for everyone in society.

Communist society is not a dream or utopia. All the conditions for the formation of such a society have already created within the capitalist world itself. The scientific, technological and productive powers of humanity have already grown so enormously that founding a society committed to the well-being of all is perfectly feasible. The spectacular advances in communication and information technology during the last two decades have meant that the organization of a world community with collective participation in the design, planning and execution of society's diverse functions is possible more than ever before. A large part of these resources is now either wasted in different ways or is even deliberately used to hinder efforts to improve society and satisfy human needs. But for all the immensity of society's material resources, the backbone of communist society is the creative and living power of billions of men and women beings freed from class bondage, wage-slavery, intellectual slavery, alienation and degradation. The free human being is the guarantee for the realization of communist society.

Communist society is not a utopia. It is the goal and result of the struggle of an immense social class against capitalism; a living, real and ongoing struggle that is as old as bourgeois society itself. Capitalism itself has created the great social force that can materialise this liberating prospect. The staggering power of capital on a global scale is a reflection of the power of a world working class. Unlike other oppressed classes in the history of human society, the working class cannot set itself free without freeing the whole of humanity. Communist society is the product of workers' revolution to put an end to the system of wage-slavery; a social revolution which inevitably transforms the entire foundation of the production relations.

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Proletarian revolution and workers' state

The exponents and ideologues of the bourgeoisie accuse Marxism and worker-communism of advocating force and violence to achieve their social objectives. The truth, however, is that it is the bourgeois system itself that is founded on organised violence; violence against people, against their bodies and minds, against their thoughts and emotions, against their hopes and aspirations and against their struggle to improve their lives and the world they live in.

The wage-labour system, that is the daily compulsion of the great majority of people to sell their physical and intellectual abilities to others in order to make a living, is the source and essence of the violence which is inherent of this system. This naked violence has many direct victims: Women, workers, children, the aged, people of the poorer regions of the world, anyone who asks for their rights and stands up to any oppression, and anyone who has been branded as belonging to this or that 'minority'. In this system, thanks essentially to the rivalry of capitals and economic blocs, war and genocide have assumed staggering proportions. The technology of war and mass destruction is far more advanced than the technology used in production of goods. The bourgeoisie's global arsenal can annihilate the world several times over. This is the system that has actually used horrendous nuclear and chemical weapons against people. Bourgeois society can also take pride in its remarkable advances in turning crime, murder, abuse and rape into a routine fact of life in this system.

Can such a system be swept out of the way of human liberation and a permanent end to violence without the working people resorting to force? Nowhere in communist theory is use of force viewed as a

necessary component of workers' revolution. But anyone with even the slightest grasp of the realities of this society would admit that the ruling class will never peacefully stand aside and bow to the will of the overwhelming majority to change the system. If protection of the day to day business and interest of the bourgeoisie is the job of the state, defending the existence of capitalism and bourgeois property is its very essence. If demands for higher wages and free speech incur the wrath of the state, police and the military, one can imagine the kind of resistance that will be put up to the attempt to expropriate the bourgeoisie politically and economically. Violence by the bourgeoisie and its state against workers' revolution, against the will of the overwhelming majority of people who, with the working class in their lead, rise to set up a new society is practically inevitable.

Workers' revolution must bring down the bourgeois state. Bourgeois resistance against the revolution, and particularly against the attempt to turn the means of production into common ownership, will continue even after bourgeois state power has been dismantled. Therefore it is crucial to establish a workers' state that could breaks this resistance and enforce the will of the revolution. Like any other state, workers' state does not stand above society and classes. It is a class rule. But this state, which accordingly in Marxist theory has been called a dictatorship of the proletariat, is the rule of the exploited majority to dictate to the exploiting classes the decree of human freedom and equality and defeat their attempts and intrigues. In its form, workers' state is a free state which organises the direct decisions and will of the masses of the working people themselves. By its nature, workers' state is a transient state withers away as soon as the aims of the revolution have been realised.

The communist party

and the communist International of

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the working class

A critical requirement for the progress and victory of workers' social revolution is the formation of worker-communist parties that put such a perspective before the working class and mobilise and lead the forces of the class in this struggle. These parties should be formed in different countries, as organizations uniting above all the most conscious and active leaders of workers' struggles. Capitalism is a world system, the working class is a world class, workers' conflict with the bourgeoisie is a daily struggle on a global scale, and socialism is an alternative that the working class presents to the whole of humanity. The worker- socialist movement must also be organised on a global scale. The building of a worker-communist International, as the body uniting and leading the workers' global struggle for socialism, is an urgent task of the various sections of the worker-communist movement and worker-communist parties around the world.

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A Better World – Part One – 4

Worker Communism and Bourgeois Communism

For much of the twentieth century, Marxism and communism have enjoyed an enormous prestige within different protest and reform movements worldwide. The universality and depth of Marx's critical thinking, Marxism's profound humanity and egalitarianism, and the worker-communist movement's

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practical influence – particularly as a result of the workers' revolution in Russia in 1917 which turned communism into the hope of hundreds of millions of workers throughout the world – had the result that many non-worker and even non-socialist movements during the twentieth century began labelling themselves as communist and Marxist. Most of these movements had very little in common with the basic principles of communism and Marxism, and, in reality, only desired certain reforms and moderations within the framework of the capitalist system.

Communism was the name adopted by the worker socialist movement in the nineteenth century to distinguish itself from the non-revolutionary, and even reactionary, socialism of the other classes. But in the twentieth century even this name was abused by other movements and classes, to the extent that it lost its distinctive meaning. Under the general name of communism, there emerged all shades of social tendencies which neither in their outlook, nor in their programme, nor in their social and class origins, were related to workers' communism and Marxism. Offshoots of this non-worker communism, and foremost among them the bourgeois communism of the Soviet bloc, practically turned into the official mainstream of communism throughout much of the twentieth century. Worker-communism was driven to the margins.

The most important bourgeois-communist tendency in the twentieth century emerged in the Soviet Union following the derailment and final defeat of the workers' revolution. With the October 1917 revolution, the worker-communist movement, led by the Bolsheviks, succeeded to smash the state power of the ruling classes, set up a workers' rule and even defeat the outright military efforts of the defeated reaction to restore its lost power. But despite this political victory, the Russian working class ultimately failed to transform the production relations, i.e. abolish the wage-labour system and turn the means of production into common ownership. In the mid- 1920s, against a backdrop of severe economic strains following the war and revolution, and in the absence of a clear perspective for the socialist transformation of the economic relations, nationalism came to dominate the politics and economic programme of the Russian workers' party and movement. What took place in the Stalin era was

not the construction of socialism but the reconstruction of the capitalist national economy according to a state-ist and managed model. Instead of the ideal of common and collective ownership, state ownership of the means of production was established. Wages, money and the wage-labour system all remained. The failure of the Russian working class to revolutionise the economic relations led to the defeat of the workers' revolution as a whole. Workers' state was replaced by a new bourgeois state with a massive bureaucracy and military apparatus based on a state- capitalist economy.

This state model became the economic blueprint of a so-called communist pole, entering the world stage following the derailment of the October workers' revolution. The whole 'socialism' of bourgeois communism in the Soviet Union and the Eastern bloc consisted of economic state-ism, replacement of the market mechanism by planning and administrative decisions, redistribution of wealth and a minimum level of public welfare and social services.

But the Soviet Union was not the only source of bourgeois communism in this century. In Western Europe, offshoots of non-worker communism sprang into existence which, while sharing fundamental elements with the economic outlook of the communism of the Eastern bloc, namely substitution of economic state-ism for socialism, and preservation of the wage-labour system, criticised the Soviet experience and held their distance from it from democratic, nationalist, humanist and modernist standpoints. Western Marxism, Eurocommunism, the New Left and the different branches of Trotskyism were among the prominent tendencies of non-worker communism in Western Europe. In the less developed countries and former colonies, nationalism and anti-colonial leanings of the bourgeoisie and petty-bourgeoisie, and in some cases peasant movements, formed the stuff of a new kind of 'Third Worldist' communism. The content of this communism was economic independence, industrialization, rapid develo pment of the national economy according to a state-driven and planned model, an end to the open political domination of imperialist powers, and at times even the revival of archaic local traditions and cultural legacies in opposition to modernism and Western culture. The archetype of Third Worldist communism was Maoism and Chinese Communism

which deeply influenced the views and politics of so- called communist groups in the less developed countries.

A consequence of the rise of the different strands of non- worker communism in the twentieth century was the serious isolation and setback of worker-communism and Marxism. In the first place, the basic ideas of worker-socialism and different aspects of Marxist theory were seriously revised and misinterpreted to fit the non-socialist and non-worker nature of these movements themselves, and this distorted picture was presented and perceived on a global scale as Marxism and communism. Secondly, the social and class base of twentieth century communism was shifted from the working class into a wide spectrum of non-worker social layers. In Western Europe and industrialised countries, intellectuals, students, academics and the reformist sections of the bourgeoisie itself made up the main social milieus for the growth and political action of the communist forces. In the so-called Third World countries, besides these groups, poor peasants, disgruntled petty-bourgeois, and most of all a nationalist bourgeoisie yearning for national economic development and industrialization made up the social basis of non-worker communism.

In the absence of an influential worker-communist tradition, the working class for decades lacked a strong independent political presence internationally. In Western Europe and the USA and some countries of Latin America, workers wound up in the hands of unionism and parties of the left wing of the ruling class itself, particularly Social-Democracy, to such an extent that these came to be perceived by the general public and a large section of the workers themselves as the natural and self-evident organizations of the labour movement. In the Soviet Union and the Eastern bloc, for small concessions at the workplace, the working class was atomised and stripped off political rights. In the majority of the more backward countries, even the mere idea of building workers' parties and associations remained a suppressed hope.

The main strands of bourgeois communism reached a dead-end, one after the other, in the last few decades. The last episode was the spectacular disintegration of the Soviet Union and the Eastern bloc at

the end of the ’80s and in the early ’90s – something the bourgeoisie euphorically called the ‘end of communism’.

But despite the anti-communist climate of the initial years of the ’90s and the bourgeoisie’s deafening cries of ‘the fall of communism’, and despite the enormous hardship that descended on hundreds of millions of people throughout the world following the collapse of the Eastern bloc, current trends point to an opening for worker-communism to retake the political centre-stage, particularly in the industrially advanced countries. A basic requirement for such a development is a vigorous political and theoretical confrontation with the various trends of bourgeois communism which will re-emerge in different forms with the progress of the workers’ movement and growing influence of Marxism and worker-communism.

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A Better World – Part One – 5

Revolution and Reform

The immediate aim of the worker-communist party is to organise the social revolution of the working class. A revolution that overthrows the entire exploitative capitalist relations and puts an end to all exploitations and hardships. Our programme is for the immediate establishment of a communist society; a society without classes, without private ownership of the means of production, without wage labour and without a state; a free human society in which all share in the social wealth and collectively decide the society’s direction and future. Communist society is possible this very day.

But the great workers’ revolution that must bring about this free society does not happen just upon the will of the worker- communist

party. This is a vast social and class movement that has to be organised in different aspects and forms. All kinds of barriers must be swept out of its way. This work is the raison d'etre and the very substance of the daily activity of the-worker-communist party. But while the struggle for the organization of workers' revolution is going on, everyday billions of people are struggling to eke out a living under capitalism. The revolutionary struggle to build a new world is inseparable from the daily effort to improve the living conditions of the working humanity in this same world.

Worker-communism does not find organizing a revolution against this system incompatible with the struggle to impose on capitalism the most far-reaching reforms. On the contrary, it sees its presence in both fronts as the vital condition of final victory. Workers' revolution is not a revolution out of desperation or poverty. It is a revolution relying on the consciousness and material and moral readiness of the working class. The wider the extent of political freedoms, economic security and social dignity of the working class and people in general and the more progressive the political, welfare and civil standards that have been imposed on bourgeois society by workers' and progressive struggles, the more prepared will be the conditions for workers' revolution, and the more decisive and sweeping the victory of this revolution. The worker- communist movement stands in the forefront of every struggle to improve the social conditions and standards in favour of people.

What distinguishes worker-communism in the struggle for reforms from reformist movements and organizations – both working-class and non-working class – is above all that, firstly, worker-communists always stress the fact that complete freedom and equality cannot be achieved through reforms. Even the most profound economic and political reforms, by definition, leave the hateful foundations of the existing system, namely private property, class divisions and the wage-labour system, untouched. Besides, as the whole history of capitalism and actual experience in different countries show, the bourgeoisie in most cases violently resists any attempt to push through even the slightest reforms. Also, what is won is always temporary, vulnerable and capable of being rolled back. While fighting for reforms, worker-communism insists on the necessity of

social revolution as the only really viable and liberating working-class alternative.

Secondly, while defending even the smallest improvements in working people's economic, political and cultural life, worker-communism calls for the widest and most progressive political, civil and welfare rights. In the struggle for reforms, our movement does not restrict itself to demanding what the capitalist class regards as affordable. The profit and loss accounts of businesses or the so-called interests of the 'national economy' and so on do not condition or restrict our demands. Our starting point is the indisputable rights of people in our times. If such rights as the right to health care, education, economic security, the right to strike, direct and constant participation of people in political life, equal rights for women, freedom from religious encroachments, etc., are inconsistent with business profitability and the interests of capitalism, then this only goes to prove the need to overthrow this whole system. This is the fundamental truth that our movement brings home to the working class and society as a whole in the fight for reforms. Our purpose in this struggle is not the creation of a reformed capitalism, a capitalism 'with a human face', or a 'caring' capitalism. Our aim is to force the existing system to recognise and abide by the unquestionable rights of the working people. The rights and demands which the bourgeoisie finds incompatible with its survival, the working class is prepared to enforce this very day and in the most comprehensive way.

The worker-communist party struggles for the complete victory of the social revolution of the working class and the introduction of workers' communist programme in its entirety. The worker-communist party believes that advances of human society so far in economy, science, technology and standards of civil life have

already created the material conditions necessary to set up a free society without classes, exploitation and oppression, i.e. a world socialist community, and that the working class on taking political power must introduce its communist programme.

At the same time, as long as and where-ever capitalism prevails the-worker-communist party also struggles for the most profound and far-reaching political, economic, social and cultural reforms that raise the living standard of people and their political and civil rights to the highest possible level. These reforms, as well as the strength and unity gained in the struggle for their realisation, will make it easier for the working people to deliver the final blow to the capitalist system.

Part Two of the Programme contains the main immediate demands raised by the worker-communist party in workers' ongoing struggles to impose reforms on the existing system. Though, by the standards of even the most advanced capitalist countries today, the following demands and norms appear radical and ideal, in fact they only represent a very small fraction of rights and freedoms that will be realised in full in a communist society.

There is no doubt that even the slightest improvement in the life of the people in Iran today and the realization of the most elementary rights and liberties require bringing down the inhuman and reactionary Islamic Republic regime. The overthrow of this regime is an urgent task of workers' revolution in Iran. The worker-communist party struggles for the overthrow of the Islamic Republic and the immediate establishment of workers' state. The workers' rule will not only ensure the immediate introduction of the norms outlined in this section of the Programme as the most basic rights of the people in Iran but will also, by implementing the whole of its communist programme, prepare the conditions for real and complete liberation and equality.

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General Principle and Framework

1. Establishment of a political structure based on people's direct and permanent participation in political power.
2. Establishment of far-reaching, unconditional, guaranteed and equal political and civil rights and liberties for all. Abolition of any kind of discrimination according to sex, ethnicity, nationality, citizenship, race, religion, age, and so on.

3. Introduction of such general economic and welfare norms, as well as a progressive labour law, that impose the highest standard of living, welfare and economic security for people on the existing capitalist system.

4. Legislation of laws and measures to radically and swiftly push aside reactionary, discriminatory and degrading beliefs, customs and traditions and help the development of a free and open culture, values and human relations.

5. Introduction of laws and policies which turn Iran into a source of support for progressive struggles, progressive social values and relations, and workers' and socialist struggles around the world.

The above general principles to be implemented at once through the following measures:

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The Structure and Organs of Political Power

Council rule

Our times more than any other have brought to full view the real disenfranchisement of the people and the formal nature of their participation in political power under liberal and parliamentary democracies. A society that is to ensure wide popular participation in government and in the legislative and executive process cannot be based on parliament and on the system of delegatory democracy. Exercise of power at various levels, from the local up to the national level, has to be carried out by people's own councils, acting as both legislative and executive. The supreme ruling organ will be the national congress of representatives of people's councils. All persons over the age of 16 are recognised as vote-carrying members of their local council and have the right to run for all positions in the local council or for representation to higher councils.

Dissolution of the army

The army and professional armed forces in the existing society are but the armed mercenary bands of the ruling class, organised at the expense of the working people to keep them under subjugation and to protect the economic interests and the home market of one country's bourgeoisie against

another. Despite the fact that the ruling class tries to conceal the class nature and the real function of its army under various covers, portraying it as a public organ created to serve society as a whole, the intimate connection of armies with ruling classes, and their role in protecting the interests of the masters of society is clear to the majority of people – and this not only in Asian, African and Latin American countries, where the repressive role of the army and police has been blatantly obvious, but also in Europe and North America, where the myth of an apolitical military has survived longer.

The Worker-communist Party stands for the dissolution of the army and professional armed forces.

The army, Pasdaran (Islamic guards) and other professional armed forces, as well as all secret military, security and espionage organisations should be dissolved.

A militia force of people's councils, based on universal military education and universal participation in security and defence duties, replaces the professional army that stands separate from and above the people.

In addition, the party believes that the following principles must be applied in any case and under all circumstances, whilst armed forces exist:

Repealing the practice of unquestioning obedience in the armed forces. All military personnel have the right to refuse to carry out orders which they regard as being in conflict with the laws of the country or which contradict their own conscience and principles.

Every person has the right to refuse to take part in war or in any military activity that is incompatible with his/her principles and beliefs.

Members of law-enforcement agencies must always wear their uniforms on duty and bear their weapons unconcealed. Formation of armed forces without uniform or conducting of missions as armed

police in civilian clothes is forbidden. It is the right of every citizen to have knowledge of the presence of armed law-enforcement forces in her community and vicinity (workplaces, residential areas, roads, etc.).

Members of the military have the right to take part in political activities and join political parties. Political parties, trade unions and other organisations have freedom of activity inside military forces.

Abolition of unelected bureaucracy.

Direct popular participation in

administration

All political and administrative organs and posts in the country are to be elective and revocable whenever the majority of the electors so decide. Persons elected to such posts should receive salaries not higher than the average wage of workers. Direct supervision by people, through their councils, of the activities of all administrative bodies. Simplification of the hierarchy, language and working procedures of state bureaus in order to make people's intervention in them and their control a simple task. Enhancement of work ethics and respect for citizens and clients in the public service. Any abuse of position of authority by officials, bribery, nepotism, discrimination, deviation from legally defined rules and procedures, or failure to carry out the provisions of law etc., should result in prosecution in common courts as major offences. Strict prohibition of the use of facilities and resources of public office for private purposes.

Unconditional right of individuals to sue any state official in common

courts.

An independent judiciary. Legal justice for all

The judicial system and the concept of legal justice in every society are a reflection of the social relations and the economic and political foundations of that society. The judicial sphere – from the corpus of laws and the prevailing interpretation of right, fairness and justice, to the institutions, administration and procedures of judicial power – is part of society's political superstructure that protects the existing economic and class foundations. Thus, genuine legal justice and its equal application to all, and a truly independent and fair administration of justice, require a fundamental refashioning of the existing class society.

As a step towards this goal, and to ensure the most equitable judicial practice possible in the existing society, the Worker- communist Party calls for the immediate implementation of the following basic principles:

1 – Complete legal independence of judges, courts and the judicial system from the executive.

2 – Judges and other judicial authorities to be elective by people, and revocable whenever the majority of the electorate so decide.

3 – Abolition of special courts; all trials to take place in common courts.

4 – All trials to be open and public. Trial by jury in all major criminal offences. The right of the accused and their lawyers to accept or

reject judges or members of the jury.

5 – In all trials, the accused is presumed innocent until proven guilty, and the burden of proof lies with the prosecutor or the plaintiff.

6 – The country's judicial principles and the rights of the individual before the judicial system are described in more detail in later sections of the Programme.

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A Better World – Part Two – 3

Individual and Civil Rights and Liberties

Bourgeois apologists claim that respect for individual and civil rights is a hallmark and a linchpin of their system. The truth is that out of the five billion or more people who live under the rule of capital today, only a fraction, and that only in a handful of countries, can be said to enjoy any sort of stipulated and fairly stable individual and civil rights. The lot of the overwhelming majority of people in the capitalist world is a more or less absolute lack of political rights, despotic regimes and organised state terrorism and violence. But even in the industrialised countries of Western Europe and North America these rights are merely a fraction of rights and liberties that people demand and deserve today. Moreover, the economic subjugation of working people by capital and the direct relation that exists between civil rights, on the one hand, and property, on the other, make these rights devoid of any real or serious meaning. Besides, the experience of people

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in these countries during times of economic crisis clearly shows that the survival of even these nominal rights directly corresponds to the economic circumstances of the capitalist class, and that they readily come under attack whenever they have got in the way of profitability and accumulation of capital.

Genuine individual and civil liberties can only be realised in a society that is itself free. By eliminating class and economic subjugation, workers' communist revolution will open the way for the most far-reaching freedoms and opportunities for the individual's self-expression in the various domains of life.

At the same time, the worker-communist party struggles for the realisation and protection of the widest individual and civil rights in the present society. These undeniable and inviolable rights, in their outlines, are as follows:

1 – The right to live. Immunity of body and mind against any violation.

2 – The right to a livelihood. The right to the necessaries of a normal life in the present-day society.

3 – The right to leisure, recreation, rest and relaxation.

4 – The right to education. The right to enjoy all the educational resources available to society.

5 – The right to health. The right to enjoy all the existing facilities for protection against injury and disease. The right to enjoy all health care and medical facilities available to society.

6 – The right to individual independence. Prohibition of enslavement and forced labour under any guise or justification.

7 – The right to socialise and have a social life. Prohibition of segregation of people from the social environment and denying them opportunity of association with others.

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8 – The right to seek and know the truth about all areas of social life. Prohibition of censorship and control by the state or media magnates and managers over the information made available to the public.

9 – The right to enjoy a healthy and safe environment. The right of people and their representatives to monitor and control the effects on the environment of the activities of the state and enterprises.

10 – Unconditional freedom of belief, expression, assembly, press, demonstration, strike. Unconditional freedom of organisation and of formation of political parties.

11 – Full and unconditional freedom of criticism. The right to criticise all political, cultural, ethical, and ideological aspects of society. Any invocation of national, patriotic, religious and other 'sanctities' to restrict the freedom of criticism and expression is to be prohibited and declared illegal. Prohibition of religious, patriotic, nationalistic, and other forms of intimidation aiming to suppress free expression of opinion.

12 – Freedom of religion and atheism.

13 – Universal and equal suffrage for everyone over the age of 16, regardless of sex, religion, ethnicity, nationality, occupation, citizenship, creed or political belief. The right of every person over 16 to run for any representative body and to hold any elected position or office.

14 – Prohibition of inquisition. The right of every person to refuse to testify against themselves to avoid self- incrimination. The right to remain silent about one's personal views and beliefs.

15 – Unconditional right to choose one's place of residence. Freedom of travel and movement for everyone over 16, man or woman. Prohibition of any form of permanent control of movement within the country by the state or law-enforcement authorities. Abolition of any restrictions on exit from the country. Immediate and

unconditional issuing of passport and travel document on demand.

16 – Prohibition of imposing any restriction on the entry and exit of citizens of other countries. Granting of citizenship to any applicant who accepts the legal obligations of citizenship. Unconditional issuing of residence and work permits to applicants of residence in Iran.

17 – Inviobality of people's privacy. Inviolability of the person's home, correspondence and conversation and its protection against any form of intrusion by any authority. Prohibition of bugging, pursuit and surveillance. Prohibition of collecting information on people without their express permission. The right of all to obtain and study all the information that state authorities have on them.

18 – Freedom in choice of employment.

19 – Unconditional freedom in choice of clothing. Abolition of any official or implied requirements on the amount or type of clothing that men or women should wear in public. Prohibition of any form of discrimination or restrictions on the basis of people's clothing and appearance.

20 – The right of people's elected representatives to check and monitor the activities, documents and offices of the state. Prohibition of secret diplomacy.

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A Better World – Part Two – 4

Equality and Elimination of Discrimination

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Human equality is a central concept in worker-communism and a basic principle of the free socialist society that must be founded with the abolition of the class, exploitative and discriminatory system of capitalism. Communist equality is a concept much wider than mere equality before the law. Communist equality is the real equality of all people in economic, social and political domains. Equality not only in political rights but also in the enjoyment of material resources and the products of humanity's collective effort; equality in social status and economic relations; equality not only before the law but in the relations of people with each other. Communist equality, which is at the same time the necessary condition for the development of people's different abilities and talents and for society's material and intellectual vitality, can only be realised by ending the division of people into classes. Class society by definition cannot be an equal and free society.

Our struggle for equality and elimination of discrimination in the existing capitalist societies is an integral part of our wider and basic struggle to advance the social revolution and set up an equal and free communist society. Our party stands in the front line of every social struggle against discrimination and inequality and believes that equal rights and the equal application of laws to all, irrespective of sex, nationality, religion, race, belief, creed, employment, status, citizenship, etc., must be proclaimed as the inviolable cardinal principle behind all law. Any law and regulation that is in violation of this principle must be immediately repealed, and all cases of discrimination by any individual, authority or institution, state or private, should come under criminal investigation.

Equality of women and men.

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Prohibition of discrimination according to sex

Discrimination against women is a hallmark of the world today. In the major part of the world, woman is officially and legally denied even the meagre rights recognised for men. In the economically backward countries and where religion and old traditions have a stronger hold on society's political, administrative and cultural structure, oppression of women takes the grossest and most outrageous forms. In advanced countries, and even in societies where, thanks to women's rights movements and worker-socialist struggles, sexual discrimination has apparently disappeared from the text of most laws, woman is still in many respects in practice discriminated against through the mechanisms of the capitalist economy and the existing male-chauvinistic traditions and beliefs.

In itself, woman's oppression is not an invention of capitalism. However, capitalism has developed this detestable legacy of history into a cornerstone of contemporary economic and social relations. The roots of women's inequality today are to be found not in the archaic beliefs and intellectual and cultural heritage of extinct societies, or in the ideas of the prophets and religions of the Dark Ages, but in the industrial and modern capitalist society of today; in a system that views the sexual division in the production process as an important economic and political factor in ensuring the profitability of capital. Creating labour flexibility in hiring and firing, introducing divisions, competition and frictions among workers, ensuring the existence of more disadvantaged sections within the working class itself as a way of pushing down the living standard of the whole class, distorting the human and class self-consciousness of the working people and revamping archaic and worn-out prejudices – these are the blessings of women's oppression for modern contemporary capitalism and pillars of capitalist accumulation today. Irrespective of whether or not capitalism intrinsically and as such is

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compatible with women's equality, the capitalism of the end of the 20th century specifically has based itself on this inequality and will not back off without stiff and violent resistance.

The worker-communist party struggles for the full and unconditional equality of women and men. The major laws and measures that must be introduced at once in order to begin the elimination of discrimination against women are as follows:

1. Declaration of the full and unconditional equality of rights of women and men the immediate repealing of all laws and regulations that violate this principle.

2. Immediate measures to ensure complete equality for women and men in participation in the political life. Women's unconditional right to take part in elections at all levels and to hold any position and office – political, administrative, judicial, and so on. Repealing of any law and regulation that restricts the right of women to participate equally in politics and administration.

3. Full equal rights and status for women and men in the family. Abolition of man's privileges as the so-called 'head of the household', and laying down of equal rights and obligations for woman and man regarding the care and upbringing of children, control and running of family's finances, inheritance, choice of residence, housework, professional employment, divorce, and, in case of separation, custody of children and division of, and claims to, the family's property. Prohibition of the Ta'addod Zowjat (Islamic right of multiple marriages for men). Prohibition of Seegheh (Islamic rent-a-wife). Abolition of all the slavish obligations of the wife towards the husband under Islamic laws and ancient traditions. Prohibition for the husband to have sex with his wife without her consent, even without use of violence. Such cases, upon the woman's pressing charges, should be prosecuted as rape. Prohibition of imposing housework or specifically housekeeping duties on the woman in the family. Imposition of severe penalties on abuse, intimidation, restriction of freedom, degradation and violent treatment of women and girls in the family.

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4. Complete equality of women and men in economic life and employment. Equal application of labour and social security laws to women and men. Equal wage for similar work for men and women. Abolition of any restrictions on the kind of employment available to women. Full equality of women and men in all matters relating to wages, insurance, holidays, working hours, work shifts, job assignments, job grading, promotions and worker representation at various levels. Implementation of special rules and standards at enterprises to allow women to have secure employment and professional carriers, such as prohibition of laying off pregnant women, prohibition of assigning heavy work to pregnant women, and the provision at the workplace of special facilities needed by women. 16 weeks' maternity leave and one year's leave for child care. The latter to be used by both woman and man by their own agreement. Formation of inspection and supervisory councils to monitor compliance of enterprises with these regulations.

Formation of equal opportunities tribunals with powers to rule on women's equality in employment and workplace, state or private, commercial or non-commercial. Prosecution and heavy punishment of establishments that infringe the principle of absolute equality of women and men in employment.

Free locally-available centres and facilities such as day-care centres, nurseries and children's clubs which, given the disproportionate burden of housework and child care on women as things are today, would facilitate the entry of women into various fields of activity outside the home.

5. Abolition of all restrictive and backward cultural and moral codes and customs which hinder and contradict woman's independence and free will as an equal citizen. Abolition of any restriction on the right of woman – single or married – to travel and choose place of residence at will, whether inside or outside the country. Abolition of all laws and regulations which restrict woman's right in choice of clothing, employment and social intercourse. Prohibition of any form of segregation of women and men in public places, establishments, assemblies, meetings and public transport. Mixed education at all levels. Prohibition of use in official correspondence and discourse by

state or private authorities and establishments of such titles as Miss, Mrs, sister or any other appellations that define woman by her position vis-�-vis man. Prohibition of interference by any authority, family members or relatives, or official authorities in the private lives of women and their personal, emotional and sexual relationships. Prohibition of any form of degrading, male-chauvinistic, patriarchal and unequal treatment of women in public institutions. Prohibition of reference to gender in job adverts. Elimination of any prejudiced and degrading references to women from text books and educational material, and inclusion, instead, of special courses and teaching material on the issue of women's equality. Formation of supervisory boards and special law- enforcement departments to deal with cases of harassment and discrimination against women.

6. Direct action by relevant state authorities to fight male-chauvinistic and anti-woman culture in society. Support and encouragement to non-government women's rights groups.

Equal rights for all residents of the country irrespective of citizenship

1 – Full unconditional equality of all residents of Iran, regardless of citizenship, in all legal rights and duties, whether individual, civil, political, social or welfare rights.

2 – Equal application of labour and social welfare laws to all workers irrespective of citizenship.

3 – Issuing of entry, residence and work permits, insurance cards,

etc. to all applicants of residence in Iran.

Prohibition of racial discrimination

The worker-communist party struggles resolutely against racism and any form of racial prejudice. Not only should the laws of the country explicitly prohibit discrimination according to race, but emphatic opposition to racial discrimination around the world should be a permanent part of foreign policy.

Elimination of national oppression

The worker-communist party stands for the complete end to national oppression and to all forms of national discrimination in the laws of the country and government policies. The party regards nationalism, national identity and national pride as very backward and harmful notions that negate the universal human identity of people and stifle the cause of equality and freedom. The party is strictly opposed to any categorisation of the population according to nationality and any definition of national identity for people. It stands for setting up a system in which all residents, irrespective of nationality, have equal rights as members of the society, and where no discrimination, negative or positive, is exercised on the basis of nationality.

As a general principle, the worker-communist party stands for people of different national origins to live as free citizens with equal rights within larger national entities. This strengthens workers' ranks in the class struggle. Nevertheless, in cases where a history of national oppression and strife has made coexistence within existing states difficult, the party recognises the right of oppressed

nationalities, if they so choose in a direct and free referendum, to secede and form independent states.

The Kurdish question

In view of the long history of national oppression against the Kurdish people in all the countries of the region, and the bloody suppression of protest movements and struggles for autonomy in Iranian Kurdistan under both the Shah's regime and the Islamic regime, the worker-communist party, in principle, recognises Kurdish people's right to separate from Iran and form an independent state through a free referendum. The party strongly condemns any violent and military actions to prevent the exercise of this free choice. The worker-communist party calls for immediate resolution of the Kurdish question in Iran by means of a free referendum in the Kurd-inhabited regions of western Iran under the supervision of recognised international bodies. Such a referendum should be held after the withdrawal of the central government's military forces and a period of free activity for all the political parties in Kurdistan to inform people of their programmes, positions and views. As a rule, the worker-communist party will, at any point in time, favour Kurdistan's secession only if it is strongly probable that such a path would provide the working people in Kurdistan with more progressive civil rights and a fairer and more secure economic and social environment. The official position of the party will therefore be decided in accordance with the interests of the working class as a whole and of the working people in Kurdistan specifically, after a concrete appraisal of the situation at the time.

The worker-communist party regards the idea of Kurdish autonomy called for by the nationalist forces in Kurdistan not as a step forward but rather as a recipe for perpetuating Kurdish and-non-Kurdish national identities within a single national framework. National

autonomy is bound to eternalise and officially legitimise national divisions, and set the stage for the continuation of national conflicts in the years to come.

The worker-communist party considers as invalid and illegal any settlement of the political future of Kurdistan, be it a unilateral decision of the government or result of deals between the central government and local parties, introduced without the explicit consent of the people of Kurdistan themselves in an open and free referendum.

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Modern and Progressive Social and Cultural Norms

The political and administrative norms and practices in society should be modern, secular and progressive. This requires the complete purging of the state and administration from religion, ethnicity, nationalism, racialism and any ideology and institution that contradicts the absolute equality of all in civil rights and before the law, or stifles freedom of thought, criticism and scientific enquiry. Religion and nationalism by nature are discriminatory and reactionary trends and incompatible with human freedom and progress. Religion specifically, even if it remains a private affair of the individual, is a barrier to human emancipation and development.

The establishment of a modern secular state and political system is merely the first step towards complete emancipation from religious,

national, ethnic, racial and sexual bigotry and prejudice.

The Worker-communist Party calls for the immediate implementation of the following:

Religion, nationality and ethnicity

1 – Freedom of religion and atheism. Complete separation of religion from the state. Omission of all religious and religiously-inspired notions and references from all laws. Religion to be declared private affair of the individual. Removing any reference in laws and in identity cards and official papers to the person's religion. Prohibition of ascribing people, individually or collectively, to any ethnic group or religion in official documents, in the media, and so on.

2 – Complete separation of religion from education. Prohibition of teaching religious subjects and dogmas or religious interpretation of subjects in schools and educational establishments. Any law and regulation that breaches the principle of secular non-religious education must be immediately abolished.

3 – Prohibition of any kind of financial, material or moral support by the state or state institutions to religion and religious activities, institutions and sects. The state to have the duty to eradicate religion from the various spheres of social life by informational means and by raising the public's level of education and scientific knowledge. Omission of any kind of reference in the official calendar to religious occasions and dates.

4 – Prohibition of violent and inhuman religious ceremonies. Prohibition of any form of religious activity, ceremony or ritual that is incompatible with people's civil rights and liberties and the principle of the equality of all. Prohibition of any form of religious manifestation that disturbs people's peace and security. Prohibition

of any form of religious ceremony or conduct that is incompatible with the laws and regulations regarding health, hygiene, environment and prevention of cruelty to animals.

5 – Protection of children and persons under 16 from all forms of material and spiritual manipulation by religions and religious institutions. Prohibition of attracting persons under 16 to religious sects or religious ceremonies and locations.

6 – All religious denominations and sects to be officially registered as private enterprises. Subjection of religious establishments to enterprise laws and regulations. Auditing, by legal authorities, of the books and accounts and transactions of religious bodies. Subjection of these institutions to the tax laws which apply to other business enterprises.

7 – Prohibition of any physical or psychological coercion for acceptance of religion.

8 – Prohibition of religious, ethnic, traditional, local, etc. customs that infringe on people's rights, equality and freedom, their enjoyment of the civil, cultural, political and economic rights recognised under the law, and their free participation in social life.

9 – Confiscation and repossession of all property, wealth and buildings that the religious establishments have acquired by force or through the state and various foundations under the Islamic regime. These to be placed in the hands of popularly- elected bodies for the benefit of the public.

10 – Prohibition of ascribing individuals or groups to a particular nationality, in public, in the media, in offices, etc. without their express permission.

11 – Omission of any reference to the person's nationality in identity cards, official documents, and official business.

12 – Prohibition of incitement of religious, national, ethnic, racial, or sexual hatred. Prohibition of forming political organisations which

openly and officially proclaim superiority of one group of people over others on the basis of their nationality, ethnicity, race, religion, or sex.

Cohabitation, family, marriage and divorce

1 – The right of every couple over 16 to live together by their own choice. Any form of coercion of individuals by any person or authority in choice of their partner, in cohabitation (or marriage) or in separation (or divorce) is prohibited.

2 – Simple registration is sufficient for cohabitation to be recognised officially and be covered by family laws, if the parties so wish. Secularization of marriage. Prohibition of religious rituals and recitals at state ceremonies for registration of marriage. Holding or not holding special ceremonies, religious or secular, for marriage has no bearing on its validity or status before the law.

3 – Prohibition of any form of financial transaction in marriage, such as fixing a Mehriyye, Shirbaha, Jahizieh (various cash and kind payments by the two parties), and so on, as terms and preconditions of marriage.

4 – Prohibition of Ta'addod Zowjat (Islamic right of multiple marriages for men) and Seegheh (Islamic rent-a-wife).

5 – Equal rights for woman and man in the family, in the choice of residence, in care and education of children, in decisions concerning the family's property and finances, and in all matters concerning cohabitation. Abolition of man's special status as the head of the household in all laws and regulations, and equal rights for woman

and man in supervision of the family's affairs.

6 – Unconditional right of separation (divorce) for woman and man. Equal rights and obligations for woman and man in the custody and care of children after separation.

7 – Equal right of partners during separation with respect to property and resources that have been acquired or used by the family, during cohabitation.

8 – Abolition of the automatic transfer of father's family name to children. The decision on the child's surname to be left to the mutual agreement of the parents. If no agreement is reached, the child takes the mother's surname. References to parents' names to be omitted from identity cards and other official identity documents, such as passport, driving license, etc.

9 – Material and moral support by the state to single parents. Special support to mothers who have separated or born their children outside marriage, in the face of economic difficulties or reactionary cultural and ethical pressures.

10 – Abolition of all anachronistic and reactionary laws and regulations that treat the sexual relationship of men or women with persons other than their espouses as a crime.

Children's rights

1 – Every child's right to a happy, secure and creative life.
2 – Society is responsible for ensuring the well-being of every child irrespective of her family's means and circumstances. The state is obliged to ensure a uniform, and the highest possible, standard of welfare and development opportunities for children.

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3 – Allowances and free medical, educational and cultural services to ensure a high standard of living for children and youngsters regardless of family circumstances.

4 – Placing all children without a family or familial care under the guardianship of the state, and providing for their life and education in modern, caring, progressive and well-equipped centres.

5 – Creation of well-equipped, modern nurseries to ensure that all children are provided with a creative educational and social environment regardless of family circumstances.

6 – Equal rights for all children, whether born in or outside marriage.

7 – Prohibition of professional employment for children and youngsters under 16.

8 – Prohibition of abuse of children at home, in school and the society at large. Strict prohibition of corporal punishment. Prohibition of subjecting children to psychological pressure and intimidation.

9 – Decisive legal action against sexual abuse of children. Sexual abuse of children is deemed a grave crime.

10 – Prosecution and punishment of anyone who in any way and under any pretext impedes children, whether boys or girls, from enjoying their civil and social rights, such as education, recreation, and participation in children's social activities

Sexual relationships

1 – Free and consensual sexual relationship is the undeniable right of anyone who has reached the age of consent. The legal age of consent for both women and men is

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15. Sexual relationship of adults (persons over the age of consent) with under-age persons, even if it consensual is illegal and the adult party is prosecuted under the law.
2 – All adults, women or men, are completely free in deciding over their sexual relationship with other adults. Voluntary relationship of adults with each other is their private affair and no person or authority has the right to scrutinise it, interfere with it or make it public.

3 – Everyone, especially the youth and adolescents, should receive sexual education, and instruction on contraceptive methods and safe sex. Sexual education should be a compulsory part of high school curricula. The state is responsible to rapidly raise the population's scientific awareness of sexual matters and the rights of the individual in sexual relationship, by putting out information, setting up clinics and advisory services accessible to all concerned, special radio and TV programmes, and all other effective methods.

4 – Contraceptives and VD prevention devices should be freely and easily available to all adults.

Abortion

Few phenomena like abortion, i.e. the deliberate elimination of the human embryo because of cultural and economic pressures, display the inherent contempt for human life in the present system and the incompatibility of existing class society and exploitative relations with human life and well- being. Abortion is a testimony to the self-alienation of people and their vulnerability in the face of the deprivations and hardships that the existing class society imposes on them.
The worker-communist party is against the act of abortion. The party fights for the creation of a society where no pressures or circumstances would drive people to performing or accepting this

act.

At the same time, as long as the adverse social circumstances do drive a large number of women to resorting to backstreet abortions, the worker-communist party in order to prevent abuse by profiteers and ensure protection of women's health calls for the introduction of the following measures:

1 – Legalization of abortion up to the twelfth week of pregnancy.

2 – Abortion after the twelfth week to be legally permitted if there is danger to the health of the mother (until that time when Caesarean section and the saving of the foetus is possible given the latest medical expertise). Such cases to be ascertained by the competent medical authorities.

3 – Wide and freely available facilities for pregnancy tests. Instruction of people in their use to ensure quick detection of unwanted pregnancies.

4 – Free abortion and free post-abortion care in licensed clinics by gynaecologists.

5 – The decision whether to have or not to have an abortion rests with the woman alone. The state has the duty, however, to inform her before her final decision, of the dissuasive arguments and recommendations of the scientific authorities and social counsellors as well as of the financial, material and moral commitments of the state to her and her child.

To reduce the number of abortions, the worker-communist party also calls for the introduction of the following urgent measures to prevent unwanted pregnancies and to free women from economic, cultural and moral pressures:

1 – Broad sexual education of people on contraceptives and on the importance of the issue. Widely accessible advisory services.

2 – Wide and free access to contraceptives.

3 – Allocation of adequate funding and resources to help the women who are considering having an abortion because of economic constraints. The state should stress its duty and readiness to take care of the child should the mother decide to give birth to the child.

4 – Resolute campaigns against prejudices and moral pressures that drive women to abortion. Active state support to women against such pressures, prejudices and intimidations.

5- Campaign against the ignorant, religious, male- chauvinistic and backward attitudes that hinder the growth of people's sexual awareness and, specifically, impede women's and young people's wide use of contraceptives and safe-sex devices.

The fight against drug addiction and drug trafficking

1 – Strict prohibition of sale and purchase of narcotics and the prosecution and severe sentencing of those responsible for the illicit production, and trafficking of drugs.

2 – Helping the fight against drug addiction by eliminating the social and economic grounds that push people to drugs, and protection of drug addicts from pushers and drug-trafficking networks.

3 – Decriminalization of the life of drug addicts. Helping drug users off drugs, through:

a – Creation of state clinics that meet the needs of drug users on the condition that they agree to take part in rehabilitation programmes.

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b – Legalisation of the possession of some drugs in quantities needed for personal use. Free hypodermic needles and syringes to be made available through chemists and clinics to all those who need them to protect drug users from diseases such as Aids and Hepatitis and to contain the spread of such diseases.

c – Prohibition of any form of exile, incarceration or isolation of drug users on the grounds of their addiction. Drug addiction per se is not a crime.

The fight against prostitution

Active fight against prostitution by eliminating its economic, social and cultural grounds, and decisive action against prostitution-organising networks, middlemen and racketeers.
Strict prohibition of organisation of prostitution, dealing, broking, and profiting by the work of prostitutes.

Decriminalization of the life and work of prostitutes. Helping prostitutes to regain their social dignity and self-esteem and freeing their lives from criminal networks and gangs, through:

1 – Legalising sale of sex by the individual as self-employment. Extending the protection of laws and law-enforcement authorities to prostitutes against the mob, racketeers, extortioners, pimps, etc.

2 – Issuing of work permits to those who work as self- employed prostitutes. Upholding their honour and prestige as respectable members of society, and helping them to organise in their own union.

3 – Free special preventive and therapeutic medical services to prostitutes to protect them from diseases and injuries resulting from employment in this profession.

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4 – Consistent educational work, encouragement and practical help by responsible state organs to help prostitutes give up prostitution and receive vocational training for work in other areas.

Principles of trials

1 – The accused is innocent until proven guilty.

2 – Trials must take place free of provocation and pre-judgments and under fair conditions. The location of the trial, the judge and the composition of the jury must be so determined as to ensure such conditions.

3 – The accused and their counsels have the right to know and study all the proofs, evidence and witnesses of the prosecution or the plaintiff prior to the trial.

4 – The verdict of the court is appealable, at least once, by the accused, the prosecution or by both parties to the lawsuit.

5 – Prohibition of stirring up public preconceptions about the trial and about the persons involved while the trial is in progress.

6 – Prohibition of trial under circumstances where the pressure of public opinion has denied or compromised the chance of an impartial trial.

7 – The testimony of police carries the same weight as that of other witnesses.

8 – Judges and courts must be totally independent of the process of enquiry and investigation. The legal correctness of the investigation procedure should be supervised and approved by special judges.

9 – In the penal laws, abuse and violation of the person's body and mind, violence against children, so-called crimes of passion committed against women, domestic violence, hate crimes against

specific groups of people, and crimes involving violence and intimidation in general, should be treated as much more serious offences than violation of property rights and wealth, both state and private. Vindictive and so-called exemplary punishments should be replaced by punishments meant to be corrective and to shield society from the recurrence of the crime.

Rights of the accused and offenders

1 – A person may be held only for a maximum of 24 hours without being charged. The place of detention should not be a prison but part of the usual quarters of law-enforcement authorities.
2 – Before the arrest, detainees should be informed of their rights.

3 – Everyone has the right to call in a lawyer or witnesses to their arrest and interrogation. Everyone has the right to make two phone calls to their lawyer or relatives, or anyone else they wish, within the first hour of detention.

4 – The law-enforcement authorities do not have the right, before charging a person, to take fingerprints or photographs of the individual or to perform medical checks or DNA tests on the individual without his/her permission.

5 – Upon arrest, the detainees' next of kin or anyone else they decide should be immediately notified of their detention.

6 – Acts of torture, intimidation, humiliation or psychological pressure against detainees, the accused or the convicted is strictly forbidden and is deemed a serious crime.

7 – Obtaining confession by threat or inducement is prohibited.

8 – Peaceful resistance to arrest, peaceful attempt to escape from

prison, or evading arrest are not crimes in themselves.

9 – The law-enforcement authorities do not have the right to question or search people or enter their private premises without their permission or the authorization of competent judicial authorities.

10 – Coroner's office, forensic and technical labs responsible for the examination of physical evidence, should be independent of the law-enforcement organs. These institutions work directly under the judiciary.

11 – The police complaints tribunal should be independent of the police and law-enforcement authorities. The findings of the tribunal should be made public.

12 – Files and information kept by law-enforcement bodies on any individual should be readily accessible to him/her for study.

13 – Prisoners are covered by the labour law and the general social welfare and health care laws

14 – Prisons should be administered by institutions independent of the police and law-enforcement organs and under the direct supervision of the judiciary.

15 – The right of elected inspectors to visit prisons as they see fit and without notice.

Abolition of the death penalty

The death penalty must be immediately abolished. Execution or any form of punishment that involves violation of the body (mutilation, corporal punishment, etc.) is prohibited under all circumstances. Life imprisonment must also be

abolished.

Respect for the dignity of people

1 – Prohibition of openly or implicitly grading the dignity and social worth of people on the basis of rank, position, religion, nationality, citizenship, sex, level of income, appearance, physical features, education, and so on.
2 – Prohibition of libel and defamation.

3 – Prohibition of performing medical, pharmaceutical or environmental experiments and tests on individuals without their knowledge and express consent. Prohibition of any violation of the person's physical integrity (such as sterilization, removal or transplantation of organs and limbs, genetic manipulation, abortion, circumcision, and so on) without the knowledge and consent of the individual.

4 – Prohibition of the use of academic, religious, state or military titles and appellations (such as General, Ayatollah, Doctor, Reverend, and so on) outside the appropriate professional environment. In official and state communication every person must be referred to only by his/her first name and surname. Prohibition of the use of derogatory titles and terms in describing various social groups, by any authority or instance, state or private.

5 – Prohibition of designating first and second class, deluxe and standard, etc. sections in public transport, railways, airlines, state hotels, leisure centres, holiday resorts, and so on. Such services must be available to all at a uniform and highest possible standard

The mass media

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Public access to popular press and broadcast media. Creation of public radio and TV networks and sharing of broadcast time among the various organisations and associations of people, such as councils, parties, societies, etc. Total abolition of media censorship – political or otherwise

National and local languages

Prohibition of a compulsory official language. The state may designate one of the current languages in the country as the main language of administration and education, providing that the speakers of other languages enjoy the necessary facilities in the political, social and educational life and that everyone's right to use their mother tongue in all social activities and to enjoy all public facilities is protected.

Changing the Farsi alphabet

In order to help bridge the gap that separates Iranian society from the forefronts of scientific, industrial and cultural progress in the world today, and in order to help people benefit from the results of this progress and take a more direct and active part in it, the official Farsi alphabet should be systematically changed to Latin.
The party also calls for:

1 – English language to be taught from early school age with the aim of making it a prevalent language of education and administration.

2 – The Western calendar (the official calendar in use internationally today) to be officially recognised and to be used in official documents alongside the local calendar.

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Labour and Social Welfare Laws

As long as capital dominates human society, as long as people have to sell their labour power to the owners of means of production and work for capital in order to make a living, and as long as the system of wage-labour and the buying and selling of human labour power survives, no labour law, no matter how many clauses it contains in favour of workers, will be a truly free labour law – a workers' labour law. The Workers' true labour law is the abolition of the wages system and the creation of a society where all contribute, voluntarily and according to their abilities, to the production of necessities of life and the welfare of all, and share in the products of this collective effort according to their needs.

However, as long as the wage system is in existence, the worker-communist movement aims to force such conditions upon the labour relations and labour laws in this system as to ensure the highest possible degree of welfare and the best working conditions for workers, and to protect the working class and people as a whole from the destructive consequences of the wage-labour system. In this struggle worker-communism also aims for the introduction of employment practices and standards which help enhance workers' self-consciousness as a class, their organisation and their struggle.

The labour and social welfare laws, just like all the rights and obligations of citizens, must apply to foreign workers and other foreign residents of the country without exception. The worker-communist party stands for equal rights for all workers irrespective of citizenship, nationality, religion, sex, and so on. The party's main demands regarding labour and social welfare laws are

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as follows:

Labour law

1. Full and unconditional freedom of worker organisation.
2. Complete and unconditional freedom of strike. Strikes do not need the prior permission of the state or any state authority. Full payment of wages during the period of strike. Equal right of access to the media for strikers to put their case and respond to the claims of the state and employers. Banning strikes under any pretext such as 'national and patriotic interests', 'state of emergency', 'war', etc, would be illegal.

3. Prohibition of employing strike-breakers or police or army personnel to replace strikers, in all enterprises, state or private.

4. Right of workers to stop work while their complaints regarding actions of the employers and their officials, safety issues or unforeseen problems in the workplace, are being dealt with.

5. Freedom of picketing. Freedom for all to join picket lines, whether or not they are employees of the enterprise concerned.

6. Immediate introduction of a maximum 30-hour working week (five six-hour working days), a 25-hour week in heavy occupations, and regular reductions in working hours every five years. Inclusion in the working hours the time spent for lunch breaks, commuting, taking showers after work, literacy classes, technical training and general assembly meetings.

7. Two consecutive days off in the week. Weekends to be changed to Saturday and Sunday [from the present Friday] to conform to the standard in most countries, especially the industrially advanced. A minimum 30-day annual vacation. Short emergency leaves, in addition to the annual holiday, and without reductions in pay, to

attend to unforeseen personal problems. The opportunity for women workers to take two days off during menstrual periods.

8. Prohibition of overtime. Workers' normal pay should be at such a level that no worker would be forced to do overtime out of economic necessity.

9. First of May to be a public holiday, as the International Workers' Day.

10. Eighth of March to be a public holiday, as the International Women's Day.

11. Prohibition of piece-rate work, such as piecework and contract work.

12. A minimum wage set by workers' representatives.

13. Automatic rise in the minimum wage proportional to inflation.

14. Determination of the minimum annual rise in wage levels by collective bargaining at the national level between representatives of workers' organisations and representatives of employers and the state.

15. Equal pay for women and men for similar work.

16. Prohibition of paying wages in kind. Prohibition of delay in wage payments. Prohibition of fines or any deductions from pay under various pretexts. Payment of wages for valid absences, periods of sickness and recuperation, strikes or any stoppage of production for various reasons or due to the actions of the employer.

17. Prohibition of linking workers' pay to circumstances and factors other than the act of work itself (such as increase in output, productivity, discipline, production targets, etc.). Workers' pay should be paid in one piece, as wages.

18. Prohibition of child labour. Prohibition of professional

employment of children and youngsters under the age of 16.

19. Prohibition of assigning heavy work to pregnant workers or workers whose health would be at risk owing to their specific physical conditions. The right of every worker to refuse to do a work which he/she considers to be physically or mentally harmful.

20. Prohibition of firing. Full payment, at the same level as the last pay received, to workers whose enterprise is shut down, until new employment is found. The state has the responsibility to find comparable employment for workers who lose their jobs because of the closure of the enterprise. Vocational re-training, financed by the state, for workers whose profession or line of work becomes obsolete due to changes in technology.

21. Adequate unemployment benefit, according to the last pay received, for every unemployed person over 16 who is ready for work. Adequate unemployment benefit and other necessary allowances for all those who for physical or psychological reasons are unable to work.

22. Lowering of the retirement age for women and men to 55 years or after 25 years of employment (after 18 years in heavy occupations). Payment of a pension equivalent to the highest pay received when employed. Improvements in the pension along with the general rise in the level of wages.

23. Ensuring a safe and healthy workplace and minimization of work hazards, without regard to cost, by applying the most advanced facilities and resources in use throughout the world. Regular medical observation and check-ups against occupational hazards and illnesses, by medical establishments independent of employers, and financed by employers and the state.

24. Full insurance of workers against injuries and damages due to work, whether they occur inside or outside the workplace and without the worker needing to prove negligence on the part of employer or management. Full payment of pension to workers who

become incapacitated as a result of injuries resulting from work.

25. Formation of adjudication and arbitration councils with members elected by workers.

26. Drawing up and enforcement of the internal regulations of workshops and economic and production units by workers' elected representatives.

27. Formation of workers' inspection commissions to supervise the correct implementation of the labour law throughout the country in all workplaces and establishments, including domestic services.

28. Obligation of the employer to consult with workers' representatives on any decision which in a substantial way alters the work methods, working hours, the workplace and the number of employees.

29. Right of workers' representatives to inspect the books of the enterprise in which they work. The employer is obliged to provide the workers with all the information they need in the course of the inspection

Social welfare and insurance

The party calls for and is committed to:
1. Payment of unemployment benefit equivalent to the official minimum wage to all unemployed persons over 16.

2. Payment of state pension equivalent to the official minimum wage to all persons over 55 who lack a retirement pension.

3. Placing under the guardianship of the state all children and youngsters under 16 whose subsistence and proper welfare is not

taken care of through the family.

4. Free and universal health care. Regular check-ups and comprehensive vaccination of children. Adequate and suitable diet to be guaranteed for all children irrespective of family income, region, place of residence, etc. Eradication of epidemic and infectious diseases arising from polluted and unhygienic environments. Regular examination of everyone against heart diseases, common cancers and illnesses whose timely diagnosis is essential to their effective treatment. Serious improvement of standards of public health and the public's health-awareness. Expansion and organisation of the medical and therapeutic resources in a way that makes immediate access to a doctor, medicine and treatment easy for all.

5. Compulsory and free universal education until the age of 16. Free and universal higher education (university and specialization). Adequate grants for students. Eradication of illiteracy, and continuous raising of the public's level of education and scientific-technical awareness. Education is the right of everyone, and people's access to education and training should be totally independent of family income.

6. Guaranteed suitable housing for all, in terms of space, hygiene, safety and utilities (electricity, warm and cold water, bathroom facilities inside the building, air- conditioning, heating, connection to telephone and TV networks, and access to local public services). Housing costs must not exceed 10% of the individual's or family's income; any extra cost should be met through state subsidy. Homelessness or having to live in substandard housing is unlawful and the state authorities are obliged under the law to provide suitable housing for all citizens immediately.

7. Setting up special service centres, such as day-care centres, nurseries, canteens, self-service restaurants, modern launderettes, etc. locally and in housing estates to relieve the burden of housework and to facilitate participation of all people in social activities.

8. Creation of free sports, art and cultural facilities locally (gyms, theatres and workshops, libraries, etc.) with trainers and instructors.

9. Provision of necessary facilities for the active participation of the disabled and handicapped in all areas of social life. Provision of special facilities and equipment for the physically handicapped, in public places, on roads, housing estates, etc. Free provision of necessary technical instruments and aid devices to facilitate the daily life of the disabled.

10. Creation of facilities and service establishments to meet the needs of the elderly and to improve the quality of their lives. Provision of necessary resources and facilities to help the elderly continue to participate actively and creatively in social life.

11. Creation of a free urban bus and metro network.

12. Extension of urban services (electricity, water, telephone, educational, medical and cultural facilities, etc.) to all rural areas, and the elimination of the welfare disparity between town and country.

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International Relations

The Worker-communist Party of Iran stresses the following principles as the basis of government policy in international relations:

1 – Abolition of secret diplomacy. Subjection of foreign policy and diplomatic measures to the laws and decisions of popularly- elected legislative bodies.

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2 – Material and moral solidarity with working-class and socialist movements and all social movements in different countries which fight for similar rights and freedoms as those contained in this Programme. Exerting political and diplomatic pressure on all regimes which deny their citizens basic individual and civil rights.

3 – Helping to setup and strengthen international bodies which represent the free will of people themselves and which aim to promote the rights and welfare of people worldwide. Working for the abolition of all international imperialist and militarist organs, pacts and institutions that violate the equality and free will of the people of different countries around the world.

4 – Permanent allocation of a part of the country's human, technical and skilled resources to the goal of improving the economic and cultural life of people in the poorer regions of the world.

5 – Prohibition of the country's entry into anti-human, hegemonistic and repressive pacts.

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The Worker-communist Party of Iran calls on the working class and all those who share the party's aims and objectives to join its ranks.

The above was adopted by the First Congress of the Worker-communist Party of Iran, July 1994. Its first edition was printed in December 1997.

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