

*On The "Anti-Global Movement":*

**"Pious Wishes" Will Not Stop the Destructive Course of Capitalism.  
Only The International Proletariat, Led By Its Party, Can Put An End  
Once And For All To The System of Profit, Exploitation, Destruction and  
Wars**

“a ‘struggle’ against the politics  
of the trusts and the banks which  
does not strike at the economic basis  
of the trusts and the banks can only  
be a pacifism and a bourgeois  
reformism, so many so many pious wishes.”

*Lenin, Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism (1917)*

The “anti-global” movement, the “movement of movements”, “Seattle people”, “civil society”, “globalization from below”, “Global Social Forums”: a rainbow of names, acronyms, definitions, covering a wide variety of positions and at the same time a substantial lack of political discourse. This, in brief, is the true reality of the movement which, in recent years, has captured the attention of the media, always timely in building castles in the air and offering them up to the audience as the last word in modernity (or, depending on one’s taste, “post-modernity”!). This movement has inevitably given rise to its “master thinkers”, the radical chic journalists and intellectuals always ready to ride the crest of the wave, with egos that swell proportionally. But communists must “patiently explain”, as Lenin said, and thus, patiently, to that we turn.

### **Questions of Method**

#### *Going Over Old Ground*

Our method consists in examining and evaluating facts (both those of yesterday and of today) in the light of Marxist science. We thus move entirely against the grain of bourgeois ideology, which goes about extracting “theories” and “strategies” from the facts, as they present themselves, but which isolates every individual fact as something *new* requiring on every occasion *new* interpretations, *new* answers, *new* tactics. On the contrary, the power of communism consists precisely in its capacity to

deduce from the analysis of the capitalist mode of production in its complexity the laws of its comportment (on the economic level as well as in the domains of the social and the political) – laws destined to retain their validity for the entire historical arc of the dominance of this mode of production.

It is not a question of foresight and still less is Marxism for us a Bible from which to extract the appropriate chapter and verse, opening up *Capital* at random. Marxism is, rather, a *science* which, in the course of more than a century and a half, has demonstrated its own validity (and only we, as internationalist communists, can affirm this with such certainty and serenity, after having fought against all the deformations, the reversals, the distortions and the betrayals of Marxism, from Social Democracy to Stalinism). A science which, in contrast to bourgeois science, is not conditioned or limited by the inexorable law of profit, but which was on the contrary born whole from the economic, social and political subsoil (and not from the ingenious minds of “singular thinkers”), and can show itself in all its truly powerful possibilities to be a real exploration probe of today, yesterday and tomorrow.

#### *A Faceless "People"*

The variety of positions which set apart this proteiform phenomenon can only be of interest to a bourgeois sociologist or to a diligent state police inspector. On the other hand, a materialist inquiry immediately uncovers a tenacious common thread unifying all these “movements”.

The movements in fact contain French peasants pushing chauvinist agendas; priests and popes of various confessions, but all of them hand in glove with anti-communist ecumenicism; radical intellectuals with a wide audience, such as Rifkin and Klein; trade unions historically and traditionally connected with unbreakable chains to their own government bosses, such as the American AFL-CIO (to say nothing of the three major Italian unions!); ecologists looking for “solutions” within the framework of the capitalist economy; Third Worldists calling for the abolition of debts only to rush to the feet of the rulers of the bourgeois world with the declared aim of obtaining lucrative loans; NGO's, proud of their own (unconscious?) role as a bridgehead of imperialism in the markets of the Third World (like the missionaries in the epoch of colonialism); anarchists and anarcho-syndicalists who have become (and not the day before yesterday) tireless supporters of democracy as an abstract social form. The common thread unites all of them with the formless and unprincipled ideologies of the middle classes, which, consciously or not, they all embrace with enthusiasm.

These people, after having put forward a banal analysis of imperialism – one moreover acceptable to any crackpot – then converge to defend something like the “program for action” we find well summarized in the latest issue (July-August 2001) of *Bandiera Rossa*, the Italian publication of the

Unified Secretariat of the Fourth International: defense of public services; struggle against pollution; defense of jobs; struggle for land; cancellation of the debt; democracy: anything goes on a laundrylist from reformism to a prayer to Our Father Who Art In Heaven. To these points, we can add others, taken for example from the “Declaration of the NGO Millennium Forum” (May 2000): a different distribution of resources; international peace and demilitarization; “fair trade, not free trade”; a rigorous political control of investments in the underdeveloped countries; an end to genetic piracy <sup>1</sup>.

We could moreover continue, quoting from the countless documents produced during these months: the creation of a fund for the struggle against poverty; taxation of short-term transactions on international financial markets to help poor countries ("Tobin Tax"); the strengthening of the entrepreneurial capacity of indigenous people, who could thus become “self-employed” (which is nothing but the pious and absurd wish to develop a class of local entrepreneurs capable of exploiting local manpower: the unacknowledged objective of the... "national road to exploitation"! ). And we neglect here the whining about on the “struggle” against disease, the exploitation of women, the lack of “education”, armaments...

In essence, the main documents in which the “Seattle people” have expressed their own opinions about imperialism are a Franciscan hymn to the human being, to freedom for all, to the “common fatherland”, to peace and security – all these wonderful things which are, nonetheless, threatened by globalization under the control of the great multinationals, which increases inequality within and among countries. States are becoming weaker (which, for “civil society”, is obviously a threat to peace and freedom), while the transnational private sector is becoming stronger and stronger, and the free and uncontrolled market is “destroying many national economies”. The result: “the entire edifice will collapse with grave consequences for everyone” (it is clear that “civil society” cannot conceive of any social form except that in which it can wheel and deal).

### *So Many Programs, All Of Them Petty-Bourgeois*

The technique of counter-revolution is always the same: a monster takes shape which is declared to be outside of capitalism, and against this monster people expose themselves with blunted and rigorously inter-classist weapons in the name of peace and freedom. This was the nature of anti-fascism, and it is the nature of the anti-globalization movement of today. Tenaciously rooted in the humus of reformism, all these movements have nothing, and can have nothing to say on the *fight for a revolutionary international class autonomy*; on the dialectical relationships which exist between *class struggle*,

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<sup>1</sup> We quote from the Italian version, in M. Pianta, *Globalizzazione dal basso. Economia mondiale e movimenti sociali*, Manifestolibri 2001, p. 163. Subsequent quotations are from the same text

*classes and a class party; on the principles and ends of such a struggle; on the historical necessity of breaking any tie to the middle classes, to the state apparatus and to opportunism.*

Where were the anti-globalists when, in Genoa, a few weeks before the G8 meeting, the police charged, with the greatest enthusiasm, against the steel, metal and auto workers who had thrown themselves into a struggle for bread and their jobs? Where was "civil society" during the tremendous clashes between the police and the laid-off Daewoo workers several months earlier? For what reason could they not muster the energy to show up in the plazas of Argentina, filled with tens of thousands of starving demonstrators?

But, it will be said, "What about *violence*? Don't we have here *two totally different movements*, one insurrectionary, the other reformist? Is it not perhaps true that the most determined groups used violence (however blindly), but a violence both generous and class-based? Perhaps poorly led, but revolutionary? Do we not therefore have a duty to come to the defense of those who 'struggled', leaving in their wake dead, wounded and prisoners, against the forces of the police at the recent meetings of the G8 (Genoa being the last instance), thus, for these same reasons, going up against the state and against imperialism?"

There is no doubt that the bestial virulence which the Italian state (following the Swedish state, the Czech state etc.) displayed at the G8 meeting in Genoa only confirms that this "right-wing" government, exactly like the "left-wing" governments of European Social Democracy, speak the same language: that of the increased armoring of the state and the fascist transformation of its entire apparatus. But this should not be a surprise for anyone, except for those who idealize the state and see in the state "the realization of the Idea' [...]. And from this then follows a superstitious reverence for the state and for everything connected with it, which takes root the more readily as people from their childhood are accustomed to imagine that the affairs and interests common to the whole of society could not be managed and safeguarded in any other way than as in the past, that is, through the state and its well-paid officials" <sup>2</sup>.

Once again: this should not be a surprise to anyone except those who have forgotten or who never knew that all states are characterized by "the institution of a *public force* [which] consists simply of armed men, but also of real appendages, prisons and penal institutions of every kind, of which the society of the gens knew nothing" <sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> F. Engels, quoted by Lenin in *State and Revolution*, p.66

<sup>3</sup> F. Engels., *Origins of the Family, Private Property and the State*.

Thus to reduce questions of class and violence solely to the “form” assumed by social tensions would be, obviously, to lose sight of the reality in which classes move. The party naturally has an obligation to subject to its own critique every aspect of society in which initiatives of struggle break out and in which clashes between elements and social groups develop, even when the finalities determining such struggles and clashes are not in the direction of a revolutionary overthrow. It is also the duty of the party to intervene, within the concrete limits of its current possibilities, in these demonstrations, to clarify its own positions, which can neither compromise on the level of tactics nor ideology. Our inquiry on the contrary should begin from the class content of such tensions, counterposing not *methods of struggle but programs of action, the effective prospects of struggle and historical goals*. Only on this basis will we be capable of judging such movements, and thus establish our position in their struggles, on the basis of our theoretical baggage and historical experience.

As we have previously indicated, part of our method consists in continually repeating, at the cost of being boring or “out of fashion”, and certainly “against the current”, the key concepts of communism, particularly where economic and political analysis is concerned, because it is the latter which make possible an understanding of the real and which indicate the strategy to be followed. In the specific case under consideration, the vacuity of the statements and proclamations of the “anti-global” or, if one prefers, “Seattle people”, can be gauged precisely in terms of these key concepts, such as “the state”, “imperialism”, “democracy”, “classes”, and of analyses grounded in Marxism such as that relative to the economic crisis which erupted in 1975. Let us then go over that old ground.

### **Presentation of Our Economic Analysis**

It is necessary to begin with the economy, because it is precisely on that terrain that perverse or inadequate analyses wind up orienting the “movement” toward perverse or inadequate objectives, and at any rate outside of any revolutionary perspective: and this quite independently of the “good faith” of many participants, really convinced that they are “in motion” and “struggling” against a series of “injustices”. We will thus proceed by pulling apart the economic analyses of the “anti-global” movement, not merely and not so much by submitting them to a critique (for they amount to very little), but by counterposing to them a real Marxist analysis.

#### *Imperialism*

A study of the making of a world economy, which Marxism foresaw from its birth (as anyone can verify by reading the *Manifesto of the Communist Party* of 1848), should begin with an exposition of the formation of the capitalist mode of production – demonstrating that the global market is an

inexorable law, even if in reality we are dealing with distinct capitals and markets, involved in ferocious competitive struggle. Such a study would show, moreover, that the contradictions are *created not in the market but in production*, that such contradictions shift tensions and inequalities onto the international market simply by the fact that it is in such markets that the realization of surplus-value extracted in the production process takes place.

The fundamental tendencies of the current economic period, an understanding of which is indispensable for formulation a correct revolutionary politics, can be summarized in the following way, which our current laid out in its re-reading *Capital* over half a century ago, and of which we do not need to change a comma in order to “understand contemporary reality”.

1. Modern capitalist production cannot exist if there is not a capital, which does not belong to the owner of the means of production, provided by the banks at a certain rate of interest. “The bourgeois, arrived at his ideal form, reveals himself henceforth to be stripped bare of all property, mobile and immobile, without money, and above all without scruples. He does not invest or risk anything of his *own*, but the mass of products, and hence the profit, legally remain in his hands. *The bourgeois got rid of private property, bringing about not a few other benefits: it is his strategic position which must be snatched away from him* [our emphasis]. (“Proprietà e capitale”, in *Prometeo*, III, series II, Nov. 1950).

2. The modern company presents the following characteristics: “It has no headquarters, factory or plant of its own, but from time to time installs its ‘workshop’ and its own officies in one location placed at its disposal as a customer, which even runs up a debt on the books for this plant, workshop and impromptu constructions. [...] He might have tools and machines of his own, *but more often, transplanting himself to disparate and far-away locations* [our emphasis], he either leases them or acquires and resells them on the spot, or manages to have himself paid the entire amortization. [...] In this typical form, the enterprise subsists, along with surplus-value and profit, which are generally very high, whereas all property in real estate, moveable tools and even a standard of ready cash disappears” (ibid.)

### *The Lesson of Lenin*

It would, moreover, be sufficient to re-read the whole text of Lenin on Imperialism to grasp the abysmal vacuity of the supposedly “anti-globalist” analyses. Lenin's text analyzes the development of capitalism between the late 19th and early 20th centuries – a development implicit in the very nature of capitalism and spelled out in *Capital*: the *irresistible* tendency toward monopoly, toward the interpenetration of industrial and finance capital, toward a preponderant role of banks and the stock market, toward the exportation of capital, toward the internationalization of economic life, toward the subjection of entire

continents, of the entire world, to the dictates of imperialist capitalism, toward control of the sources of raw materials and of commercial routes, toward ever-sharper inter-imperialist conflicts... We read:

Private property, based on the labor of the small property owner, free competition, democracy, i.e. all the slogans, in short, which the capitalists and their press use to deceive the workers and peasants, are things of the past. Capitalism has transformed itself into a world system of colonial oppression and of financial strangulation of the overwhelming majority of the world's population by a handful of "advanced" countries. And this "booty" is shared between two or three world marauders (England, America, Japan), armed to the teeth, which involve the whole world in *their* war, for the sharing of *their* booty <sup>4</sup>.

One can laugh (or cry) reading the "anti-globalist" proclamations, which think they are so "new" that they require "new languages", "new strategies", and "new discourses", and which in reality do nothing but discover the obvious, and then refuse to act in consequence. For example: "The agreements of the Uruguay Round primarily favored the transnational corporations, at the expense of national economies, of the workers, the peasants and the environment [*the latter three – by the way – being of course notoriously well defended by national economies!*]. Further, the WTO system [*the arch-enemy of the "anti-globalist" militants!*], its rules and procedures are not democratic [*and why should they be, given that it is an organization of capital for capital?!*] and are not accessible to civil society [??], thus marginalizing the larger part of the world population" <sup>5</sup>.

Pathetic! Much better to return to Lenin!

In the chapter entitled "The Concentration of Production and Monopolies", Lenin retraces the stages through which an ever-greater competition and concentration develops, in which monopolies are born, and imperialism comes into being (and at the same time the necessary material basis for the passage to a *higher mode of production* is set). He writes:

Competition becomes transformed into monopoly. The result is immense progress in the socialization of production. In particular, the process of technical invention and improvement becomes socialized.

This is no longer the old type of free competition between manufacturers, scattered and out of touch with one another, and producing for an unknown market. Concentration has reached the point at which it is possible to make an approximate estimate of all sources of raw materials (for example, the iron ore deposits) of a country and even, as we shall see, of several countries, or of the whole world. Not only are such estimates made, but these sources are captured by gigantic monopolist combines. An approximate estimate of the capacity of markets is also made, and the combines divide them up amongst themselves by agreement. Skilled labour is

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<sup>4</sup> Lenin, "Preface" to the French and German editions of *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*, pp. 10-11. This and all subsequent quotations are taken from the International Publishers 1939 edition.

<sup>5</sup> From "Documenti del controvertice di Seattle: Stop Millennium Round, Nov. 30, 1999"; quoted in M. Pianta, *Globalizzazione dal basso*, cit., p. 157.

monopolized, the best engineers are engaged; the means of transport are captured: railways in America, shipping companies in Europe and America. Capitalism in its imperialist stage arrives at the threshold of the most complete socialization of production. In spite of themselves, the capitalists are dragged, as it were, into a new social order, a transitional social order from complete free competition to complete socialization. Production becomes social, but appropriation remains private. The social means of production remain the private property of a few. The general framework of formally recognized free competition remains, but the yoke of a few monopolists on the rest of the population becomes a hundred times heavier, more burdensome and intolerable (*Imperialism*, p. 25)

The banks play a special role in this process, and in the chapter entitled “The Banks and Their New Function” we can read, after a long presentation of facts and documentation:

In the place of individual capitalists, there emerges a single collective capitalist. The bank, holding the current accounts of many capitalists, seems to perform a purely technical, auxiliary task. But once this operation has assumed gigantic dimensions, a handful of monopolists dominate the industrial and commercial relations of the entire society in such a way that, through their relationships among themselves, current accounts and other financial operations, they attain above all the possibility of being precisely informed on the ongoing businesses of individual capitalists, and thus of controlling them, and influencing them, expanding or restricting credit, making credit easy or difficult, and ultimately of completing deciding their fate, of fixing their profitability, of taking away their capital or giving them the possibility of rapidly increasing it, and in enormous proportion, and so on (*ibid.*, p. 35).

Thus: “The concentration of production; the monopoly arising therefrom; the merging or coalescence of banking with industry – this is the history of the rise of finance capital and what gives the term ‘finance capital’ its content” (*ibid.*, p.47), that is, the creation of a “financial oligarchy” of which Lenin analyzes in detail the characteristics, the strategies, their ability “to resort with impunity to all sorts of shady tricks to cheat the public” (*ibid.*, p.49); the cycle through which “capitalism, which began in small-scale usury capital, ends its evolution by creating a gigantic usury capital” (*ibid.*, ff) , and thus concludes the chapter entitled precisely “Finance Capital and Financial Oligarchy”:

It is characteristic of capitalism in general that the ownership of capital is separated from the application of capital to production, that money capital is separated from the application of capital to production, and that the rentier, who lives entirely on income obtained from money capital, is separated from the entrepreneur and from all who are directly concerned in the management of capital. Imperialism, or the domination of finance capital, is that highest stage of capitalism in which this separation reaches vast proportions. The supremacy of finance capital over all other forms of capital means the predominance of the rentier and of the financial oligarchy; it means the crystallization of a small number of financially "powerful" states from among all the rest (*ibid.*, p.59)

We now come to the main characteristic, the real motor of imperialist expansion: the export of capital. And once again we have to quote at length, because the passage touches a real nerve and because it is always good to reiterate:

Capitalism is commodity production at the highest stage of development, when labour power itself becomes a commodity. The growth of internal exchange, and particularly of international exchange, is the characteristic distinguishing feature of capitalism. The uneven and spasmodic character of the development of individual enterprises, of individual branches of industry and individual countries, is inevitable under the capitalist system. England became a capitalist country before any other, and in the middle of the nineteenth century, having adopted free trade, claimed to be the “workshop of the world”, the great purveyor of manufactured goods to all countries, which in exchange were to keep her supplied with raw materials. But in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, *this* monopoly was already undermined. Other countries, protecting themselves by tariff walls, had developed into independent capitalist states. On the threshold of the twentieth century, we see a new type of monopoly coming into existence. Firstly, there are monopolist capitalist combines in all advanced capitalist countries; secondly, a few rich countries, in which the accumulation of capital reaches gigantic proportions, occupy a monopolist position. An enormous “superabundance of capital” has accumulated in the advanced countries. (*ibid.*, p.62)

Consider now the following passage, which seems to have been written precisely (but almost a century earlier) for our angry “anti-globalists”:

It goes without saying that if capitalism could develop agriculture, which today lags far behind industry everywhere, if it could raise the standard of living of the masses, who are everywhere still poverty-stricken and underfed, in spite of the amazing advance in technical knowledge, there could be no talk of a superabundance of capital. This “argument” the petty-bourgeois critics of capitalism advance on every occasion. But if capitalism did these things it would not be capitalism; for uneven development and wretched conditions of the masses are fundamental and inevitable conditions and premises of this mode of production. As long as capitalism remains what it is, surplus capital will never be utilized for the purpose of raising the standard of living of the masses in a given country, for this would mean a decline in profits for the capitalists; it will be used for the purpose of increasing those profits by exporting capital abroad to the backward countries. In these backward countries profits are usually high, for capital is scarce, the price of land is relatively low, raw materials are cheap. The possibility of exporting capital is created by the fact that numerous backward countries have been drawn into international capitalist intercourse; main railways have either been built or are being built there; the elementary conditions for industrial development have been created, etc. The necessity for exporting capital arises from the fact that in a few countries capitalism has become “over-ripe” [*and today it is rotten and putrid! Editor's Note*] and (owing to the backward state of agriculture and the impoverished state of the masses) capital cannot find “profitable” investment (*ibid.*, p.63).

Less than thirty lines, which make a clean sweep of all the theoreticians of “redistribution”, of “aid to poor countries”, the “Tobin Tax”, and more generally of all the “anti-globalists”!

An exposition of Lenin's entire text cannot be undertaken here. We can merely note that the chapter immediately after the analysis of the export of capital is entitled "The Division of the World Among The Great Powers" and shows how "capital created a world market long ago", with the creation of "great monopoly associations" and "world cartels", how these "state and private monopolies interpenetrate each other and how all of them are merely links in the chain of the imperialist struggle among the most conspicuous monopolists for the division of the world" (*ibid.*, ff.). And then, in the chapter "The Division of the World Among the Great Powers", the dynamic and the effects of such a division are traced out, through the control of the world and of raw materials, a division which is ever more acute and aggressive, giving rise to countless local conflicts, culminating *inevitably* in world conflicts.

Summing up, then, what are the characteristics of imperialism?

- 1) The concentration of production and capital developed to such a high stage that it created monopolies which play a decisive role in economic life.
- 2) The merging of bank capital with industrial capital, and the creation, on the basis of this "finance capital", of a "financial oligarchy".
- 3) The export of capital, which has become extremely important, as distinguished from the export of commodities.
- 4) The formation of international capitalist monopolies which share the world among themselves.
- 5) The territorial division of the whole world among the greatest capitalist powers is completed (*ibid.*, p.89) <sup>6</sup>

A long detour, but a necessary one.

### *Nothing New*

To these analyses, we can only add the following considerations, on the basis of the development of postwar imperialism:

1. Although the oldest capitalist zones (England, France, the U.S.) also continue to grow, their curve never inflects, but the average rates of growth are continually declining.

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<sup>6</sup> The completion of the division of the world only means that there no longer exist any "places in the world unoccupied by capital"; the successive events of the capitalist economy, nonetheless, are continuously putting up for grabs the status quo of the division of the world, through inter-imperialist conflicts.

2. The U.S. operates a whole series of productive sectors on a monopoly basis (e.g. telecommunications, the Internet), which guarantee increased super-profits and makes possible the creation of an enormous balance-of-payments deficit. The European Union's loans to the U.S. are based on the promise of future payments in dollars and on the fact that interest payments on foreign capital invested in the U.S. are made in dollars.
3. The “globalizing” network, in its brute reality, is that which attracts the European economies in an iron grip toward the U.S. precisely because of the super-profits which the U.S. are still able to guarantee, especially through the control it maintains over international financial flows and thanks to the preeminent role of the dollar in the international system of payments.
4. For their part the U.S. fulfill their role as international policemen, making possible repositioning, more or less mandatory, of capitals in the world arena, using every type of apparatus or organization of international control and of an internal market whose absorptive capacity, while enormous, <sup>7</sup> (it was no accident that consumer credit was invented in the U.S.) can only exhaust itself, in spite of the infinity of media persuaders, with the sharpening of the crisis of overproduction and the increasing rates of unemployment. The current crisis, which elicits copious tears from various winners of the Nobel Prize for economics and which again and again brings down interest rates, (reflecting the tendencial fall of the average rate of profit in the world economy), cannot fail to have long-term consequences both at home and abroad (Europe) for the American power.

At the end of the post-war cycle, therefore, the lesson to be drawn from this drugged economy is the following. Since its progressive surge already came to an end a century ago, it can only set in motion two systems of accumulation, based on public debt and bank credit respectively. In both cases, it is nothing but an enormous process of surplus-value extraction, carried out under the laws of the most democratic and civil states: pacifist by definition, fascist in fact.

#### *Neo-Liberalism and State Control: Two Sides of the Same Coin*

It is necessary to re-establish certain essential foundations, rejecting any alternating counter-position between the two forms and stages of capitalism, free-trade liberal and monopolistic, respectively. In no part of the world has monopoly capitalism ever existed without free trade subsisting in many sectors. We wrote in 1956: “If capitalism develops mercantilism to the maximum and expands markets, through

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<sup>7</sup> As recently as 1996, the U.S. internal market absorbed 91.4% of GNP; the comparable figures were 79.2% for Italy, 80.7% for Germany, 77,1% for UK, and 81.3% for France; the only country similar to the U.S. was Japan, with 91.1%.

competition, to unprecedented geographical areas, it does so by breaking up pre-existing monopolistic spheres reflecting the limited circulation of commodities. If capitalism, historically, claims the category of *competition* for itself, the earlier seigniorial form of property claims for itself the category of *monopoly*. The original accumulation of money capital often arose from monopolies, as did the early capitals of kings and states which gave rise to large manufacture, to the great mining and navigational companies [...]. The capitalists always maintained that their system achieved perfection once the obstacles of the earlier phase were eliminated, impediments they attributed to the presence of feudal remnants, and Marx proved that even if this hypothesis was admitted, his revolutionary theses were fully confirmed: the first of them was the relapse into monopoly and economic totalitarianism”<sup>8</sup>. In 1912, or two years before the outbreak of the First World War, the German economist Kestner (quoted by Lenin in *Imperialism*) showed the systems to which the capitalist economy had to resort: depriving competitors of raw materials; forming reserves of labor power to be drawn upon when necessary (organized today in statist trade unions); depriving competitors of means of transport and closing markets; methodically lowering prices in order to ruin those not organized in cartels; depriving competitors of credit and, where necessary, boycotting them. This Kestner, though a bourgeois, had understood the reality of capitalism much better than the deluded anti-globalists of today! After almost a century, two world wars, hundreds of local wars, tens upon tens of millions of civilian deaths, ethnic slaughters, incomparable environmental destruction, frightening increases in proletarianization on a world scale, “civil society” enters the arena asking for “more justice” from exactly those organizations (the UN, the World Bank, the IMF, the WTO, “governments”, etc.) which, *as products of the successes of the last world massacre*, are solely and exclusively the representatives of cannibalistic imperialisms whose single purpose is to delay the revolutionary demolition of capital! “Civil society” thinks that imperialism can “correct its own errors”, eliminate its own egoisms, and become more altruistic. This vision of things – the vision of priests, of traitors to Marxism and of imbeciles – thinks that with good will the multinationals (the necessary evolution of what were once called “cartels”) can eliminate crises. Let us once again turn to Lenin:

On the contrary, when monopoly appears in *certain* branches of industry, it increases and intensifies the anarchy inherent in capitalist production *as a whole*... The disparity between the development of agriculture and that of industry, which is characteristic of capitalism, is increased... [capital meanwhile] overflows the brim, as it were, flows abroad, etc. At the same time the extremely rapid rate of technical progress gives rise more and more to disturbances in

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<sup>8</sup> *Struttura economica e sociale della Russia di oggi* (1956; Edizioni Il programma comunista, 1976), pp.380-381.

the co-ordination between the various spheres of national economy, to anarchy and crisis. (*Imperialism*, pp.28-29).

It is an old Marxist thesis, and one we find completely confirmed in reality, that imperialism and finance capitalism are a superstructure of the old capitalism. All the facts which so upset “civil society” are there to confirm it <sup>9</sup>.

1. In the middle of the 18th century, the income of the most advanced countries was a little more than twice that of the underdeveloped countries; today the difference is more than twenty times greater. That is an immediate consequence of the industrial revolution, of the process of concentration and centralization of capitals, of the successive development of the holding companies in the sector of production and especially in the financial sector (the parent company controls the majority of stock in an international chain of affiliates). As Lenin wrote: “The prevalence of finance capital over all remaining forms of capital leads to [...] the selection of a few states which are financially ‘stronger’ than others” (*Imperialism*, p.90).

2. Confirming the Marxist law of uneven development, and against the theories of super-imperialism or of a federation of imperialisms which have been in fashion from Kautsky onward, there remain important differences between countries, on the level of organizations, economic strategies, control of resources, specializations in different sectors, and in military power. The portions of GDP invested abroad differ significantly; the flow of industrial profit oriented toward finance capital has grown continuously since the end of the Second World War, and in fact grinding down the situation of workers in industry.

3. The deregulation of markets, which elicits such tears in “civil society” (i.e. the liberalization of financial activities, with the removal of the national constraints on the mobility of capital, the expansion of financial and speculative activities throughout the world), broke through during the 1980's. According to the bourgeois economists, up to that point states had maintained control over the movement of local capitals, so that reproduction expanded within national borders, “in order to ensure a balanced economic development” <sup>10</sup>. That this is an absurdity is clear to everyone except to those who, for decades, drew their inspiration from self-management and “socialism in one country”. Capital, by its nature, invests profit where it can and where it pleases; it speaks no national language except the international language of surplus value, to be extracted in any place and in any fashion. The fact that

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<sup>9</sup> We only mention some of them, in order to avoid the incomprehensions reported by Pianta himself, *op. cit.*

there has been a hypertrophic acceleration of finance capital over productive capital (a phenomenon which, as we have seen, is nonetheless a fact intrinsic to the production mechanism of capital, which is the production of growing surplus-value and thus to be located in ever more distant places), arises from the fact that the crisis of the 1970s – a structural crisis of overproduction, delineated decades in advance by our movement and which closed the period of postwar accumulation to mark the beginning of a period of instability, only to end in either revolution or the Third World War – the crisis of the 1970s signified on a world scale the growing difficulties in valorizing productive capital. The crisis thus led to a hyperspeculation, diverting the plethorical excess of capital into the world markets of finance; and there is no nation state which can limit its movement without bringing about the collapse of the entire system. But the latter is, as we have seen, exactly what causes “civil society” to tremble with fear.

### *"Civil Society" and the Reality of Imperialism*

For what reason are the globalizing transnational monopolies, the multinational corporations, the “decline of the autonomy and of the efficacy of national politics”, the enemies of “civil society”? Essentially, because these monsters are no longer democratic, and impose their own laws on smaller capitals: they are no longer satisfied with the average rate of profit, but demand a higher one. This has the result of snuffing out any possibility of “development” for backward countries, and world disequilibria are increasingly sharpened. The remedy, for “civil society”, can thus only be the following: the small capitals must attain the same rate of profit as the big ones; this will revitalize the national and international economy; production and distribution will recover their lost harmony. The predatory aims of neo-liberal globalization, therefore, are to be opposed by the efforts of governments, in the name of everyone.

But "desires" are one thing, and harsh reality is another. Here it is:

1. The countries of the so-called Third World do not, in fact, aspire to expel the capitals which are crushing them, but rather to attract more of them: this would in fact be tantamount, in an exquisitely petty-bourgeois logic, to more development, in a “healthy competition” with the imperialist states, in the unrealistic hope of sucking in a growing share of international capital, provided that the interest is “fair”.

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<sup>10</sup> Cfr. M. Pianta, *op. cit.*, p. 43.

2. Cancelling the debts of the “poor countries” is a phrase with no economic or political meaning. These states can impose nothing on the octopus of imperialism, and imperialism can do nothing but loot the planet to sustain itself. The papal invocation to the Eternal Father for more justice on earth is one thing, the unrhetorical necessity that the underdevelopment of three-fourths of humanity exists to prop up the hyperdevelopment of the other fourth, another. “Cancelling the debts” of the “Third World” means nothing but preserving them on the world market like tanning hides, to be beaten even more finely.

3. Equal consumption and trade, or better “fair and equitable” trade in the U.S. and in Burkina Faso is certainly a nice thing. However, a similar situation, which Marx, already in 1847, showed to be impossible between two individual producers, becomes farcical in 2003 when applied to nation states. The supporters of “fair and equitable” consumption, their gossip aside, ought to think more about the “fascist”-type politics of states – i.e. their capacity for intervening in the economy and in the internal and foreign markets, a capacity which developed on the international level precisely to prevent any form of “equality” in either the sector of production or of consumption. Let us listen to and gloss from Marx, who writes in *The Poverty of Philosophy*: “In every epoch the good bourgeois and the philanthropic economists complacently formulated these innocent vows” <sup>11</sup>.

And Marx quotes Boisguilbert, according to whom it is necessary that foodstuffs are always present simultaneously and with proportionate prices: if their prices are “disturbed”, the result is the disruption of the market, and poverty. This is followed by a quote from Atkinson:

“ [...] All nations have attempted, at various periods in their history, by instituting numerous commerial regulations and restrictions, to effect, in some degree, the object here explained [...] But the natural and inherent selfishness of man [...] has urged him to break down all such regulations” (p.62)

At issue is the fair proportion between supply and demand, “which is once again becoming the object of so many pious wishes” and which “ceased to exist long ago”. Marx comments: “*Those who, like Sismondi, wish to return to the correct proportion of production, while preserving the present basis of society, are reactionary...*” (ibid., our emphasis). In fact, at that time, in the early 19th century, production followed consumption, whereas today “production precedes consumption, and supply does violence to demand”.

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<sup>11</sup> The following quotations are from Karl Marx, *The Poverty of Philosophy*, Beijing 1996, pp. 61ff.

Thus, the egalitarian exchange that philanthropic economists dreamed up at the individual level has been transformed, in the heads of today's deluded people, into equal exchange between those productive and distributive monsters called capitalist states.

### *Ever-Renascent Proudhonism*

Those who yesterday were against “monopolies” (and first of all the PCI, the Italian “communist” party, obviously for filthy electoral motives: its courtship of the petty bourgeoisie, the middle classes, etc.) and who today have become the “pluralist left”, shout against “neo-liberalism” and “deregulation” (but always for the same sordid reasons). They talk about a “third way” that exists only in their heads: a democratic alliance between the strongest and the weakest governments (hopefully joined together in a confederation), in the name of some “eternal principle” sanctioned by an Enlightenment agenda or some other paleo-Christian movement: *liberté égalité fraternité* in society! in politics! in the economy!, all in the name of superceding egoisms and the “guilty indifference” which “unfortunately” still has a grip on the “powerful of the world”. This is, then, a movement with a Proudhonist flavor, with a not unimportant difference. In 1850, that was in fact the outlook of artisans and those who worked the land, who were still small proprietors not yet expropriated by the impetuous advance of capitalism, and who saw in the course taken by history the laws of their inexorable death as classes constituting the backbone of a superseded economic system condemned to extinction. Today, it is a movement of the petty bourgeoisie and the labor aristocracy of the imperialist countries which, while not in any way owning the means of social production, a long period of post-war accumulation allowed to snatch off the backs of the underdeveloped countries and an impoverished proletariat a *relative* well-being, and which see their own real economic and social catastrophe emerging on the horizon.

Precisely for this reason, they seek to set themselves up as “civil society”, full of those “pious wishes” which make them believe they are the arbiters of the world – a world which, quite to the contrary, will in the end crush them in the grip of the crisis and international competition on the labor market. The only hope for salvation of these formerly privileged groups is in openly *throwing their support for the revolutionary demands of the proletariat*, for the destruction of, and not in support for an economy which has outlived its usefulness, and which cannot overcome its contradictions except by the

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continuous expulsion of labor-power, periodic destruction of wealth and massacres of men and women in every corner of the planet.

Not even the most ardent supporter of the market today asserts that the market can have rules. The market is the jungle in which capitalists starved for profits confront themselves as well as sellers whose survival depends on the quantity of commodities they succeed in selling at the expense of their competitors. To think that the state can become a regulator of exchange means not understanding the lesson of fascism, or of state intervention in the economy: a system which is protectionist and which pushes to the maximum the contradictions in the world economic arena. These are contradictions which not even the mirage of an *absurd* “super-imperialism” such as the U.S. can avoid, because its iron laws are uneven development, the international division of labor, and competition generated by monopoly.

Once again, Lenin:

“The facts prove that the differences between the individual capitalist countries, e.g. with regard to protectionism and free trade, only determined unessential differences in the forms of monopoly, or in the moment when it appears, but the rise of monopolies, through the impact of concentration, in, generally, a universal and basic law of the contemporary stage of capitalist development [...]. The basic result of the history of monopolies are as follows: 1) 1860-1870, the apogee of free trade. Monopolies are only embryonic. 2) After the crisis of 1873, substantial developments of cartels [...]. 3) Boom to the end of the nineteenth century and the crises of 1900-1903. The cartels become one of the bases of all economic life. Capitalism has been transformed into imperialism.” (*Imperialism*, p.16 ff)

### **The “Theoretico-Political Foundations”**

If, at this point, we devote so much space to the political critique of the positions of individual spokespersons or so-called “theoreticians” of the anti-globalist movement, it is not because such positions represent any specific novelty. In our tradition, the polemic with the “contradictors” of Marxism is not an occasion to cross swords with this or that individual, but to counterpose the correct communist perspective to “discourses” which at certain moments (having as their primary accomplice the disastrous theoretical disorder produced by more than seventy-five years of counter-revolution) take center stage with a clamor inversely proportional to their real substance.

*Marcos, or "National Narrow-Mindedness"*

Rightly invoked by all the anti-globalists as the forebear of their movement, Sub-Comandante Marcos seems to have finally achieved his real objectives with the spectacular Zapatista march on Mexico City, accompanied by the worst representatives of populist publicity hounds currently on the scene, from Bové to Montalban, from Saramago to Oliver Stone. The apotheosis took place on March 11, 2001, when the march was triumphantly greeted in the Mexican capital by the newly-elected President Vicente Fox, who, the well-informed tell us, is universally recognized as the “genuine expression of the popular will”<sup>12</sup>.

What were the objectives of the movement? Essentially, two: that “the indigenous people of Chiapas can enjoy the same rights as a white man anywhere in the Republic” and that “elections are no longer synonymous with fraud” (cf. Regis Debray's 1996 interview with Marcos). The petty-bourgeois character of this program will become clear in the following analysis.

The neo-Zapatist movement began officially on Jan.1, 1994, precisely the day that NAFTA, the North American Treaty between the United States, Canada and Mexico, went into effect. This treaty, as everyone realized, meant the end of the rural economy of Chiapas, moreover already condemned to extinction, where three million indios, living in miserable conditions, are ghettoized<sup>13</sup>.

What is the cause of the malnutrition, of the disastrous sanitary conditions, of the extremely high level of poverty in Chiapas, which is nonetheless *one of the richest regions in Mexico* in terms of natural resources (water, oil, minerals, gas)? Is it really to be found in the fact that “the destiny of states is no longer [?] determined by politicians [?], but by other forces, and particularly by the financial markets and the logics of free exchange”?<sup>14</sup> Or is it rather, as Marcos himself claims, in the fact that “the values of the market [he is speaking here of the “novelty” of globalization] are imposing themselves everywhere and not only determine the functioning of governments but also that of the media, the school, and even of the family”? (Ibid.)

The unspoken implication is that *before* so-called globalization, the destiny of states was determined by politicians, *before* schools and families freely made their own decisions, *before* ethnic minorities were respected (but in Chiapas there is no ethnic question!), *before*, perhaps there was electoral fraud, and perhaps, yes, “democracy” was not perfect, but it was nonetheless *our* doing, it was a political question

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<sup>12</sup> We are quoting the article of I. Ramonet, "La marche de Marcos", *Le Monde Diplomatique*, March 2001.

<sup>13</sup> The reader will find information and comments in our article in Italian, “L'epilogo del movimento zapatista e la lotta delle masse contadine povere”, *il programma comunista*, no. 3, May-June 2001.

<sup>14</sup> This was the shameless assertion of H. Bellinghausen, “one of the foremost experts on the Zapatista insurrection” according to the definitions of *Le Monde Diplomatique*, cit.

*internal to our country*, and it was not subject to pressures from the abhorrent “outside world”, from *other people's capital*.

The anti-globalization ideology of Marcos, we freely admit, has a more tragic origin than the obviously repellent ideology of a French Bové or the Northern Italian Cobas del Latte (grassroots organisations of dairy producers). Whereas the latter are small landowners who have invested capital in land and who are today suffering from the successes of an international competition which is ruining them, in Mexico we are confronted with the collapse of a rural economy which for a long time was based on an archaic legacy, the collective use of at least part of the resources of the land (pastures, forests, water).

Throughout the world, during the past decades and centuries, wherever the mode of production tied to spontaneous harvest and ancient foraging and farming, to the land, to small plots, to very small-scale village artisanry, came into contact with the productive forces set in motion by capital, we have seen tragedies like the one which Chiapas is living through today. This was the reality of 18th-century England, and some of the most inspired pages of *Capital* are there to prove it. This was the reality, from the 16th century onward, in Latin America, and subsequently, wherever colonialism established itself. This is the reality today, for dozens upon dozens of pre-industrial peoples, who have to some extent managed to survive only by seeking refuge in the great forests, or the deserts, or in the Arctic. This is the reality in China, where we are witnessing one of the most brutal processes of urbanization and proletarianization ever to occur in the history of humanity, whereby within a few years cities with millions of inhabitants arise from nothing. We read in the *Communist Manifesto* (the italics are ours):

“The bourgeoisie cannot exist without constantly revolutionizing the instruments of production, and thereby the relations of production, and with them the whole relations of society. Conservation of the old modes of production in unaltered form was, on the contrary, the first condition of existence of all earlier industrial classes. Constant revolutionizing of production, uninterrupted disturbance of all social conditions, everlasting uncertainty and agitation distinguish the bourgeois epoch from all earlier ones. All fixed, fast-frozen relations, with their train of ancient and venerable prejudices and opinions are swept away, all new-formed ones become antiquated before they can ossify. All that is solid melts into air, all that is holy is profaned, and man is at last compelled to face with sober senses, his real conditions of life, and his conditions with his kind.

The need of a constantly expanding market for its products chases the bourgeoisie over the whole surface of the globe. It must nestle everywhere, settle everywhere, establish connections everywhere.

The bourgeoisie has through its exploitation of the world market given a cosmopolitan character to production and consumption in every country. To the great chagrin of Reactionists, it has drawn from under the feet of industry the national ground on which it stood. All old-established national industries have been destroyed or are daily being destroyed. They are dislodged by new industries, whose production becomes a life and death question for all civilized nations, by industries that no longer work up indigenous raw material, but raw material drawn up from the remotest zones, industries whose products are consumed, not only at home, but in every quarter of the globe. In place of the old wants, satisfied by the productions of the country, we find new wants, requiring for their satisfaction the products of

distant lands and climes. In place of the old local and national seclusion and self-sufficiency, we have intercourse in every direction, universal inter-dependence of nations. And as in material, so also in intellectual production. The intellectual creations of individual nations become common property. National one-sidedness and narrow-mindedness become more and more impossible, and from the numerous national and local literatures, there arises a world literature”<sup>15</sup>

Anyone who, after reading these magnificent pages from 1848, can still claim to speak of localism, of the defense of minorities, of “human rights” within bourgeois society, is either mad or reactionary. Our purpose here is not to cynically pose the question of the “peoples without history”. Their tragic disappearance, made worse by all the kinds of brutality undergone under the impact of the unstoppable expansive force of capitalism, cannot be avoided; but their sufferings can be mitigated only to the extent that such peoples are not forced to pass through the monstrosities of primitive accumulation. This is possible only to the extent that they enter into an alliance, not with their “own country”, but with the international revolutionary proletariat. Or, in other words, to the extent that they become, bringing along all the historical rage produced by exploitation and massacres, *a contingent of the international revolutionary proletariat*.

It will not be enough for Sub-Comandante Marcos to genuflect before the idolatry of the state which had become momentarily an improvised “democracy”; it will not be enough for him to adopt “a strategy of non-violence to win the hearts and minds of an international public opinion increasingly convinced that concern for the indios is a ‘sacred’ cause”; and it will not be enough for him to call for the intervention of his new ally, the Mexican national state, against “other movements, much more radical, intolerant, desperate and violent than we are. Because the ethnic question, here as elsewhere, can give rise to fundamentalist movements capable of carrying out every type of homicidal madness”<sup>16</sup>. Wherein, if we read correctly, this “more radical movement”, which disturbs the sleep of the Comandante, is nothing but the armed proletariat, led by its revolutionary party.

Having thus re-established the reality of the processes at work, in which we recognize not “new mechanisms” ostensibly requiring “new forms of struggle” (which are, in reality, always the same, the forms of the opportunists and the reformists: pacifism, democracy, human rights), but the iron grip of the laws of capital which at all times and places come down to the extraction of surplus-value from living labor, we are now dealing with the question of the forms of struggle against world capital and not merely against this or that political regime to which capital entrusts the optimization of its own functioning, whether that regime calls itself a democratic republic, or a hereditary monarchy, or fascism.

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<sup>15</sup> Marx-Engels, *Communist Manifesto*, London 1967, pp. 83-84.

<sup>16</sup> Bellinghausen, cit.

By not understanding these elementary truths, the neo-Zapatistas renounce an internationalist vision of the emancipation of the working classes, and wall themselves off in a reactionary, nationalist ideology (“we are indigenous people and we are Mexicans. We want to be indigenous and we want to be Mexicans. [...] Today we are marching so that this Mexican flag will accept us as its own”, as Marcos declared a few months ago, on the eve of the march on Mexico City). Such national/petty-bourgeois ideology feeds on the poverty and desperation of millions of individuals: but it is not the poverty and desperation of disinherited proletarians, “who have nothing to lose but their own chains”. It is the ideology of men who, having lost their own patch of land, nourish ambitions of reclaiming its ownership; who want the government to defend the status of potential small landholders against the invasion of “foreign” capital; who in substance want to perpetuate the condition of the eternally exploited, which they can overcome when, having had to give up their lands and their villages, they unite with millions of other urban proletarians in the only revolution which can restore to them, not as individuals *but as a class*, the enjoyment of gigantic collective social resources, according to a common plan.

But the lessons of history are not enough if one does not wish to understand them. In the tragedy of Chiapas, as in all the earlier ones, capitalism must follow its infernal course. The “democratic” government of Fox “freely elected by the whole people” will give its blessing to the “rights of the indios”, who will be given full citizenship and every form of guarantee of respect and cultural protection. Chiapas, martyred by centuries of capitalist pillage, will be flooded with schools, humanitarian and cultural associations, churches of every confession, movie houses, theatres and discotheques, and everything else in the gigantic Barnum circus of capitalist ideology; and in the wake of this there will come cops, hustling lawyers, tax inspectors, law enforcement officials, ecumenical priests, large and small shops, banks and bankers, with the inevitable throng of scientists ready to sacrifice themselves for the good of humanity, seeking out these or those raw materials with a potential for making a splash in New York. And then? Where will they be then, these 3.5 million wretchedly poor people today being pushed to the limits of poverty? Will the Zapatista dream of a rural society of satisfied small landowners actually be realized? However high the great wall of China that Chiapas wants to erect around itself, how will it resist the “tenuous prices of commodities” industrially produced, if not by making itself into a capitalist territory in its own right? One might easily imagine – within the limits conceded by the international capital attracted to the area – the formation of a restricted circle of Chiapan speculators and wheeler-dealers who, thanks to some miserable sum grabbed up from the murky business they might drum up in this unhappy region, will be the first to subjugate the available wage labor, not giving a damn about sermons on the violation of the local language, on the culture that must be defended, and on the traditions which are dying out. And in the putrid stench of the market economy, against which the clamor of “civil society” somehow never lifts a

finger, rural Chiapas will die. The wish, which is a hope, is that in this process the communist spark will be born.

### *Porto Alegre, or Arch-Reformism*

Porto Alegre is the capital (with ca.1.2 million inhabitants) of the southernmost region of Brazil, Rio Grande do Sul. In this region, bordering on Uruguay and Argentina, halfway between Sao Paulo and Buenos Aires, 60% of the entire economy of Latin America is concentrated. It has particularly benefited from the creation of Mercosur, the common market of South America, within which 85% of the products circulate freely (but the anti-globalists do not like to talk about the fact that this “advantage” has been enjoyed by the already-strong regional economy of the region). The productivity of labor is one of the highest in the country; technical schools and universities provide an excellent education. Privatization affects numerous firms, and particularly the petrochemical sector (Copesul). In Porto Alegre, in particular, illiteracy has been reduced to 5% (compared to a Brazilian average of 24%); infant mortality is at 21% (compared to a national average of 47%). These few facts are enough to capture the atmosphere in which one of the showcases of anti-globalist international reformism flourishes: direct democracy, i.e. the management of the budget and administrative choices, which has already lasted for twelve years.

In contrast to the Zapatista armed movement, whose social base is represented by a stratum in ferment of smallholders undergoing rapid proletarianization, the anti-globalist movement which acts in Porto Alegre, and uses it as a point of reference, refuses on principle to take up arms, adducing this curious argument from its own “Marxist” ideology. This position depends on various factors, of both a theoretical and practical nature. The latter derive from the extraordinary electoral success which the Brazilian Workers' Party (PT) <sup>17</sup> has been able to gain in the state of Rio Grande do Sul, where in 1998 one of its representatives became governor, following up on the 1989 election of the Trotskyist Raul Pont as mayor of Porto Alegre <sup>18</sup>.

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<sup>17</sup> The PT includes militants of various "left-wing" formations, trade unionists, rank-and-file democrats, Trotskyists and Christian socialists inspired by liberation theology.

<sup>18</sup> We take these facts and the following information from the article of Luis Pilla Vares, "Democrazia diretta nel sud del Brasile", published in the Trotskyist Italian journal *Bandiera Rossa*, no. 2, Sept-Oct 2000. The author is a member of the popular democratic government of the state of Rio Grande do Sul. All sentences within quotation marks, where not otherwise indicated, come from the article itself.

The theoretical factors, which are behind this electoral success, are of particular interest because they claim to invoke the class struggle and are explicitly critical in their treatment of representative democracy (to whose uses the PT still owes its own electoral success), the latter being “entirely lacking in substance”, having been “increasingly transformed into a mere ritual”. Whereas with the Zapatistas we are dealing with a popular movement which went from armed struggle to pacifism, but one still seeking legitimation from the state, in Porto Alegre we have a pacifist movement which refers to class (even though it never specifies *what* class) and which, precisely for this reason, asserts that it was elected to represent all the people in the government of an entire region (“direct democracy”). The banished souls of Bernstein and Kautsky can finally rejoice in some interclassist inferno!

Let us then have a look at the "doctrine" of these social innovators. The first point, which should be quite clear to everyone, is the thesis (as defined by the “critical Marxists”) for which “socialism” and the “authoritarian system of the single party” are incompatible. Now, it is of little interest to us to enter into the ideological muddle of the middle classes, but we obviously have an obligation to assess the scientific exactness of assertions concerning Marxism. We must, in fact, make ourselves clear on one of the vital questions of the revolution and of communism: that of the party and its relations with the class. Either the party in question, as in the case of Porto Alegre, is a gypsy circus procession of vote-mongers, “a theoretically agnostic party, on which diverse ideological tendencies have converged”, a “party of a new type, without precedent in the history of the political organizations of the working class”; or else it is a party in the Marxist tradition: neither a charismatic nor a mass nor an elite party, but the *organ of a class*, a class which is revolutionary out of objective historical finality – a party destined to lead the class in the revolutionary assault, and to maintain its historical traditions of struggle and doctrine in the phases of social ebb. That such a party must be “pluralistic”, or “non-authoritarian”, can only cross the mind of petty bourgeois who, more than having strayed, have never had any historical perspective except that of being dragged wearily – to the extent that the boss allows it – in the tow of capitalism and its diversified forms and state organizations.

The theoretically-agnostic party which does so well in Porto Alegre is thus a party which, by reaching consensus with just about everyone, can certainly not be a class party. Nevertheless, the Brazilian Trotskyists continue unperturbedly to call for “a renewal of the will to struggle among the laboring classes”, the “beginning of a new phase of conscious class struggles”. They see the evidence of this “renewal” in the strikes in France and in South Korea, in the demonstrations in Seattle, and in the struggles of the Zapatistas in Mexico. This kind of confusion flows from the ideological premises of the movement: if the party is interclassist, the *classes* it supports inexorably become the *entire population*, “civil society”; and its political directives no longer exist, or become limited to pure and simple administration of the state. What the state might be, for these gentlemen, cannot be a matter for doubt: it is a structure which allows for the peaceful evolution of democracy, within which the various

bourgeois and petty bourgeois parties divide and redistribute the “booty” of state jobs, while the basis of the bourgeois regime remains unchanged, according to the denunciatory expressions of Lenin in *State and Revolution*.

A claim on authentic Marxism is obligatory for these eclectics as well. They find it in nothing less than the “Program of the First International” (“The emancipation of the workers will be the task of the workers themselves”). The application of this formula, which in Marx represented the war cry by which the armed proletariat settled accounts with any alliance with other classes and recognized its own autonomous historical destiny, becomes in Porto Alegre the bleating invitation to a “popular public sphere”, within which one enters into a “permanent dialogue with society”. In reality, in spite of the innocuous talk about social classes, the reformists and gradualists of the entire world see in Porto Alegre the realization of their secular ideal: class collaboration in the administration; elimination of social tensions; “masses who feel they are the makers of their own destiny, deciding the tasks to be realized and the uses of the funds of the budget”. How many times have we heard, since Marxism explained the necessity of social revolution, these invocations of mass participation! How many times have we heard the Social Democrats speak, illustrating the “successes” of reformist politics, about the “clearly revolutionary contents”, of a “substantial transformation of the relations between the masses and the state”!

Lacking a theory of the state, lacking an historical perspective, these “ideologues” take the structures of the state as they are and claim to make from them a “strategic project of democracy, a step toward utopia” (whatever that might mean!). Nonetheless we wish to ask a few questions of the enlightened “socialist” managers of Porto Alegre: does there exist, or does there not exist in Rio Grande do Sul, a police force, a group of functionaries assigned to collect taxes, a special agency of repression, a parasitic bureaucracy? If so, is this not the *state*, “a force, which has emerged from society, but which places itself above it and becomes more and more distant from it”, in Engels' perfect definition? If it is not, as you claim, if it is therefore an organ for the conciliation of classes, why does Brazil have more than 300,000 men in its armed forces for “defense”, at a cost higher than expenditure on education? And if the entire people participates actively in political management, to the point that even “a lot of cooks” make “decisions about the budget”, what does that all mean except that – as has been the case for more than a hundred years in all the democracies in the world – capital tends to involve all classes in a filthy social pacifism? What does that mean except that this tendency succeeds – without having moved by a comma the mode of production and distribution of products to the advantage of the poor classes – precisely where the petty bourgeoisie and the labor aristocracy, with “cooks” at the cutting edge (undoubtedly also well administered in Rio Grande do Sul), set themselves up for the whole society?

It may be the case (but we don't believe it!) that the one million citizens of Porto Alegre decide, with equal authority and equal weight, on the uses of the budget. But, even if it is in a reformist perspective, we would like to know: is there a struggle in Porto Alegre for the limitation of the working day? of child labor? a struggle for wages? Is there, in other words, a *serious social reformism*, although this is no longer necessary, from the moment that classes seem miraculously to be disappearing? To delude oneself that “direct democracy” puts an end to “privileges, clientelism, and, in the last analysis, to the power of Capital over the whole of society” means coarsely confusing the most appearance-ridden, most frequent and most inherent aspects of capitalism – and moreover not essential to its development – with the processes by which capital extracts the very lymph from the blood and nerves of the proletariat, in the land of idleness and luxury, of which Porto Alegre is the capital, just as in any Pakistani village. It means sowing illusions among the masses that the state, the “special force of repression” over the oppressed class, can be conquered peacefully, and then utilized for other ends, without preventively breaking and preliminarily demolishing its structures.

Let us read from another fundamental text, a reading which would be beneficial to all those who are so fascinated by the decoys of the “anti-globalists”:

“The petty-bourgeois democrats, these sham Socialists who have substituted for the class struggle *dreams of harmony between classes*, imagined even the transition to Socialism in a dreamy fashion--not in the form of the overthrow of the rule of the exploiting class, but in the form of the *peaceful submission of the minority to a majority* conscious of its aims. This petty-bourgeois Utopia, indissolubly connected with the idea of the state's being above classes, in practice led to the *betrayal of the interests of the toiling classes...*”<sup>19</sup>

To thus assert that “this is a class struggle [in which] the Gramscian concept of hegemony takes on an impressive concrete dimension” is to confuse the issue, admitting the existence of a class struggle (a class which is *never identified and never given any historical perspective and finality*) in the sphere of an equivocal “hegemony” – just as all of Gramscism, so admired by populists, in which the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat is no longer even a faded memory, was wrong.

They are thus living on petty-bourgeois illusions in the city of Porto Alegre, as long as capital gives its consent. They are exporting throughout the world their middle-class ideology, of “profit sharing” and of “management of the government”. It is the worn-out orchestration of impotence, of incapacity for struggle, of total surrender to the bourgeoisie. We have become well-acquainted with this Social Democratic ideology in previous decades. It is condemned by history from top to bottom, because it has no room for maneuver, and no possibility for autonomous initiative; it lives as long as it is functional

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<sup>19</sup> Lenin, *State and Revolution*, New York, 1943, pp. 22-23 (our emphasis).

for the smoother development of big capital. Its character is to transform itself rapidly, when faced with economic crises and world wars, into crackdowns on revolutionary workers, and into the cruelest nationalism and militarism.

### *Bové, or Four-Cheeses Chauvinism*

On Aug. 12, 1999, in Millau, in the French Aveyron, a group of peasants undertakes the symbolic “dismantling” of a MacDonal’d’s under construction. Among them, a central role is played by José Bové, a trade-union official of the Confédération Paysanne, created in 1987 from the fusion of several organizations for the defense of small peasant producers. We underscore: *small peasant producers*. Not, in other words, a union of agricultural day laborers, or “rural proletarians”; but a series of organizations which are trying to protect the peasant smallholder threatened with the excessive power of either big agribusiness or international competition. These origins must be kept in mind, because they shape the “genetic heritage” of Bové’s movement and thus the character of his major contribution to the “anti-globalist” movement. Obviously we cannot review the history of the French peasant movement here: it suffices to say that it has always been the most obvious incarnation of the *reactionary* and *chauvinist* nature of the smallholder peasant, walled off in the defense of his own field, his own animals, and his own crops. There is further no need to recall the anti-bourgeois role (in the *overtly* reactionary sense) of the Vendée in the epoch of the French Revolution. Marxism has always had to neutralize this movement, precisely because of its limited and distorted vision, for its anti-proletarian connotations, for its openly conservative role, and for its “idiotism”.

Moreover, the whole discussion of the “agrarian question” is central to the communist perspective and it is precisely on this terrain that the revolutionary pretensions of all kinds have run aground. It is also an extremely complex question, which our Party has dealt with many times, among others in texts of vital importance such as *Proprietà e capitale* (1948-50) and especially *Mai la merce sfamerà l’uomo* (1953-54). We certainly cannot summarize the question here. But we can establish certain points: that capitalism is “genetically” incapable of assuring a development of agriculture consonant with the needs of the human species, but rather leads to the “ruin” and “destruction” of the land, as we have witnessed in particular in the last half-century (but the roots of the disorder are in the distant past, as important sections of *Capital* and so many writings of Marx and Engels show); that the communist perspective is not a network of small agrarian producers (whether in the Lacandona forest or in the French Aveyron), and still less linked to a reactionary “fair and equitable trade”, but rather a radically different relationship with land (and thus with agriculture and with food). What relationship? We read in *Capital*, vol. III, Ch. 46 (“Rent of Buildings. Rent of Mines. Price of Land”):

“From the standpoint of a higher socio-economic formation, the private property of particular individuals in the earth will appear just as absurd as the private property of one man in other men. Even an entire society, a nation, or all simultaneously existing societies taken together, are not the owners of the earth. They are simply its possessors, its beneficiaries, and have to bequeath it in an improved state to succeeding generations, as *boni patres familias*.”<sup>20</sup>

Millions of light years away from the petty defense of a patch of land against the multinationals!

On the other hand, Bové himself argues for this pre-bourgeois and anti-Marxist position, when he traces the roots of his own movement to the counter-position Marx-Bakunin. He says: “We are reaching back to the origins of trade unionism with the Jura Confederation, the alternative to the Marxist project. At the birth of the First International there were two currents – Marx on one hand and Bakunin on the other – which pointed to different types of organization for the workers' movement. Marx's thinking on the the trade-union question is focused exclusively [???] on the problem of the recovery of surplus-value [???] and on the role of the worker in capitalism [???]. The Jura Federation, on the other hand, has origins in the thought of Bakunin and I feel closely linked to that history”<sup>21</sup>

Having strutted his own political ignorance, the “dismantler” of McDonald’s then proceeds to explain what links him so closely to the Bakunist past: “The watchmakers’ union, in the Jura, included worker-peasants and workers, who had organized themselves in small workshops. Each one was autonomous and the boss of his own job, a productive and creative job. Their experience has given rise to a body of thought on the autonomy of the trade-union movement and on the contents of work itself.” (p.13)

Here is the constant and recurring dream of the petty bourgeoisie, in the peasant and artisan version: the dream of being (and remaining) “little bosses” in “their own little shops”. It is a dream which over the centuries has been nourished (in different but *convergent* forms) by anarchists and Social Democrats, Stalinists and workerists: to be “bosses of their own jobs”! It is here that Proudhon joins hands with Gramsci! “Let's take over the factory! Let's take over the pigsty! Everyone an independent producer!” Confronted with the inexorable march of capital, we make ourselves tiny, we seek to turn back the historical clock, to a pre-capitalist dimension, in which everyone was the boss of a small shop, or was an artisan not yet expropriated of the means of production – *people had not yet become proletarians, the constant nightmare of the petty bourgeoisie*.

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<sup>20</sup> K. Marx, *Capital*, vol. III, London 1981, p. 911. On this question, cf. also our text of 1958 *Il programma rivoluzionario della società comunista elimina ogni forma di proprietà del suolo, degli impianti e dei prodotti del lavoro*, and in particular the chapter entitled “La questione agraria francese”, which seems to have been written...to anticipate the appearance of Bové & Co.

<sup>21</sup> J. Bové, in J. Bové/F. Dufour, *Il mondo non è in vendita. Agricoltori contro la globalizzazione alimentare*, Milano 2000, pp. 129-130. The quotes which follow are taken from the same text.

Thus, it is obvious that putting forward such a perspective today, in the imperialist epoch, means playing a much worse role than that of the “petty bourgeois socialism” which was definitively shown the door in the *Communist Manifesto*:

“In countries like France, where the peasants constitute far more than half the population, it was natural that writers who sided with the proletariat against the bourgeoisie should use, in their criticism of the bourgeois regime, the standard of the peasant and petty bourgeois, and from the standpoint of these intermediate classes should take up the cudgels for the working class. Thus arose petty-bourgeois Socialism. Sismondi was the head of this school, not only in France but also in England.”<sup>22</sup>

And what characterized (in 1848!) this “petty-bourgeois socialism”?

“In its positive aims, however, this form of Socialism aspires either to restoring the old means of production and of exchange, and with them the old property relations, and the old society, or to cramping the modern means of production and of exchange, with the framework of the old property relations that have been, and were bound to be, exploded by those means. In either case, it is both reactionary and Utopian.

“Its last words are: corporate guilds for manufacture; patriarchal relations in agriculture.

“Ultimately, when stubborn historical facts had dispersed all intoxicating effects of self-deception, this form of Socialism ended in a miserable fit of the blues” (ibid., p.109)

Unfortunately, we now have to return to Monsieur Bové. In order to better clarify his own position (and here Proudhon and Gramsci join hands under the Aveyron moon, with a strong whiff of Roquefort, the national trademark cheese which must be defended against the ferocious attack of the protectionist surcharges on the other side of the Atlantic!), he adds that the experience of the Jura watchmakers’ union, as shown above, “was not unlike the struggle of the Lip workers who, at the beginning of the 1970’s, during a long strike, had begun the self-management of production and sales of watches.” (p. 130)

And there we have it, the eternally renewed myth of self-management, through which the proletarians can be transformed into so many little self-starting entrepreneurs, adept at the production and especially the sale of commodities! This is the myth in which all the spontaneists and workerists regularly get together with the Social Democrats and Stalinists – a real infernal circle! Destroy the rule of profit? God forbid, no! They want to make themselves over in its image, “from below”, hopefully getting a “fair wage”, and for sure making propaganda for a “fair and equitable trade”! These made-over petty bourgeois from the “anti-global” extremists cannot live outside the shadow of capital, nor can they imagine a mode of production in which commodities do not exist. It is for this reason that they are

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<sup>22</sup> *Communist Manifesto*, pp. 108-109.

intimately anti-working class and anti-proletarian: because they know that, precisely because of the location of proletarians in the mechanism of the production of profit, the latter are the gravediggers of capital, and thus they are terrified by them. Today, they squawk and whine about the overwhelming power of the multinationals, which risk turning them into so many wage-laborers and thus into proletarians. Tomorrow, they will line up – as has happened in the past with so many “revolutionary syndicalists” – with the class enemy, with the anti-proletarian and anti-communist phalanx. Welcome to Seattle!

The Lip strike, which Bové mentions, is precisely the most fitting example of a major working-class struggle which was betrayed (like so many others in the early 1970's) by ghettoizing it inside the limits of the factory and the logic of profit, by channeling precious energies toward non-class objectives and, at the end, by celebrating its funeral.<sup>23</sup>

On the other hand, the whole position of Bové & Co. is a page from the book of classical French chauvinism (it is no accident that the word was born in France!): a defense with daggers drawn of the material and ideological borders of the fatherland, of its commodities and its products. The anti-globalization of the French peasants is an anti-Americanism with four (French) cheeses, or at most a Europeanism which can easily be transformed into “anti-any other nation which threatens national agriculture”, as we saw in the episode of the “mad cow” crisis: then Bové bitterly criticized the Italian decision – a minimal and quite insufficient measure, like all other measures taken at that time – to block imports from abroad, as dictated by the Italian meat lobby! Yes indeed: when one steps onto the terrain of chauvinism, one inevitably arrives at the point where the war is of all against all. The anti-globalists with a glimmer of common sense should be careful, and they will see how many surprises positions of this kind have in store.

“But”, someone will say, “Bové is fighting for better food, against the plague of fast food, etc.” Indeed: but the point – here as with the entire anti-globalist movement – is not so much in the critique of the existent, as in the political perspective being proposed. It is a fact that capitalism cannot assure decent food for the human species – a fact noted by Marxism since 1848. The problem is that the desire to change this state of affairs while leaving the capitalist mode of production intact means... precisely leaving things as they are. And no critique of those putting forward such “solutions” will ever be hard enough.

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<sup>23</sup> On this point, cf. our article from those years, which analyses the Lip struggle: “Il movimento degli operai della 'Lip'”, *il programma comunista*, n. 17/1973.

*Naomi Klein, or the Stench of Conscience*

Following the Third Worldist, legalist-gradualist and chauvinist forms, with Naomi Klein<sup>24</sup> the *fourth*, and possibly the worst, form of counter-revolutionary opportunism enters the fray: the form which leverages itself on the Individual, on Subjectivity, on the Human Being. In a recent interview, the author explains her objective: the struggle for democracy, for freedom, and to affirm our (?) right to be considered (by whom?) first of all human beings and citizens rather than consumers/investors. Only in this way, for Ms. Klein, “is it possible to derail disembodied and ferocious capitalism”<sup>25</sup>.

The idea of discovering, with every rustling of the bushes, novelty in the economy and in society grows out of the necessity of announcing the death of the only doctrine – Marxism – which demonstrates the inevitable end of capital and the indispensable surgical intervention represented by an act of class violence. The nth expose of capitalist “injustices” – in the form of coercion on the job, of ideological submission, of destruction of nature, and so on – does not add much to what we know about this productive form since the time in which Engels described the situation of the working class in England. That this “civilization” produces misery, and increasing misery, was demonstrated by Marx as a necessary condition for the development of capital. For decades and decades this forecast has been reproached, precisely by those who are today compelled to recognize that (“in all these years [...] they had betrayed us: the poor are even poorer, entire continents have been reduced to total unlivability”)<sup>26</sup>.

But these belated--and unsolicited--recognitions, far from constituting a full acceptance of Marxism, constitute the premise for an “analysis” of the globalization phenomenon, once again peddled as novelty (“an extraordinary rediscovery of politics”!), and the refusal to adhere, without ever having considered it, to a revolutionary solution to the present contradictions, built into imperialism.

We do not want to gloss Klein's book. It will suffice to quickly summarize its basic theses. Here they are:

1. Today the largest corporations contract out the productive processes factories in the underdeveloped countries; these companies produce commodities (at low cost, exploiting manpower without the interference of trade unions, etc.) whereas the parent companies produce the image guaranteeing the good quality of the commodities..
2. For this reason in recent years there has been an enormous growth of advertising costs: a label has actual market value and companies invest in advertising.

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<sup>24</sup> N. Klein, *No Logo*, Toronto, 2000.

<sup>25</sup> From the interview to the Italian monthly *L'Indice*, July-August 2001.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*

3. Finally, on the Western market, a fierce struggle has arisen to impose the label, and no longer merely the commodities.<sup>27</sup>

The purpose of the book is thus, in Klein's thinking, that the more people become aware of the secrets (?) of the global network of labels and logos, the more their indignation (!) will feed into the large political movement now taking shape, i.e. a vast wave of opposition which will take aim at the transnational companies themselves.<sup>28</sup>

The "secrets" which Klein proposes to clarify to the applauding and swindled masses are already contained, for anyone who knows how to read, in Lenin's *Imperialism*. These open secrets have already been sufficiently elaborated in the preceding lines and we will obviously not repeat their... unmasking. We must nonetheless underscore that, like the "Seattle people" as a whole, Klein fully subscribes to the "mercantilist" vision of capital, which could only function by imposing by force the acquisition of commodities. The fact that capital has always had recourse to every possible trick to extort profits is not a novelty. The mechanism was recognized and perfectly described ca. 155 years ago:

"When the German market was saturated and the goods, in spite of every effort, no longer found an outlet on the international market, business turned to...second-rate production, shoddy goods, deteriorating quality, the adulteration of raw materials, the counterfeiting of labels (Klein's accursed logos!), fictive sales, the discounting of bills of exchange and a credit system with no real foundation. *Competition ended up in a dog-eat-dog struggle, which is today presented to us as a turning point of universal history, the source of the most grandiose results and achievements.*" (Marx/Engels, *The German Ideology*, our emphasis)

Apart from this, Klein does not tell us anything about the *origins of capital*, i.e. about the processes through which a mass of money generates a greater mass of money. One senses here and there that for the author, everything resides in force and sleights-of-hand, i.e. in the attribution of a monopoly price to determinate commodities, and thus in systematic theft – and as a consequence nothing can be said on the *very existence of social classes*. In fact, the elements who participate in the anti-globalizing conflicts are described variously as "people", "activist artists", "cyclists", "trade-union activists", etc. or else as groups of uncertain definition, such as "rural communities", "handfuls of crazies" (people who break windows), "fashionable radical movements", and "citizens' movements". *A class perspective is rigorously dispensed with.*

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<sup>27</sup> N. Klein, *op. cit.*, Ch. 2.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*

In essence, the thematics taken up in the book of Klein flow directly from the swamp of a capitalist market to the desperate search for outlets.

From the necessity of selling at any cost – because of the hyperproductive madness which flows from the rigid necessity of producing surplus value – a mediatized process arises in which the company is no longer identified with this or that commodity, but rather with a philosophy of life: something like what, in Italy was germinated forty years ago in the headquarters of the Olivetti firm.

To succeed, the big corporation uses the system of sponsorship, and wins the favor of the widest possible spectrum of actors, literati, scientists, who makes testimonials for the label <sup>29</sup>. The usual imbecile, chosen because he presents a level of intelligence even lower than that of the targeted audience, guarantees the sale of commodities of a quality roughly equal to that of the potential consumers. The moment is not far off when even insults – properly logoed – will become a vehicle of persuasion to buy, in the framework of the general social dumbing-down. Young people and their tendency to imitate are targeted (“they arrive in flocks, a salesperson said of the youngest customers [...] If you sell to one, you sell to everyone in their classes and to everyone in their school”) <sup>30</sup> and the schools are targeted through adulation, paying young “outsiders” who, working in the streets and in public places, convince their age cohort.

These sales techniques, which obviously have little to do with a serious analysis of the imperialist phase of capitalism, are not in fact seen by the author as a necessary consequence of the market system, against which the sole effective remedy is the destruction of the existing nexus of social relations in the sphere of production. On the contrary, once again the cause is located in *moral reasons*. In Klein's thinking, “the conduct of the multinationals is simply the by-product of a vaster global economic system which has slowly removed every barrier and limitation to trade, investment and outsourcing. If companies make agreements with unscrupulous dictators, sell off their factories and pay wages too low to live on this happens because there exists no international law preventing them from acting in this way”. <sup>31</sup>

Law and morality, above all! When the laws and the morality of the petty bourgeois rule the world; when the galleys of capitalist production are extended everywhere; when international tribunals work full tilt punishing some and rewarding others in the name of “universal rights”, limiting excesses here, conceding well-being there, then we will live in a better world! Then there will no longer be crises,

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<sup>29</sup> N. Klein, *op. cit.*, Ch. 2

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, Ch.4

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, Ch.16

hunger, desperation and debts! Then the immanent laws of capital will be bent to the desires of the petty bourgeois, then the spectre of communism and revolution will be finally banished from the world!

We are thus face to face with the Individual, Consciousness, and Being. Once social classes are eliminated, history becomes the product of individual learning, and from the sum of so many little learned people flows that Cultural Revolution which has always been rooted in the ideology of the middle classes. And it is here that, in no sense paradoxically, the anti-globalist Klein honeymooned with the Gramsci who imagined a proletarian *Weltanschauung* (exactly what communists have the revolutionary duty to abolish!), anti-Marxism together with pre-Marxism, inter-classism with bourgeois democracy.

It is on this basis that “a common imperative within the various movements that attack the multinationals” is formulated. And what is it, in Klein's view? Essentially, people have a right to know.<sup>32</sup> It is on this basis that the two tactics of the “struggle” are grounded, and precisely the recourse to “tribunals”, in which one can keep track of what the transnationals are doing,<sup>33</sup> and the recourse to the inevitable Internet, which can be used to diffuse information everywhere, and in this way provoke “burning humiliations” (!! for the multinationals (Ibid.). *Tertium non datur*, there is no other way: but for Klein, “the most important thing is the right to sit down at a table and negotiate, even if one fails to negotiate the ideal agreement; it is the sacrosanct right to self-determination.”<sup>34</sup> Thus to trust the companies for the defense of human rights, for Klein, means sacrificing the right of people to “govern themselves” (Ibid.) Klein looks to “elected representatives” to enforce these corporate codes of conduct (Ibid.). The “successes” of this strategy are proudly listed by the author: putting on exhibits, organizing internet sites, staging marches, organizing counter-summits and peaceful sit-ins, going “armed with sponges, soap and squeegee men to wash the facades of the big banks downtown”, tainted as they are with the shame of Nazi gold and the weight of the debt of the countries of the Third World.<sup>35</sup> People dance and sing in the streets and in the public squares of the whole world against globalization.

And while they are singing and dancing, the proletariat continues to secrete surplus-value at infernal rhythms, as has happened for centuries, for the happiness of the parasitical classes. We will have our liberation only when the proletariat dances and sings revolutionary songs on the bones of these movements, vile and cowardly as movements of the petty bourgeoisie have always been, ready to play its role as waterboy of capital when things are going well, but always available to hammer the

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid., Ch.13.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., Ch.16.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., Ch.17

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., Ch.18

proletariat in moments of crisis, with the usual weapons of social pacifism, democracy, “culture” and “progress”.

Identifying imperialism with the label and the logo, neglecting the reality of the megafusions of corporations, which mean megalayoffs – shifting the harsh reality of the crisis into the virtual world of the image, refusing to see the wave of misery which is about to crash down on a world choking with wealth – means either fleeing into the world of dreams or taking naive readers for a ride. It means not understanding that “globalization” is the same thing as imperialism and that the economy of waste, built into capitalism, has for a long time become an obstacle to the development of the productive forces. It means not understanding as well the meaning of what is now clear to everyone, namely that today “a reduction in productive capacity is good news”, in the words of an American analyst.<sup>36</sup> It means being on the eve of catastrophic collapses of the very temples of the world economy and raving in the grip of propaganda – a real fact, but nonetheless transient as the crisis advances – which, Klein maintains, appropriates for itself the most private zones of our naked individual life and ravages our subjectivity.<sup>37</sup>

The Individual, the supreme bourgeois mystification, can croak without any regrets on our part. Better still, and notwithstanding its apologists who are recruited in droves in the middle classes, the Individual has already given up the ghost with the passage through different modes of production, with the intensification and pressure of networks of ever more complex relationships, within which the individual, freedom and autonomy have become pure illusions. It is capitalism which definitively suppressed the individual as a subject and social form, to the extent that it swept away an archaic economy based on microproduction, on the family nucleus, and on artisanal production. And it has been bourgeois ideology, reactionary today as it was revolutionary yesterday, which pervades the middle classes – and unfortunately also broad proletarian strata – with the conception that history was instead the progressive liberation of man (first of the slave, then of the serf) from exploitation. The idealistic regurgitations which have their base in the petty bourgeois – on the latter's idea of an eternal Morality, of the eternal Conscience, of the eternal Law – are disgusting most of all precisely because they were swept away by the inexorable becoming of history long ago.

#### *A “Chilean State”?*

One of the sharpest theoretical struggles fought by communism against opportunism and reformism concerns the conception of the state. That, behind the anti-globalization ideology, there is a palpable

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<sup>36</sup> Cfr. “Da Tokyo all'America un'ondata di licenziamenti”, in the Italian daily *La Stampa*, Aug. 28, 2001.

<sup>37</sup> See again her interview on *L'Indice*, cit.

orientation in defense of the political and economic organizations of individual states, was not made up by us. The “Declaration of the Millennium Forum of the NGO's, New York 2000”<sup>38</sup> openly says it. “States are becoming weaker [this is something that, for these servants of constituted power, for these idolators of the state, especially when blessed with the votes of millions of swindled proletarians, is highly displeasing], while an irresponsible transnational private sector [only because it is obeying the laws of capital, against which “civil society” *has nothing to say?*] is constantly getting stronger”. The “Final Document of the World Social Forum of Porto Alegre”<sup>39</sup> openly says it. After having invoked solidarity “with the African people”, it calls for a struggle “for the defense of its [what is this “its”? who is this “it”? what are the social classes in play?] right to the land” and, a bit further, demands “that governments respect the obligations [sanctioned by whom, if not by the local bourgeoisies of which these governments are the representatives?] which are due them”, demanding moreover that the IMF, the World Bank, the WTO, NATO, etc. put an end “to their interference in national politics”: a shameful document, also signed by movements which claim to base themselves on Marxism and which as such are nothing but traitors to the working class.

It is indispensable, dealing with the confusion which rules in this argument, to go over some old ground on the question of the state. We will use once again Lenin’s *State and Revolution*, a book which the “Seattle people” will not like because it makes the mistake of clearly expounding solely class positions:

“The state is the product and the manifestation of the *irreconcilability* of class antagonisms. The state arises when, where and to the extent that the class antagonisms *cannot* be objectively reconciled. And, conversely, the existence of the state proves that the class antagonisms *are* irreconcilable... the bourgeois, and particularly the petty-bourgeois, ideologists, compelled under the pressure of indisputable historical facts to admit that the state only exists where there are class antagonisms and the class struggle, ‘correct’ Marx in such a way as to make it appear that the state is an organ for *reconciling* the classes... if the state is the product of the irreconcilable character of class antagonisms, if it is a force standing *above* society and ‘increasingly separating itself from it’, then it is clear that the liberation of the oppressed class is impossible not only without a violent revolution, but also without the destruction of the apparatus of state power and which was created by the ruling class...”<sup>40</sup>

The keen anti-globalists, who in Göteborg, Prague, and Genoa experienced the impact of the clubs of the democratic police of all of Europe, are the very same people who the day before yesterday exalted the welfare state, and who today find themselves unexpectedly orphaned by the “paternal” state, the state which made itself the guarantor of “democratic freedoms” against fascist obscurantism, and which

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<sup>38</sup> In Pianta, *op. cit.*, p. 163. We translate here from the Italian version.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 187. We translate here from the Italian version.

<sup>40</sup> Lenin, *State and Revolution*, pp.8-9.

today, for who knows what reason, does not defend them from the assault of the rapacious transnational companies, the IMF and the World Bank.

Once again in *State and Revolution*, Lenin quotes Engels from *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*: “In the democratic republic [and here Lenin quotes Engels] ‘wealth exercises its power in an indirect but all the more secure way’, first of all through the ‘direct corruption of the functionaries’ (America), secondly with ‘the alliance between the government and the stock exchange’”. And then he continues:

“At the present time, imperialism and the domination of the banks have ‘developed’ to an unusually fine art both these methods of defending and asserting the omnipotence of wealth in democratic republics of all description...The omnipotence of ‘wealth’ is thus more secure in a democratic republic, since it does not depend on the poor political shell of capitalism. A democratic republic is the best possible political shell for capitalism, and therefore, once capital has gained control [...] of this very best shell, it establishes its power so securely, so firmly that *no* change, either of persons, or institutions, or parties in the bourgeois republic can shake it.”<sup>41</sup>

These words were written in 1917. Has something changed in the political framework of imperialism since then? *Obviously yes*. Two bourgeoisies of the Western world, one victorious and the other defeated in war, reorganized their own states according to fascist criteria, i.e. with methods favoring financial and industrial concentration through direct state intervention, support for companies in crisis, the reorganization of state finances, and collaboration between the classes. *All* economic powers, under false “democratic” pretenses and led by the U.S. and England, very quickly signed on for these programs of reorganization. Is there some enthusiast of the “Seattle people” that does not see how the fascistization and armouring of contemporary states, the *best democratic republics* in Lenin’s words, are the sole and necessary political reality in which global capital *must move*?

## Our Road

### *Against Petty-Bourgeois Ideology*

One threadbare and newly greened-over slogan of the anti-globalists proclaims that “another world is possible”. Against this formulation, communists maintain that this society has for a long time been pregnant with a new mode of production and a new social system: without classes, without money, without a market, without the accursed law of value which regulates all human relationships. Communists maintain that a society of this kind is not only indispensable to the future of humanity, but

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<sup>41</sup> Lenin, *State and Revolution*, pp. 13-14.

that it flows of necessity from the same laws of the existing one, precisely through the current centuries-old process of “globalization” which has pervaded every mechanism. If birthing of this new society is too long, if the revolutionary perspective which politically underwrites the destruction of the old society and the beginning of the road to a new mode of production seems far away, a role of the first order – on the social and political level – in the preservation of capitalist rule falls precisely to those who, whether or not they are aware of it, propose an alternative which seeks *to be halfway*: saving capitalism but rejecting those aspects which were intrinsic to it when it was born, and which the anti-globalists see instead as a product of human “evil”. These people, and they have been around for a long time (and this is one of the most obvious peculiarities of petty-bourgeois reformism) transform that which in historical reality is a social science, with its laws and its theoretical apparatus, into a vile and banal “moral question”, whose solution is to be found in either Teaching, or in Culture, or in Popular Education, (with the effigy of Gramsci at the forefront); they otherwise seek its solution in eternal Morality and Truth, violated by this or that “corrupt government”, by this or that roguish leader, on the right if the government is “left-wing”, on the left if the government is right-wing.

There is a constant thread running through the “struggles” of the middle classes – that authentic plague afflicting the world proletariat, particularly in periods of ebb – against big capital in the last half century. During the postwar recovery, the dominant theme was the struggle against concentration and monopoly, understood as the negation of the “freedom” of capitals to attain an average equal profit for all of them. In the same way and in the same perspective, the contemporary “struggle” is directed against the organization of capitals on a planetary scale and dimension, which for us communists has always represented the indispensable *premise* for the economy organized internationally and guided by a general species plan: this is what we call “communism”.

Our party conducted a dogged struggle against the petty-bourgeois ideology (most specifically that of the Stalinist parties throughout Europe after World War II) of “struggle against the monopolies” and defense of small-scale and liberal capitalism. Let us admit for a moment, and ad absurdum, that this reactionary ideology had won out against all the laws of the concentration and centralization of capitals, and of the gigantic tie-up between commercial, finance and industrial capital. Whatever the case, this ideology could not move in any other direction than that which, alone, can keep the commodity-based capitalist system alive. Only deluded people or renegades can set off on a path whose only focus is to stand in the way of the laws of history: laws that any bourgeois economist knows perfectly well. An example? “The public [...] called for the intervention of the state [“the U.S.A.”] against the ‘monopolistic effects’, which in fact, beginning with the Sherman Act of 1890, produced numerous anti-trust laws, almost all of which, however, were ineffective, so that the most powerful and famous of

the trusts, among which we recall Standard Oil (Rockefeller) and U.S. Steel Corporation (Morgan), continued to increase their power even through various transformations.”<sup>42</sup>

And these are the words of a bourgeois scholar!

The fact is that, in capitalism, the dialectic between concentration on one hand and competition on the other, is based on two elements which act in a relative, if also diverse manner, but always in conjunction. If the multinationals developed in a tentacular fashion everywhere, in spite of the pious laments of the reactionary defenders of small property (yesterday their names were Togliatti and Thorez; today their names, more modestly but no less repellently, are Bové, Rifkin, Klein, etc.), this does not in fact depend, as the spokesmen of “civil society” seem to imagine, on the fact that the multinationals can attain a permanently higher rate of profit on their own initiative, but from the fact that they can benefit from an ever-increasing mass of profit.

But the laws regulating the dynamic of small capitals are the same that apply to big ones. The leveling of the rate of profit, which occurs by continuously shifting, on a world scale, the capitals in the most profitable sectors, does nothing more than push competition within the capitalist jungle to the maximum. The super-extraction of surplus-value, an important part of which can no longer be reinvested in the productive sphere, does nothing but power the circulation of finance capital within and above all outside the individual nation-states. This has as a consequence the continuous recalibration of a rate of profit to which all productive branches must accommodate themselves, in a Sisiphsian labor to cancel out the inequalities of development in individual productive branches, which nonetheless are constantly reproduced. This requires on one hand continuous innovation to keep down prices and squeeze competitors, and concentration and expansion of the market on the other: this, and only this is the golden law of capitalism.

The great cloud of dust kicked up by the recent discoverers of globalization only means that they seem to be unaware that every form of “common market” since the 1950’s was transformed into a jungle of capitalist concentration beyond borders, in the automobile, steel and chemical sectors, etc. Meanwhile, on the other hand, the giants created by nation-states pursued a customs policy aimed at containing imports, promoting exports, and favoring dumping. What, then, is new about the current brigand-like “commercial treaties” and “agreements” with countries of the so-called Third World, designed to strip them of all their resources?

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<sup>42</sup> Luzzatto, *Storia economica dell'età moderna e contemporanea*, Padua 1960, part II, p. 448.

### *A Long Road, But There Is No Alternative*

To the recurring practice of reducing the question of “globalizing” capitalism to a political-moral fact of the “hypocrisy of states”, of the “violation of human rights”, of the “self-determination of peoples” (we quote from the above-mentioned “Declaration of the Millennium Forum”) we oppose the historically confirmed fact that, from Marx's analysis in the mid-19th century until today, capitalism is governed by immanent laws which determine its complex movement. This is how we characterized this law, in a 1960 text of ours: “It is not the yearnings of personal capitalists to enjoy profits, but the impersonal exigency of social capital to increase surplus-value, a social force which only a revolution can demolish.”<sup>43</sup>

When will the poor non-entities who today run around raving about the democratization of the economy understand that the only road to salvation for all of humanity lies in the violent tearing down of the economic and social bases of the entire planet? And that this, far from being a utopia, is an urgent historical necessity which flows *from the productive subsoil of capitalism*? And that what, up to now, has prevented its realization is also the delayed reorganization of the international revolutionary movement, whose origins lie in the defeat inflicted by the combined reaction of Stalinism-fascism-democracy?

Obviously, these people will understand – and unfortunately, perhaps, it will not suffice – when the axe of the crisis and unemployment crashes down on them as well. But even then, and this is a sad lesson of history, they will not resign themselves to enlist under the banners of communism, for the violent destruction of the existing society. They will invoke “united fronts”, they will exalt “socialisms in one country”, they will support their own bourgeoisies in the world massacres, trying to demonstrate – and historians of the hired academy will not be lacking then, as they were never lacking in the past – that it was “the enemy's fault”.

It is for this reason that the communist party today has the historical duty to go over old ground of theory and program, of principles and ends, which TOMORROW will guide the proletarian masses in the assault on all the fortified citadels of the bourgeoisie. Here, then, is our invariant road: no to any alliance with the middle classes! No to any attempt to pass off as class struggle what is only the atavistic fear of the petty bourgeoisie, of losing its own miserable, and often fictitious, privileges! Only the union of the international proletariat under the banners of communism will be able to lead to the destruction of all the state machines – whether in more or less developed countries – and to the final extinction of the state.

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<sup>43</sup> “Rivoluzioni storiche della specie che vive, opera e conosce”, in *Il programma comunista*, no. 12/1960.

### *Two Centralities*

Now, it has been obvious for communists since 1848 (but it becomes more and more obvious as the social contradictions intensify under the pressure of economic crisis) that the central element of this strategy of anti-capitalist struggle can only be the *international working class*. But this “centrality” is not, for us, an act of faith, and still less do we consider it a kind of “genetic heritage” inscribed in the DNA of every individual worker, as workerists and Stalinists would have had it. This “centrality” derives, quite... simply, from the location of the working class within *the capitalist mode of production*; it is this class and not other groups (the middle classes, young people, marginals, or other “revolutionary subjects” sucked out of the thumb of the radical-chic intelligentsia) which produces *surplus-labor and thus surplus-value, the heart of the mechanism of production of profit*. And this is true, independently of the consciousness which the working class (or the individual workers who make it up) has of this fact and of the consequences implicit in it, in economic and political terms.

Thus, the working class is the only social stratum capable of striking at the heart of the capitalist mode of production, going into motion on the basis of its *own* objectives and its *own* program, and to project itself toward that society without classes and without exploitation which has already been made possible, in its material basis, by the developments and transformations produced by capitalism itself.

Whether it wants it or not, whether it is more or less conscious of it, this is the meaning of the “centrality” of the international working class. The problem is that, from a Marxist point of view, this is not sufficient. It is necessary to add to this “centrality” an organization, a leadership, a theory of the past, present and future, a political program. And all this does not flow spontaneously from the objective course of things, from struggles and strikes, however generous and combative: centuries of struggles and strikes are there to demonstrate it. All this can only be contained in a revolutionary party, rooted in the class, capable of nourishing it daily in its experiences and its struggles, so that nothing of this “centrality”, this energy, is lost, *on a world scale*. A party capable of assuring this continuity, above and beyond the vicissitudes of the moment and the contingencies of situations, of generational shifts and periods of defeat and ebb, without which no struggle (neither partial nor final) can really pose itself within a revolutionary perspective. Trotsky wrote in 1920:

“Only with the help of a party drawing on its whole historical past, which theoretically foresees the way forward and all its stages, and which concludes from them what form of action in the given moment is correct and necessary, only with the help of such a party will the proletariat be freed from the necessity of constantly repeating its own history from the beginning, with its hesitations, its uncertainties and its errors.”<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> L. Trotsky, *Teachings of the Paris Commune*.

Two centralities, therefore, one objective and the other subjective. Two preliminary unavoidable conditions, which are moreover in close and necessary relationship with the economic crisis: in the sense that the unfolding and deepening of this crisis in the course of the last twenty-five years makes these two centralities all the more necessary, all the more urgent, all the more inevitable.

Today, however, after seventy years of counterrevolution (during which democracy, Nazism/fascism and Stalinism have worked hand in hand, with different *but convergent* roles and functions) the working class “unlearned” how to struggle for its *own* objectives: the memory and the experience of what it means to defend its own conditions of life and work have been forcibly stripped away, the working class has been compelled to take the field to defend everything that does not concern it (the fatherland, the national economy, democracy, peaceful coexistence, collaboration between the classes, etc.). Today, however, after seventy years of counter-revolution, the revolutionary party is reduced to a minority which not only struggles against the current, as is inevitable for every revolutionary party, but which for the moment has only the smallest possibility of really weighing on events and influencing those few workers’ struggles which burst forth from time to time, these thin social strata which are shaking off the torpor and the paralysis induced by the counter-revolution.

Precisely for this reason, it is necessary to work with an eye to putting these two conditions back on the agenda, however long and hard this work might appear (and undoubtedly is). If one does not go in this direction, one winds up working – *even without wanting to* – for new, disastrous, catastrophic defeats. It is in fact obvious that the economic crisis which opened in the mid-1970’s (and which we anticipated in detail twenty-five years earlier) is moving into an ever-greater acceleration and depth, *on a world scale*. We have already devoted (and will continue to devote) numerous articles and studies to it, and this is not the place to summarize them. Here it suffices to forcefully restate that either one works seriously to putting these two conditions back on the agenda, without immediatist haste or subjectivist voluntarisms but with that serenity, dedication and continuity that sets revolutionaries apart, or else one accepts that the capitalist mode of production is headed for the only final solution for which it is known: a new world massacre. And acceptance means complicity.

How then can one work to advance these central conditions?

### *What Is To Be Done?*

It is clear that, in this perspective, the *process of the international grounding of the party* is fundamental for us. This is a theoretical-political-organizational fact. It is thus a question of: *a)* re-establishing the correct communist positions, against every adulteration and manipulation, going once again over the old theoretical ground methodically, patiently, and inflexibly, without allowing ourselves

to be swept up in either activist haste or in fatalistic passivity – a task at which our Party has never ceased to work over the last seventy-five years, dominated by the most brutal counter-revolution that the working-class and communist movement have ever endured; *b*) reposing the communist program as the sole real (and *realistic!*) perspective for immediate and future struggle, against all the supposed shortcuts (reformist or adventurist), which accomplish nothing but piling frustration upon frustration in an already stagnant and swamp-like situation; *c*) expand the theoretical-political range of action of the Party, in the awareness that this – the perennial task of anyone declaring himself a communist – is rendered all the more urgent and vital in the face of the economic crisis which is advancing inexorably and which is preparing bloody days of reckoning in the future.

For this, *the concept and practice of internationalism* are at the center of the theoretical and practical activity, the propaganda and proselytizing, of our Party, however small it may be. Because precisely on this terrain, in the past century, the world working class has undergone the most scorching defeat: from the bastard theory of “socialism in one country” to the proclamation of “national roads to socialism”, to all the episodes of “poor peoples’ wars” or artificial counterpositions between sectors of a class which can only be victorious if it is united.

But, for the reasons stated above, this process of the international grounding of the party is necessarily based on a serious and constant commitment to *working in close contact with the class*. Once again, this is anything but a simple task. It must take account of the disasters produced in the proletariat by the combined action of fascism, Stalinism and democracy, terms which are only apparently antithetical, but which conceal instead their unique class function – that of the counter-revolutionary preservation of the capitalist economy. And it must take into account the transformations which have occurred in the economic-industrial fabric under the pressure of more than twenty-five years of crisis, of the sense of disillusion and isolation into which whole generations of workers have fallen, of the conservative weight of the “labor aristocracy”, of the open betrayal carried out by political and trade-union organizations, of the spontaneist and individualistic temptations which periods of disorientation inevitably produce.

Thus, no illusions, no shortcuts, but rather a task carried on in profundity, knowing full well that the time will inevitably be long and difficult, but that precisely and only a *party perspective* assures a continuity beyond the highs and the lows, generational change, the possible defeats, toward a victory which is prepared day after day, without any anxiety for individual recognition or personal or group self-promotion. The only sure road to follow is the one which passes through the refusal of class collaboration in the defense of the ostensible “superior interests” of this or that nation, the recovery of an authentic class front, around classist objectives and methods in all workplaces, rejecting every bastard ideology based on the “interests of consumers”, on the “struggle” against this or that industrial

cartel, against this or that “fascism” in favor of this or that “democracy” – a road which breaks definitively with every reformist, gradualist, and individualist illusion. It is for these reasons that we set, with absolute urgency, the objective of recovering the classical forms of struggle which animated the great worker insurrections of the past. Taking up again the fight to wrest acceptable conditions of life and work through struggle does not yet represent the revolutionary break. Nevertheless, and this is the teaching of Lenin, the immediate struggle of economic self-defense is the necessary first step for beginning to climb the ladder which will lead the class to realize the inevitability of the supreme conflict.

Only through an effective resumption of working-class struggles, too long absent from the scene in Western countries, and their linkup with the movements developing in the rest of the world, in spite of the worst kinds of police states, will it be possible to pass from the reign of necessity to the realm of freedom.

Any perspective of class-based renewal will thus have to pass through the reconquest of some fundamental concepts:

a) *Rejecting the blackmail of “national interest”*. The national economy is not a common good: to impose its defense on workers only means greater exploitation, the worsening of living conditions, the intensification of rhythms, mobility and precariousness, the multiplication of workplace accidents, reduction of real wages, the increased destruction of the environment, and a further accumulation of inter-imperialist conflict, destined sooner or later to lead a new world war;

b) *Rejecting all forced isolation of workers’ struggles*. For decades, trade-union practice has been, on one hand, to disperse the energies of the workers (micro-conflicts, the isolation of struggles by department, factory, urban zone, region or sector, the preventive limitation of the strike in space and time, deviant objectives such as the defense of the national economy, of democracy, of legality, etc.); on the other hand, actively to contribute to their enforced isolation (the self-limiting of struggles in some “national interest”, stiffening and bureaucratization of union structures, marginalization and denunciation of combative workers, etc.). All this must be combated, not in the name of a deceptive union democracy (an empty phrase, given the irreversibly anti-worker direction taken by the dominant unions over the past half-century), but in the name of an authentic resumption of class struggle, which must be at the most ample and vigorous possible. The strike, the picket line, the blockage of production and of commodities, the worker demonstrations, etc. are arms of the proletariat, and no one should be able to appropriate them for other ends, rendering them ineffective or turning them against the workers.

c) *Rejecting all internal divisions in the class*. Among the devastating effects of the counter-revolution and of the practice of opportunist parties and unions, has been the breakup of the class front and, as a consequence, the diffusion of localist and federalist ideologies, hostility, diffidence and

competition among workers, and an exacerbated individualism. All this, far from constituting a road to salvation for the individual or for given sectors, only leads to more and more disastrous defeats. The working class can today hope to resist the attack which capital is launching against it, and to pass tomorrow to a counter-attack, only by reforging its unity around classist objectives and methods of struggle, only recognizing itself (and thus acting), not as a formless sum of individuals but as a class, against all the attempts to break it up and divide it. And as a class it must return to the struggle against the divisive wage differentials, layoffs, mobility and flexibility, differentiation by age and sex, work in the underground economy and all forms of precariousness, the myth of professionalism, federalism, localism, racism, and all those relationships within the class which set workers against workers, men against women, the young against the old, “national” workers against immigrant workers.

d) *Rejecting all attacks on living and working conditions.* Capital in crisis is compelled to launch a violent attack against the working class (and also against broad strata of the middle classes which, up till now, have had the illusion of being protected against brutal surprises.) Workers must resist this attack and repel it, and can do so only by once again setting out on a class-based road and reconquering a unity on this basis. But other attacks will follow, other attempts to foist off onto the workers the effects of a crisis that is not the result of bad management, private dishonesty, or personal egoism. These attempts will of necessity take diverse forms, some softer and more underhanded, others more harsh and explicit. The workers must therefore prepare themselves for a struggle whose results will necessarily be precarious, whose victories will be immediately called into question, whose gains will have nothing lasting. What the class must undertake is a struggle of daily resistance, without falling into the illusion that it is possible to return to any pre-existing (and moreover illusory) situation of peace and idyll.

The workers must not allow themselves to be diverted toward false objectives. They must struggle today for their own physical survival, and demand:

- *Major wage increases, even larger for the worst-paid and most-exploited categories.* Because it is clear that today ever lower wages are not enough to sustain family nuclei under serious threat by present and future unemployment; that medical, public health and hospital assistance have become more precarious and at the same time more expensive; that the weight of rents, electricity, gas, public transportation and taxes of various kinds has become greater...

- *Major reductions in the work week, at the same pay.* Because, between churning of the workforce and overtime, the anxiety of work is increasing every day, just as there is a dramatic increase in the incidents directly tied to the increase of productivity and savings on measures of control and prevention. To struggle for a reduction of the work week thus does not mean to nourish the illusion that such a reduction can reabsorb the unemployed, but to realize that it can have the effect of alleviating

that anxiety, slowing down the tension to which millions of workers are subjected, and restoring a psycho-physical force which is currently being seriously corroded for the sole aim of extracting profits for capital. It means, in sum, also struggling to reconstitute a real class identity.

It will be this class identity, reconquered through intransigent struggles, which will allow the world working class, under the leadership of its party – the International Communist Party – to finally undertake the “assault on the heavens”.

And not the assault on this or that citadel, more or less fortified, in which the zombies of the G8, the WTO, or the IMF, are meeting for a few days.

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