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Congress Motions approved by the majority of the National Political Committee

MOTION 1 - A CRISIS OF CIVILISATION

Today we can see that the crisis of capitalistic globalisation is in fact a more generalised crisis of civilisation. Insecurity, uncertainty and precariousness have become endemic in nations, social classes and individuals. We are increasingly subject to a "process of modernisation that falls short of modernity", renewing the vicious circle of war and terrorism and gradually eroding the terrain of democracy.

The dawn of the 21st century was stained by terrorism and war. Our world has been submerged by a tidal wave of violence and destruction which has shattered the ideological illusions of globalisation and its promise of "a magnificent march of progress" for humankind. Once again the very concept of "future" seems to have been called into question. A profound sense of insecurity undermines Western societies, in spite of their material well-being, and accelerates the already far-advanced processes of social disintegration. A sort of endemic state of emergency is gaining ground in the sphere of institutional relations. A generalised uncertainty prevails, so that workers face a condition of precariousness, with structural unemployment and the constant threat of dismissal. Production and consumption are paralysed, bringing recession and economic depression, destruction of the environment and negation of the necessary conditions for social reproduction. We are confronted with a crisis of identity and the end of shared values, making it difficult to draw up individual and collective projects, and promoting a fear of the "invisible enemy", of whatever is other or different, in a peculiar blend of irrationalism and scientism, of neo-fundamentalist vehemence and "weak thought".

The concept of modernity itself, in the sense of the historical process of the emergence of subjectivity and urge towards emancipation, has been distorted by capitalist globalisation, and finds itself in crisis at every level. Not surprisingly, what is held up as a "clash of civilisations" matches the individual in the egoistic persona of the *homo oeconomicus* against the community in the unacceptable form of a patriarchal and tribal organism. The possibility of combining individual liberty with civil social relations has been denied by this war in which the rival camps are merely two sides of one and the same coin.

This set of involutory tendencies characterises a full-blown crisis of civilisation, in which all the conquests of the 20th century are destined to go by the board, including individual and collective rights and the various spheres of democracy, while the variegated forces of the right find ample opportunities for expansion. At its root lies the involutory process of capitalism itself. The mode of production based on the logic of capital, which up until now has brought not only extraordinary progress but also devastating exploitation and increasingly glaring contradictions, has entered into a regression which may well prove irreversible. As Marx said, "the true limit of capitalist production is capital itself".

MOTION 2 – GLOBAL WAR

The current war has all the hallmarks of a global conflict: not merely because the whole planet constitutes the theatre of war, but because the ultimate goal is to form a “new world order” under a single regime, to provide an authoritarian answer to the world-wide crisis.

The ruthless destruction of the Twin Towers, which caused thousands of innocent victims, and the devastation of Kabul, costing thousands more innocent lives, give us a harrowing snapshot of our world today, caught up in the vicious circle of war and terrorism. This situation can indeed be characterised as planetary civil war, not merely because it involves the whole planet and all the leading nations, as we saw during the 20th century, but also because what is at stake is control over economic globalisation. We see that even the threat posed by the rise of the “movement of movements” is being met by an unprecedented authoritarian reinforcement world-wide, involving an apparently inextricable combination of military expansionism, diplomatic manoeuvring, geopolitical blackmailing and control over prime resources. In this process there can be no mistaking the political, strategic and military pre-eminence of the United States, the only superpower in existence. But the logic that both governs and fans the conflict has nothing to do with the classic competition between nation states and their conflicting interests. In political terms a completely new system of alliances is being formed, with all its internal conflicts and variables, in which the USA, Europe, Russia, the “moderate” Arab regimes and China are all ranged on the same side. More in general we are witnessing a powerful coercion towards inclusion in a political and economic system dominated by America. This tends to exclude all the world’s various “Souths”, peripheral entities and forms of antiliberalist and anticapitalist resistance. The alternative is drastic: either you opt for the American model or you languish beyond the pale of civilisation. This is another of the effects which the new global war of the 21st century is tending to impose.

MOTION 3 - SOCIALISM OR BARBARISM

Capitalism in the neo-liberalist era is dominated by a fundamental regressive tendency: it plays down the value of labour, exasperates disparities, privatises and commercialises basic needs, devastates nature and the environment, and returns to such regressive relational models as the patriarchy. It defies any attempt at reform or “tempering”. Once again we are confronted by the possibility and urgency of transformation through revolution, by the alternative of socialism or barbarism.

The capitalist tendency to expand omnivorously, without any checks or limits, comes increasingly into conflict with the needs and requirements of the masses, induced by progress and development but incompatible with them: thus the fundamental social rights to health, education, food and mobility are contrasted by the ever greater impulse to privatise and commercialise; remarkable advances in science and technology can even improve our everyday lives, yet everything is absurdly subject to the pure logic of short-term gain. Efforts to safeguard our environmental resources and the need to reach an equilibrium and exchange of productivity between humans and nature are contrasted by the pre-eminence of the market. This system prevails over science to favour profit-making rather than environmental and human values.

Moreover the situation is strongly conditioned by the persistence of negative patriarchal structures – which naturally vary from one historical-cultural area to another – alternating with archaic social and symbolic forms. As a consequence, women are condemned to segregation and juridical inferiority, and regressive, clan-based and misogynous tendencies prevail even in those nations in which feminism made most of an impact during the 20th century. In practice, neo-liberalist globalisation is impervious to any attempt to humanise or reform it, or indeed merely to temper it: the failure of the Third Way, apparent in the political experiences of the centre-left both in Europe and America, is rooted in this structural axiom. It comes as no surprise to see that its leading exponents have removed the term from their political agenda.

The emergence of the antiglobalisation movement expresses the contradictions which beset us and represents the first fruits of the crisis of the globalised economy and civilisation. Although still only in embryo, this movement poses the problem of an alternative, a possible way forward from the barbarism of neo-liberalism and its crisis. In this radical contrast we are faced once again with the question of transforming or superseding capitalism: revolution once more becomes a possible scenario, a further stage in human history. What is now at stake, to a much greater extent than in the early phases of capitalism, is the safety of humankind: as the "Manifesto" stated, we are living under the threat of the "indiscriminate destruction of the classes in conflict". For these reasons, in proclaiming "Socialism or Barbarism" we still give expression to both our perspective and our strategy.

MOTION 4 – THE RESTORATIONIST CAPITALIST REVOLUTION

Capitalism has entered a new phase since the mid-1970s, and the changes have been so far-reaching that we can truly speak of a "new capitalism", and indeed of a "restorationist revolution", characterised by a potentially totalitarian will to dominate.

We are experiencing a radical capitalist revolution driven by a process of globalisation which differs significantly from other phases in the history of capitalism. The changes are so striking that it is no exaggeration to talk of a new capitalism. This revolution came into being about half way through the seventies, at a time when economic development could no longer be taken to mean the growth of prevalently stable employment, the dollar broke free from the gold standard, the world experienced its first real oil crisis, and also when the capitalist system had to find an answer to the great economic crisis of 1974 - 75 and indeed to the great revolutionary movement that imposed itself from the late sixties onwards, with characteristics, intensity and a time-span that have varied from one country to another. This revolution not only inaugurated a new phase in the history of capitalism but had profound effects on the systems and organisation of production, the composition of capital and the structuring of labour, the role of nation states and the workings of democracy, the concept of politics and culture, international relations and the use of war, and the material lives and collective imagination of millions of people.

So far this revolution has altered the balance of power in favour of capital and to the detriment of the workers, brought about an enormous increase in cases of disparity and injustice, widened the gap in terms of social differences and between rich and poor countries, concentrated power in the hands of a few who are ever more remote from the masses, and caused the destruction of the environment.

For these reasons we feel justified in coining the oxymoron of "restorationist capitalist revolution", in recognition of the radical novelty of the situation and at the same time the heightened and all-embracing grip of capital on the world as a whole. This new phase of capitalism and the current process of globalisation pose substantial problems of analysis and interpretation. We are taking an active part in the relevant international debate, with the identification of certain essential characteristics as our starting-point.

MOTION 5 - CAPITAL

The process of auto-valorisation of capital is changing, and involves a spectacular increase in financial activities, an intensification in the exploitation of labour, and direct material and "immaterial" absorption of science into the production cycle. The organisation of labour is changing as the Taylorist model is being superseded, while expansion of production is characterised by unique features on the global scale.

The change in the auto-valorisation of capital involves both a greatly increased diffusion of financial activities (between 1970 and 2000 the volume of financial exchanges went up from 20 to over 2000 billion dollars, of which 80% consisted in operations with a life-span of under 7 days). There are two reasons for this: the increase in direct and indirect exploitation of immaterial labour

(from the sphere of computer technology to that of human relations) without any reduction of material labour; and the exploitation of the environment and nature, and indeed of plant, animal and human life itself, which scientific research and its applications in the sphere of biotechnology allow to be directly absorbed into the production cycle. The organisation of production has been modified following the crisis of the principle of mass production for mass consumption that underpinned the Fordist - Taylorist – Keynesian cycle, favouring systems based on the so-called “just in time” principle, adopted from experiences in the Toyota plants in Japan.

We are witnessing a compartmentalisation of production which is without precedent in any previous phase of international expansion of capital and which leaves room, sometimes even within a single company and its allied enterprises, albeit in different geographical areas, for post-Fordist production systems alongside Fordist and indeed pre-Fordist and archaic models.

MOTION 6 - LABOUR

While there is much talk of “the end of all work”, subordinate employment has increased at a dramatic rate world-wide. At the same time, it has been pulverised into a myriad of job types, while the labour market tends to be divided up into an increasingly pared down core of “guaranteed” workers, a constantly expanding area of casual and “atypical” workers, and a mass of people in the condition of more or less chronic unemployment.

We are confronted by a gigantic process of pulverisation of the world of labour: far from moving towards the much trumpeted “end of all work” world-wide, whether imminent or in the forecasts of the international institutes that monitor economic and social developments, there has been an increase in subordinate employment, destined to go on growing prolifically throughout the world, however it may be defined juridically or sociologically in the various countries. This does not merely derive from the increase in industrial production and its extension to all corners of the planet, but from the absorption into the subordinate labour environment of figures which would once have fallen into the category of autonomous labour. At the same time – and of course this is more evident in the countries where capitalism has come to maturity – the labour market, and world of work in general, is being split into three: an increasingly pared down core of workers in full-time employment for life, a growing category of workers in casual and atypical employment, and the mass of would-be workers trapped in chronic unemployment. In some nations – such as the United States – the last category appears smaller than it is: the extreme liberalisation of the labour market makes the sector of casual employment much more extensive, but the criteria used in monitoring it enable it to be included in the statistics for regular employment.

MOTION 7 – THE ICT REVOLUTION

The so-called ICT revolution is effecting a profound change in the organic composition of capital and helps to make financial movements “uncontrollable”. In the seven most highly industrialised countries, the volume of virtual currency exchanges is seven times greater than the reserves held by the respective Central Banks.

A powerful indicator of the current capitalist revolution is undoubtedly to be found in the ICT revolution and the increasing predominance of information and intellectual output in the processes of capital's valorisation. In addition, the speed with which data can be transmitted has given a decisive impulse to the diffusion of financial activities, fostering the extreme rapidity and brevity of transactions and hence their primarily speculative nature, reinforcing the globalisation of production. This results not only in a quantitative increase but also a qualitative modification of the organic composition of capital, since technological innovations have reduced the relative preponderance of fixed capital (plant) in production costs. At the same time, the advent of new information and telecommunications technologies has facilitated and greatly speeded up movements of capital, which now frequently elude the control of nation states, exacerbating the

crises in countries on the fringes of capitalist development and pointing in the future to the risk of marked instability in financial exchanges even within the core areas.

MOTION 8 – THE COLLAPSE OF REAL SOCIALISM

Globalisation has been favoured by the failure of the systems known as “real socialism” and - in Italy – by the defeat suffered by labour movements in the 1980s. The moderate left fell under the influence of the prevailing neo-liberalism, and at Maastricht the united Europe saw the light in this ideological climate.

This capitalist revolution advanced together with – and at a certain point was favoured by – the failure of the systems of “real socialism” and the denial of workers’ rights which, at least in Europe, has reached considerable proportions. From the 1980s, in Italy particularly following the defeat at the Fiat works, the processes of capitalist restructuring have been able to benefit from the reverses of the labour movements, which also account for the continuous regression of the socialdemocratic and communist parties in Europe. The attacks on the European social state, the very process of the construction of the European Union, and the contents of the treaty of Maastricht and Pact of Stability, have been largely determined by the neo-liberalist co-ordinates accepted by the members of the International Socialist. In this sense capitalist globalisation is the result not simply of a sort of economic determinism but also of a political and social offensive sustained by the predominant classes at both the national and supranational level. The facility with which the major forces of capitalism manipulate a variety of means shows their ability to elude all forms of control on their actions, thanks to the clout of the international concentration of capital, without however relaxing their pressure on individual states or groups of states, such as the EU, to obtain not merely further liberalisations, but also direct support in all their international, political, economic, financial and military dealings. The triumph of liberalism and the escalation of capitalist globalisation are also a consequence of the failure of the countries of “real socialism”, in particular the collapse of the USSR and the progressive, fully conscious insertion of China into the mechanisms of market economy. These events have facilitated the ideological and material offensive of the Western bourgeoisie, extending the laws of market forces into sectors and territories where up until recently they were quite extraneous.

MOTION 9 - ENVIRONMENTAL CRISES

Productivism and consumerism are taking us towards the collapse of the ecosphere. Emergencies regarding the climate, water, energy and food can only be overcome by adopting a radically alternative model of development.

The scientific and technological development that has taken place in the last centuries has allowed one part of the world to make extraordinary progress, but this has gone hand in hand with increasing contradictions, including ever more blatant imbalances in the ecosystem. The combination of productivism and consumerism have led to an uncontrolled escalation in the use of natural resources and the destruction of entire habitats, bringing about physical changes in structure, eliminating incalculable numbers of living species, and introducing substances which for quality or quantity cannot be “metabolised” in normal natural cycles. Over the last few decades movements have grown up to alert people that it is impossible to go on using energy and raw materials, transforming the territory and producing waste at the present rate: it is the ecosphere which guarantees the survival of humankind and the continuity of human activity, and the modifications we have introduced into the ecosphere have brought it to the brink of collapse. It is also quite clear that the mirage of extending to one and all the level of consumption enjoyed in the most affluent nations has been proved groundless. The technological development in the industrialised countries has opened up a gap between richer and poorer nations, while at the same time ensuring that everybody suffers from the consequences on the environment.

To avoid the collapse of the ecosystem and allow the underdeveloped nations to attain a decent standard of living, there must be a drastic reduction in consumption of natural resources in the more highly industrialised countries. Furthermore capitalist globalisation is causing not only irreparable damage to the environment but also a fatal incompatibility between the prevalent economic and social model and the necessary conditions for environmental reproduction. From the environmental perspective, globalisation provokes an acceleration of entropy. Globalised economic cycles interfere with the environmental cycles. The proliferation of movements required by global production leads to a much greater impact on the environment. The transfer of productions involves perfecting the exploitation of the environment. The separation of food production from its territorial basis destroys the terrain and conditions the quality of the foodstuffs. In general we are faced with a perverse linkage between the growth of gross national product (GNP) and the incidence of the greenhouse effect, while on the other hand rising GNP no longer automatically produces stable employment or social welfare. The very meaning of development and the parameters traditionally used for measuring it are now matters for debate. Everybody lives under the threat of environmental disaster. The large-scale environmental crises become interlinked, compounding the negative effects, and involve the climate, energy, water and food, whether in terms of famine or the corruption of foodstuffs. In the next 20 years the shortage of water will spark off wars in various parts of the world. In tackling these crises we have to call into question the logic underlying the capitalist economy and its globalisation. The boycott of the Kyoto agreements shows that the ruling classes will do whatever they can to ensure the survival of the current model, regardless of the increasing imbalances and damage. Indeed, through concerted actions which overcome points of conflict, the present global leadership is seeking to secure control over reproduction by manipulating the genetic domain. There is no further time to lose in promoting a different model for the economy and society to challenge the current mode of production, in the conviction that development cannot go on ignoring the biological rhythms of nature, and that we must achieve a society based on balance and harmony. This is the context in which to debate the major topics of safeguarding biodiversity and the rights and protection of the full range of living species: animal rights form an integral part in the construction of a possible new world.

MOTION 10 - THE CRISIS OF THE NATION-STATE

The number of nation-states is on the increase, but their power is dwindling. Economic policy is determined by multinationals and the large international organisms such as the IMF and WTO, while the priorities of budgets (and indeed issues of law and order) are decided at a supranational level (viz. the EU). The traditional function of the state as mediator is giving way to a role as "guarantor" of the investments of international capital and market expansion.

These are the principal modifications to have come about at the structural and economic level. Those concerning the institutions and international relations can be summarised as follows. For some time the nation-state has been in crisis. This does not mean that states are destined to disappear – in fact their number is constantly on the increase – but they are losing their power and authority in many spheres, and their role is changing significantly. The nation-state is being called into question both horizontally and in processes acting from above and below.

Its viability is being questioned because it has lost its authority in many fields that were traditionally its preserve. In the sphere of economic policy we see a drastic limitation of the possibilities of economic programming: control of the economy now lies with the large organisms set up undemocratically at the international level such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Trade Organisation (WTO), World Bank and Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). Decisions concerning economic policy and budgeting are overwhelmingly conditioned by supranational agreements such as, in the case of Europe, the treaty of Maastricht and the ensuing Pact of Stability. The traditional function of mediation which the state has fulfilled while basically defending the capitalist society, as for example

promoting a certain redistribution of the income and organisation of the social services, tends to be replaced by its role as guarantor of the allocation of the investments of international capital and the creation of new terrain for the market, eroding the public sphere. At the same time the supranational forms of control encourage a constant restriction of democracy in favour of non-democratic systems or authoritarian democracy within the nation states. These processes receive further impetus from the state of permanent war that has come to prevail in recent years, with its concomitant phenomena of militarisation and prioritising of security concerns.

Even the functions of law and order which were traditionally administered by national governments on their sovereign territory are now increasingly conditioned by decisions and orders which come from international centres of command, as was seen at recent summit meetings such as the one held in Genova.

MOTION 11 – THE WATERING DOWN OF THE STATE

The decision-making powers of the nation-state are eroded from below by the tendency towards a localistic fragmentation, which in Italy has taken the form of federalism. This policy contributes to the progressive dismantling of the welfare state.

The role of the nation-state is under attack simultaneously from below, by a process of fragmentation at the local level of what remains of its decision-making powers, which in our country has taken the form of a modification of the Constitution in a so-called federalist perspective. This process accompanies and promotes instances of privatisation – particularly widespread in the last few years – and the destruction of the welfare state, as well as tendencies – quite openly advocated – on the part of groups of influence, in other words concentrations of common “interests”, to link up directly, by-passing any mediation on the part of the state and making the most of incentives and favourable legislation at the supranational level. In this case too, far from seeing an attempt at bringing the citizen into closer contact with the centres of power, there is further erosion of the public sphere by private and market interests, a restriction of democracy and a deliberate weakening of the cohesion of the national community.

MOTION 12 - WAR, A NEW DIMENSION OF INTERNATIONAL POLITICS

As the organisms historically deputed to oversee international relations, such as the UN, fade into insignificance, structures like the G8 and NATO are going from strength to strength. War is becoming the chief dimension of international politics, tending to constitute a unipolar status quo (viz. the long-term “friendship” between USA, Russia and China) with its own mechanisms of control and fluctuating alliances.

The international organisms designated to oversee international relations are going through a profound crisis, and their influence, whether potential or real, is being annulled. Thus the United Nations has been superseded by the G8 and NATO in political and military terms, and by the WTO and other organisms and ad hoc summits among the richest and most powerful nations in the political, economic and social spheres.

The whole scenario of international politics is in a state of upheaval. War is no longer the pursuit of politics using other means, to quote the well-known dictum, but is increasingly – particularly since the 1990s – the chief dimension of international politics in the era of globalisation: the threat of war is subsumed into its prosecution without scruple, without recourse to any international instrument or declaration, ignoring the forums set up to oversee such decisions, so that nation states become mere pawns in military strategies decided at a supranational level. Starting from the Gulf war and in particular the war in the Balkans, war has emerged as the constituent instrument of a new world order which now, in this first war of globalisation, launched with the Anglo-American attack on Afghanistan, is seen to be reinforcing its control mechanisms based on variable configurations (over and above the G8 and NATO, since the latter in particular is

clearly unfit to cope with the new global situation) revolving round an axis comprising the United States, Russia and China.

In practice the process of globalisation, while being neither linear nor free of contradictions, is far from being anarchic or uncontrolled. On the contrary it is constantly generating and renewing its organisms of control, through which it seeks to compensate for the contradictions and tensions that develop in its midst and between the leading protagonists. These mechanisms of control are constituted quite undemocratically, being extraneous and in opposition to the organs that were legitimately instituted and recognised by governments, nations and peoples. They are immune to popular wishes and fiercely repressive towards any movement or sign of challenge.

MOTION 13 – THE ROLE OF THE USA

One consistent exception to the crisis of the nation state is represented by the United States of America. As leader of the capitalist revolution and globalisation, it has come to occupy a position of hegemony in the construction of the new unipolar world order, not least thanks to its military strength.

As one would expect, the crisis of the nation state does not affect all countries to the same degree or in the same way. In some parts of the world forms of resistance towards the process of globalisation, which may well harden in the current phase of crisis, are thriving, in some cases at the level of states. It is obvious that the generalised crisis does not affect the role of the United States. This nation proclaims itself the driving force behind the process of globalisation, for reasons which are historical, economic, military and social. With its system based on Fordist-Taylorist-Keynesian principles and the New Deal, America has experimented with and exported the most important experiences of structuring and organising the capitalist system to evolve during the first half of the 20th century. It came out of the Second World War as leader of the so-called “first world” based upon the capitalist system. It has played a leading role in the financial and monetary sphere, not least thanks to the Bretton Woods agreements. It has reinforced its authority in the protracted struggle against the sphere of influence dominated by the Soviet Union. It is the home of many of the leading financial concerns and multinationals. It has developed an overwhelming military apparatus. It has evolved a social and economic system that claims to be the authentic model for neo-liberalist doctrines, even though its economy has invariably been conditioned by control exercised from above over the allegedly “spontaneous” market dynamics and policies which have all too often been mercantilistic and protectionist, masquerading beneath the banner of free exchange.

As a result the United States has assumed the leadership of the current capitalist revolution and process of globalisation, even though other nations have made significant contributions, at times in open competition with the USA, such as Japan, especially with regard to innovations in the models and organisation of production. Over the decades of its pre-eminence in the capitalist system, the United States has had to come to terms with some substantial changes, above all in the management of capital resources and relationships with other countries: from being the principal source of liquidity and investments abroad during the 50s and 60s, today America is the nation with the largest national debt and the biggest recipient of foreign investments.

The combined effect of these processes situates the USA in a position of hegemony in the construction of instruments at the service of a unipolar and oligarchic world government, and this role is notably reinforced by its conduct of war, as has been clearly borne out by the current conflict in Afghanistan. The military strength of the USA – and the development of technology to this end – is absolutely overwhelming, and its leaders have no hesitation in exploiting this to underline their predominance in the process of globalisation, viz. the current discussion concerning “star wars”.

MOTION 14 – BEYOND THE CLASSIC NOTION OF IMPERIALISM

(approved by the National Political Committee)

The classic notion of imperialism, as defined by Lenin, Luxemburg and Hilferding, has come to appear inadequate. It constituted an outline of such phenomena as the increasing centralisation of capital in the hands of the State, the fusion between industrial and financial capital, and the clashes – all too often militarised - between the imperial powers for the control of resources, territories and markets. Today, on the contrary, capitalism relies on the concentration of forces at the trans- and supra- national levels, conditioning the policies and strategic choices of even the most powerful nations, while the financial markets have achieved a new degree of autonomy. Above all, in the general consensus for capitalist globalisation shown by the principal players world-wide, contrasts between states no longer produce either the construction of an anti-imperialist bloc or the lacerating contradictions typical of inter-imperialist relations. Nor for that matter do those countries which come under attack from the superpowers necessarily react by embracing anti-imperialism.

In this radically altered scenario the classic notion of imperialism appears inadequate to characterise the current phase of capitalist development. It is thus totally misleading to view international contrasts and conflicts between states as effects of inter-imperialist contradictions. From the start the accumulation of capital has had a supranational dimension. Imperialism, as defined by Lenin and Rosa Luxemburg, or indeed by Hilferding with certain distinctions, developed from the last decades of the 19th century onwards and reached its climax in the years of the Great War. After the Second World War it took on new forms which have been usefully identified by referring to neocolonialism or neoimperialism. An analysis of the imperialist phenomenon as it appeared in the first part of the last century was based essentially on the fusion between financial and industrial capital, the tendency towards the creation of monopolies, the processes of centralisation of capital that occurred at the state level and whose international repercussions derived from the individual states, the exportation of goods and capital towards new destinations, and resort to armed clashes and wars between imperialist and capitalist states to secure the control of territories, resources and markets.

Today conditions have changed radically. The processes of centralisation and concentration of capital have taken on a wholly new supranational character, involving mutations in the structure of ownership of means of production and exchange, a new territorial distribution and a greatly expanded role for the financial markets, which now operate in relative autonomy. Money's various functions, as means of exchange, savings and investment, have become much more closely intertwined in seeking greater domination of global markets. The presence of the decision-making organisms concerning capital in certain nations rather than others – above all in the United States – means that, far from deriving their strength and legitimisation from nation states, they actually condition and determine not only policy but even national behaviour and functioning.

These tendencies, and the new scenario that has followed on the collapse of the countries of the so-called "real socialism" and the end of the "cold war", demonstrate the futility of counting on the contrasts between capitalist states and inter-imperialist contradictions to bring about a crisis and the defeat of capitalist globalisation and the hypothesis of inter-imperialist wars. The current conflicts, and those to come, can no longer be interpreted as the natural attrition between the major powers: they must be viewed in the context of the need to control capitalist globalisation and safeguard the system as a whole, which is what the no-global movement is attacking.

MOTION 15 - THE NEW WORLD ORDER

The end of the bipolar world order has meant the disappearance not only of the traditional identification of a First, Second and Third World, but also of the more recent North-South "divide". A more significant paradigm for the current situation points to the contradictions between the various Centres and Peripheries of the globalisation process. Even the notion of

territory is changing: today it is more helpful to speak of "space-worlds", urban systems integrated in a network by means of permanent communication links.

For some time now the contradictions between the leading capitalist states have not led to warfare, not only because the great capitalist centralisations have transcended national borders but also because the various organisms which control the process of globalisation, in spite of being under the political domination of the USA, function as a clearing house for the contrasts and contradictions, which remain nonetheless, and prevent them reaching the flash-point of armed conflict. The world is no longer divided into antagonistic blocs, nor into the tripartite configuration of First, Second and Third Worlds, as it was analysed by an important part of the international communist movement in the post-war years. There have been remarkable changes among the countries that were then grouped in the Third World, both in economic and political terms – one only has to think of Eastern Asia – and it is now unthinkable to advocate the convergence of conditions and interests which formerly characterised the so-called non-aligned nations.

Even the contrast between the North and South of the world needs to be reconsidered in the light of recent transformations. Although, as we have seen, globalisation has brought about an enormous increase in the disparities between the richer and poorer nations, it seems more correct and productive to interpret the global contradictions according to the dichotomy of Centre and Periphery of the globalisation process, or rather between a number of centres and peripheries, because these are to be found at a local level inside the most highly industrialised capitalist countries.

In this sense the traditional concept of geopolitics must also change. We need to redefine the concept of territory with respect to globalisation, because although the latter needs local focus, this does not in fact coincide with the territories of individual states but is concentrated in prevalently urban territorial systems linked by both material and immaterial communications networks (in space-worlds, in the felicitous terminology of socio-economists). There is no doubt that the disappearance of a bloc opposed to capitalism on the one hand, and the economic necessities of the globalisation process on the other, have left the peripheries of the global capitalist system even more vulnerable to depredation and a state of continuous warfare.

These conflicts are fanned and directly stage-managed by the country which calls the shots in globalisation, the USA, and by the organisms in which it predominates, both to underline the impossibility of opting out of this process and the unipolar world-wide regime – with wars as punitive measures of retaliation and revenge – and to achieve and maintain control and possession of basic resources including sources of energy like oil which continue to be of prime strategic importance.

Thus there can be no serious prospect of constituting anti-imperialistic groupings of states, not only on account of the changes in the nature of capitalism, but for lack of interest on the part of the states themselves. This has been clearly demonstrated by the consensus given to the USA over the war in Afghanistan by Russia and China, the eagerness of Russia to be admitted to the NATO and the attitude of China during the latest G8 summit at Genova. Again, the entry of China in the WTO confirms its intention to become integrated in the process of globalisation. In this context there is little to hinder the American strategy of annexation and abolition of sovereign independence in its own backyard. Following the creation of NAFTA (North American Free Trade Area), the proposal of the Multilateral Investment Agreement and negotiations concerning the World Trade Organisation, and the creation of the Free Trade Area of the Americas stretching from Canada to Patagonia, stands as the most advanced commercial, political and military project redefining the hegemonic presence of the United States throughout the American continent and beyond. This constitutes a potential market of more than 800 million consumers, a strategic reserve of energy resources such as oil, and also water and the biodiversity of the Amazon basin. The armed wing of the Free Trade Area is "Plan Colombia", while the Andean Initiative represents its regional extension. This does not mean that the world is witnessing a process of absolute standardisation within the capitalist system, nor that among the leading nations in Europe and Asia

there are no contrasts with the USA: but today these contrasts are played out within the process of globalisation, not in opposition to it, and the future evolution of these contrasts, which is bound to be integrative and hence once again conflictual, is tied to the outcome of the crisis in the globalisation process, which currently is clearly manifest.

MOTION 16 - THE EUROPEAN UNION : A NEW STATE

The ongoing attempt to construct a united Europe is deeply compromised, producing at present a mere monetary union hamstrung by its own parameters of compatibility and increasingly shorn of political autonomy. Its inherently undemocratic nature has become evident to one and all, and the Nice Charter has done nothing to remedy this.

The current situation world-wide reveals all the political limitations of the constituent Europe. At the outbreak of the present war, just as happened previously for the Balkans, the various governments of the EU have tripped over each other in rushing to offer their services to the USA. Once again America has been able to demonstrate its total political ascendancy over the individual states of Europe and indeed the Union itself, in a way that was nothing less than mortifying for the latter. Italy's conduct has been a classic example of this servility.

In practice the European Union is increasingly a monetary unit and commercial power rather than a political subject with its own autonomy on the international stage. This is not all: even in strictly economic terms the EU lacks any ability to take the initiative. While the USA gives the green light to economic policies featuring deficit spending, albeit with a conservative matrix, the European countries are paralysed by the restrictions imposed by the Pact of Stability. The European Bank has so far refused to introduce anti-cyclical policies, with the excuse that it is determined to prevent a new bout of inflation. At the same time, in many countries in Europe we are witnessing processes of privatisation, destruction of the welfare state and liberalisation of the labour market, all of which tends to bring the European social model in line with that of America, or in any case to adopt and apply unsparingly the doctrines of neo-liberalism. The non-democratic nature of the ongoing process of construction of a united Europe is becoming ever more striking. The European Parliament, which after all is an elected body according to a proportional voting system, lacks any real decision-making powers, which instead are vested in organisms (like the European commission) that are not elected. This antidemocratic reality has not been in the least modified by the Charter of Rights approved in Nice in 2000. We were highly critical of it as being remote from the prevailing social condition in Europe. At the same time there is an impasse in discussions over the extension of EU membership to new countries.

In practice the construction of Europe is going through a grave crisis, which in the light of the current global retrenchment risks proving irreversible. The only hope for relaunching the idea of a united Europe as a democratic entity playing an active political role on the world stage lies in the protagonism of the mass movements, new social and political actors who must aim, alongside the battle to render the constituent Europe more democratic – and hence for a European Constitution able to affirm people's universal rights and the active participation of citizens – to enhance the conquests of civilisation and the social model of our continent, the fruits of the struggles of the democratic movement and the lower classes stretching back over centuries. The achievement of these objectives, which not only involves extending the movements at both the European and global levels but prefigures a new European political subject able to unite the political forces offering an alternative, depends on the evolution of the new phase of crisis of the globalisation process that is there for all to see.

MOTION 17 - THE CONDITION OF MIGRANTS

Global war feeds on racism and xenophobia, and in fact the enemy, whether external or internal, is made the object of racial discrimination. The conditions of migrants and refugees

tend to deteriorate dramatically, for they are deprived of basic rights and are treated as nothing more than a disposable workforce.

This first global war is exasperating and also feeding on racism and fear of "the other". There is nothing new in this: turning the enemy into an object of racial discrimination and raising the spectre of the "enemy within", forging a link in short between war and racism, was a characteristic of 20th century warfare. But the present planetary civil war goes one step further: since it is not a war between states, the difficulty of identifying "the enemy" gives rise to a widespread and pervasive antagonism towards whoever is seen as "other", not belonging to "Western civilisation". Thus xenophobia and racism become an integrative part of the mechanism of planetary war.

What is more, the cycle of terrorism - war - threat of terrorism tends to favour a state of generalised and permanent "emergency", with all the concomitants of a latter-day "McCarthyism": reduction or abolition of the democratic liberties and hyping of the myths and measures related to security. Whenever the ideology and praxis of security are reinforced, the first victims are always migrants, refugees and aliens, held up as accomplices of the enemy and viewed as instruments of deep-seated insecurity. In the nations of the European Union this climate serves to downgrade the material conditions of migrants and refugees and strengthen the hand of those who seek to deprive them of their fundamental rights, starting from the right to asylum, legal status and residence. The climate of a witch-hunt also retards the painfully slow progress being made towards full recognition for the "residents but not citizens" living in Europe – at least thirteen million people – and favours the tendency, pursued unrelentingly by employers, to reduce them to "brute" workforce, to be discarded after use, as contemplated in Italy by the draft law sponsored by Bossi and Fini.

Thus it is clear that the defence of migrants and refugees, their security, rights and employment, is an essential element in the strategy against permanent planetary civil war. But this is not all. Today it is indispensable to pursue a modality of conflict which is always trans-cultural, and we must be aware that no alternative social movement can afford to ignore migrants; indeed they are an integral part, both singly and collectively, of the communist identity in the new century.

Supporting the immigrants' movement in their struggle for full equality (both in Italy and Europe) is not merely a question of humanitarian care or solidarity. On the contrary, it is a fundamental element in the continual struggle that Italian workers must wage in self-defence against the degradation of life, society and politics. There is no doubt that neo-liberalist policies have rendered living and working conditions precarious, and aim at engendering a war between the have-nots, replacing class conflict with inter-ethnic conflict. At the same time it is evident that an immigrant without rights, or with highly limited rights, will be more competitive in certain sectors of the labour market. It is above all immigrants who suffer from exploitation, accidents and illegal working conditions, and their condition of juridical and social disadvantage will inevitably, sooner or later, erode those same conditions for Italian workers. This is why the recomposition of a class embracing all workers, whether native or migrant, constitutes a fundamental element of our political project.

MOTION 18 – THE WORLD ECONOMIC RECESSION

The American economy has stalled, after nearly ten years of uninterrupted growth: once more the US government is having recourse to conservative policies of deficit spending and war. Europe is stagnating, and the Japanese economy has slowed down. There is no potential locomotive for development, and hence the "great depression" is a possible scenario.

The major innovation in this panorama is the crisis in the process of globalisation. We cannot speak of a definitive halt, nor indeed of a possible U-turn, but there is no doubt that the crisis manifests itself in various aspects, opening a new phase in the process of globalisation. This process has been through more than one episode of economic and financial crisis; one only has to

think of the stock market crash in 1987 or the extensive financial crisis sparked off by the so-called Asian tigers in 1997. But now we are confronted by something more serious and radical, which preceded the destruction of the Twin Towers, although it was also magnified by that event. In practice the world has woken up to the fact that it has entered into a phase of economic recession – or possibly worse – only since the 11th September, although this was in fact already the case prior to this date. If we look at the world economic situation from the perspective of the United States, we see that the crisis was indeed in progress before the terrorist attack, and has hit both the “old” and “new” economy, which in actual fact are indistinguishable. From this point of view we are facing - in a new guise - a typical crisis of overproduction (in the USA, for example, the enormous investments made in optic fibre infrastructures have still only been exploited to a fraction of their cost). The outsize financial balloon buoying up the world had already begun to deflate in the early months of 2000, as was soon apparent in stock exchanges the world over. There can be no doubt that the current “return of the state” is actually exasperating, rather than attenuating, the ruthless redistribution of resources to the detriment of the have-nots, without addressing the qualitative nature of development.

World economic growth, even according to the calculations based on criteria that we contest, indicates a marked downturn with respect to the last decade. After nine years of growth the American economy has stalled; the same goes for the European economy, while Japan has been stationary for some while. The results are evident: consumption has declined, lay-offs have become the order of the day, unemployment is growing, and the working classes are succumbing more than ever to poverty. The United Nations agency charged with monitoring the evolution of the labour market (ILO) estimates that in 2002 there will be 24 million fewer jobs in the world, above all in Asia and the poor nations.

The USA is trying to react by adopting anti-cyclical measures involving increased state aid for industry, in particular those firms connected with armaments, and an increase in internal consumption, favoured by the restitution of previous tax deductions. In practice it has adopted policies of deficit spending. This return to active intervention through public spending, following years of ideological propaganda in favour of liberalist doctrines, bears an unmistakably conservative stamp. The production and exploitation of all kinds of weaponry plays a key role in this. At the same time the crisis of the new economy is inducing the American economy to resort to unacceptable solutions for the equilibrium of the environment, not to mention risky destabilisation in geopolitical terms: this is what lies behind the American refusal to honour the Kyoto agreements concerning the environment and the ever greater interest – which in actual fact has never been disguised – for oil and other non-renewable energy sources, and hence for control of the crucial oil-producing areas. The other capitalist countries continue to preach a pristine liberalism and the importance of respecting spending parameters. This is the case of Europe, held fast – despite some restlessness – within the straitjacket of the Pact of Stability.

Signs of any way out of the crisis are equivocal, not least because it is impossible to identify any country or zone in the world which might act as locomotive. The current recession – and this is already a possible scenario for many analysts – may in fact turn into a large scale depression, with incalculable consequences in social terms.

MOTION 19 – THE END OF THE SINGLE THOUGHT

One of the cardinal myths of globalisation has been definitively laid to rest: there is no longer any question of continuous growth guaranteeing an easy life. Collective disillusionment has produced contradictory manifestations of crisis: there has been an explosion of terrorism, but at the same time social and political opposition have been growing.

In any case we have seen the last of one of the most alluring myths of the globalisation process. In predicating a sure, steady growth, without anything sensational, it was hoped to abolish the term “crisis” from the economic mind-frame and collective imagination, ensuring, at least for those

lucky enough to live in the right part of the planet, an existence free of uncertainty. Globalisation – if we were to believe its apostles and propagandists – was to broaden the sphere of consumer behaviour and make life easier, albeit in a regime of competition. This myth was promoted by a powerful and assorted ideological lobby, until it came to represent a sort of “single thought”, as it was effectively dubbed, able to intervene in every sphere and come up with solutions to every kind of problem.

The globalisation process derived from, and in turn reinforced, an authentic hegemony of the ruling classes world-wide, based on the primacy of the economy, the logic of profit and business, and the imperatives of the market and competition. Today all of these dogma are going through a profound crisis. The mirage of a secure future, held up to millions of people, has been definitively dispelled; the majority of the world’s inhabitants are all too painfully aware of being excluded from a condition of well-being, however relative. The logic of business continues to determine production, but its hegemony on society and the system is being increasingly called into question. The large-scale environmental crises are striking at the heart of living conditions and social reproduction. The political strategy of terrorism is the mortal enemy of transformation, and at the same time it is itself the product and symptom of the crisis of globalisation. In the poorer countries various forms of opposition are starting to challenge the acquiescence of their governments in the face of neo-liberalist policies. Throughout the world we are witnessing the emergence of a vast, long-term, complex movement against globalisation, bringing together a variety of social entities, cultures, political tendencies and ideals. In short, the attempt to “normalise” the world under the aegis of capital has not succeeded.

MOTION 20 – THE SECOND PHASE OF GLOBALISATION

After the domineering affirmation of capital, it now has to cope with a state of crisis. In casting about for new mechanisms of command and control, it has opted for the “state of war” and repression.

The globalisation process has not been cancelled, but a new phase is getting under way: following its domineering, across-the board development, it is entering a second phase in which it has to come to terms with its own crisis. To judge from appearances, it has decided to rely on a protracted state of warfare, through which it hopes to achieve that predominance which it has failed to reach through hegemony. This necessitates new command mechanisms for the globalisation process, ready to suppress – even by resorting to the vicious circle of terrorism and war – all movements promoting opposition and alternative solutions, and absorb into the process, on different levels of subordination, all the claims to some autonomy of action, however timid, on the part of individual or groups of nations. The outcome of this crisis is of crucial importance for the future of humankind: either capitalism will be superseded, or the quality of human society throughout the world will be gravely compromised. The key to this dichotomy lies to a large extent in the development of the world-wide movement against globalisation.

MOTION 21 – THE OBJECTIVE OF INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM

The current international terrorist activity is another of the phenomena to originate in the isolated sphere of politics. It aims to exploit the situation of unrest and oppression among Muslim peoples, even though it cannot claim to be either a political or a representative expression of this situation.

Terrorism is certainly not a new phenomenon: it has erupted onto the world scene many times and in various different ways. It has always embodied a political project, based on a firm conviction of the fundamental autonomy of politics, opposing the action of a few to that of the masses. In this sense it does not automatically derive either from social unrest or from the various forms of religious fundamentalism or integralism. Yet there is no doubt that terrorism tries to

associate with and exploit conditions of suffering and social injustice, ethical intolerance and religious integralism to make propaganda and win consensus and support.

The current phenomenon of international terrorism – exploiting in particular the spread of radical Islamism, the state of oppression, unrest and desire for revenge of those peoples and that part of the world in which the Muslim religion prevails – can count on an economic power deriving above all from the exploitation and control of oil fields and supply routes; while this power base is itself a highly desirable objective for the oligarchic regime of globalisation and the major powers. From this it should be perfectly clear that resort to war, besides being ethically, politically and humanely unacceptable, is totally unproductive in opposing terrorism. Such opposition requires a very different commitment on the part of the international community, comprising simultaneous interventions in a range of different spheres.

In particular it is essential to work towards removing the enormous disparities and social injustices exasperated by the globalisation process in order to eliminate every opportunity for terrorism to secure the consensus of people driven to desperation. The flash-points in the current international situation must be resolved, starting from the conflict between Palestine and Israel. Here the priorities are the immediate withdrawal of Israeli troops from the occupied territories, the rapid dismantling of the Israeli settlements and the creation of a buffer zone manned by an international peace-keeping force, as the Palestine National Authority has been demanding for over a year, in order to safeguard the right of both peoples to a state of their own. We need to reconstitute the foundations of solidarity among nations, based on the legitimate international organs. The long-delayed reform of the UN must go through, eliminating permanent membership of the Security Council, recognising the supreme decision-making powers of the General Assembly and abolishing the right of veto. It is the UN, with the collaboration of all nations, which must take charge of preventing and repressing terrorism, using the investigative and operational resources of international police activities, in the full respect of human rights and democracy: this is the essential condition for obtaining active support world-wide. A solution must be found to the administration of justice at the international level, and it is indispensable to constitute the International Penal Court whose creation is being obstructed by none other than the United States.