

MOTION 43 – OPPOSITION TO THE WAR

In this phase the chief priority is opposition to the war and Italian participation in it. This calls for a few telling watch words: dissolution of the NATO, radical reform and relaunch of the UN, dismantling of nuclear stocks, resolution of the crisis in the Middle East (“two peoples, two states”).

Today opposition to the war is of crucial importance, both to achieve an immediate end to the one in progress in Afghanistan and the participation of our country, and to ensure that recourse to military intervention does not become a normal instrument for crisis management in the process of globalisation. This means working towards reconstructing the entente between nations that brought into being the UN, on the basis of its radical reform; dissolution of the NATO; dismantling of nuclear stocks and all instruments of mass extermination; the pacific resolution of world crisis zones, starting from the Israeli-Palestinian conflict; a wholly autonomous political and economic role for Europe, involving the non participation in warfare, greater decisional powers for the elected European institutions, such as the Parliament, in the context of a new European Constitution, the revision of treaties introducing and abiding by criteria of employment and social policy, and not just financial and monetary considerations, reconsideration of the charter of rights which was unsatisfactorily adopted in Nice, a policy of solidarity and cooperation world-wide, in which the cancellation of the debts of the poor nations and the introduction of a taxation on capital transactions (the Tobin Tax) can represent the first significant steps forward.

MOTION 44 - AN ALTERNATIVE ECONOMIC POLICY FOR THE COUNTRY AND THE SOUTH

To combat the recession and its devastating effects, it is essential to renew public intervention in the economy, concerning essential and environmental assets such as energy, water, urban quality of life, territorial reclamation and the right to healthy alimentation. In this contest there needs to be a deep-rooted “initiative in favour of the south” and the setting up of a “social anti-mafia” coordination unit.

The spectre of a profound economic recession – in Italy too all the predictions of growth have been downscaled – makes the clash over economic policy and the social question even more highly charged. The emergence in American economic policy of a Keynesian approach based on war has not been matched by a similar choice in Europe or indeed in Italy, in spite of the fact that the peculiar configuration of right-wing forces is attempting to graft onto a liberalist ethic some traces of a more populist and nationalist economic policy. Our answer to both tendencies lies in our proposal to relaunch a new public intervention in economy aimed at sectors and productions which do not coincide with the market and production of warfare. We should begin from alternative energy sources, made all the more urgent by the worsening of the climatic crises throughout the world, and working towards an economy in which environment and people are not shackles to be shaken off but a value. To this end we believe it is necessary and indeed urgent to reopen discussion on the pact of stability at the European level. Not only does globalisation tend to widen the gap between the South and the other regions of Italy and Europe but, by intervening in a situation which is already depressed, it brings the social unrest and actual conditions of life in the South to unbearable levels, at the same time as reinforcing mafia strongholds and patronage. The onus on privatisation and deregulation of the labour market, the spread of multiple forms of flexible and casual employment in a context where structural unemployment remains very prevalent, together with the serious production crisis that has put paid to the few industrial zones without leading to any alternative occupational outlets in the service industry, all constitute a social and democratic configuration – as was amply confirmed by the general election results in the south and by the recent polls in Sicily – which is truly alarming. In the absence of an authentic and vital productive reality and an organised political and social

representation there is a surge in individualism and a renewal of forms – renewed in their modalities and the quantities of resources they can call on – of political patronage and criminal accumulation in collusion with the sphere of politics. We can see two different but complementary orientations among the ruling classes, also concerning the South. On one hand there is the underlying tendency to assign once again to the South the short straw in a dual development (part and parcel of a social model increasingly centred on recourse to flexible and casual employment in the labour market) designed to boost the economic restructuring of the North, draining off financial and human resources. On the other hand there is a more national and populist line, viewing the South as a traditional area of consensus for right-wing policies of deficit spending, absorbing European funding for major public works schemes and even investments for the military production sector. The latter is a variant which is perhaps less starkly liberalist but equally based, in keeping with the modern ethic, on the idea of a depressed territory in social terms and civilisation. In this area, the new intrinsically distorted channels of expenditure become a coagulant for a system of power intertwined with the political system and criminal holdings. Thus the mafia does not represent an element of backwardness but an organic and dynamic factor in the process of capitalist modernisation of the South. The mafias are strong because they continue to control the territory and the economy and operate in collusion with a system of firms which conceals its own responsibilities. Indeed the increase in casual employment and the favouring of large-scale public works schemes and rampant development favour a new expansion of mafia activity. Thus we must fight against any association between politics and that mafia-implicated middle class of businessmen, professional operators and figures of culture and finance, who constitute a bridgehead between the system of power and the interests of the mafia gangs. In combating this new configuration of the mafia phenomenon we need to go beyond the present antimafia coordination which limits itself to the ethical sphere, delegating responsibility to the judiciary, and set up a truly social antimafia coordination.

In this context there must be a new initiative in favour of the South, accompanied by a new model of development (this objective is bound to incorporate a renewed link between social campaigns and the fight against criminality). The initiative will channel public interventions in the direction of a broader and more qualified shop floor workforce so as to create in the South the conditions for a lasting development based on training, research and innovation, benefiting an economy able to compete in Europe in terms of quality rather than the low cost of labour, and open to cooperation with all the countries round the shores of the Mediterranean. In this development the valorisation of the environment and human and cultural resources will orient – as a viable alternative to the current rampant development and speculation – policies of renewal of the large-scale environmental cycles, reorganisation of the historical centres in cities and on the territory, repristination of the climate and contrasting of pollution, recuperating the hydro-geological instability and restoring the natural equilibrium. All common resources such as water, energy, food and the environment must be guaranteed as publicly owned, of a high standard and with easy access. The common right to alimentation and healthy food must also be guaranteed, reversing the increasing separation between food production and territory, which together with the industrialisation of production has caused the degradation of the land and health risks in the food chain. The use of first chemicals and now genetic engineering to increase yields has also degraded the environment, without resolving the problems of food shortage. Policies and subsidies must focus on the quality of products, their availability to all and the boosting of employment, attributing to agriculture the role of safeguarding and upgrading the territory. There is a need for blueprints for access to and appropriate use of water, the right to alimentation, repristinating the water supply, energy saving, use of alternative, ecological energy sources, environmental upgrading with the introduction of methane in stead of more polluting fuels which worsen the greenhouse effect, and the retention of ENEL (electricity board) in public ownership, resisting new private enterprises.

MOTION 45 – AFFIRMING THE RIGHT TO WORK, WITH NEW REQUISITES

Our proposals for the current phase: raising of minimum pensions, full protection of pay from inflation, introduction of a 35 hour working week, social salaries for long-term unemployed. Combating a market which discriminates against women, young people and migrants.

The decision to construct an alternative proposal of economic policy starting from the real needs of the worst off receives confirmation both from the deterioration in their conditions and from the rise of new protests and movements in society, drawing on a new generation of workers. This is why the question of employment has become still more crucial, in all its aspects. The raising of salaries of regular employment and pensions, besides of course the guarantee of minimum pensions of one million lire a month, and full protection from inflation avoiding any diminution in real value – problems which in our country, compared to Europe as a whole, are particularly serious - ; the redistribution of work by means of a reduction in the working week, as a first indispensable step to extending employment and improving the quality of life, starting from the 35 hour week on equal pay, modifying the ration of work time to life time, complemented by a reform of time distribution in cities, according to the innovations evolved in women's culture; the construction of a matrix of universal rights in which to reunify the fragmentary world of work, combating the multiplication of atypical figures and the assault on the statute of workers' rights; the assignment of a social salary to the long-term unemployed, to give them a certain stability, free from blackmail and the need to do "work for the sake of working"; an increase in women's employment, achieving a comprehensive reassertion of rights and guarantees based on gender difference and specificity, combating a return to dynamics of clan and exclusion: these are some of the immediate objectives and terrains on which to conduct political and social campaigns. Their achievement will involve an intransigent opposition to the organic design for a definitive liberalisation and privatisation of the labour market contained in the government's "white paper" or the draft legislation that it may produce.

In this new international situation, and in the face of xenophobic and racist initiatives sponsored directly by the government and the right-wing forces even with legislative measures, the safeguarding of the rights of citizens who have immigrated, including the right to work, citizenship and participation in every form of democratic life such as voting and standing for election takes on a particular value.

MOTION 46 – A NEW PUBLIC SPHERE

To meet the assault on the welfare state we cannot defend our present rights: we must construct a social control on services and combine the universality of rights with responses to the needs of the individual. This means implementing the Tobin Tax and a progressive reform of taxation, and relaunching a school system which is publicly funded, free and Republican in its ethic.

The current assault on the welfare state must be countered not only by the absolutely indispensable defence of the public sphere, but also by embracing innovation, combining the principles of cost-free, universal availability with the ability to meet the needs of the individual. To achieve this, citizens must become protagonists, and the structures charged with dispensing and managing services must be made democratic. At the same time – not least in view of the increasing injustice provoked by the centre-right government, preoccupied above all with the immunity of ownership – there is urgent need of a tax reform which can redress the balance between incomes deriving from work and capital, and concentrate on the latter in whatever form, for example by introducing at a national level taxation on capital transfers along the lines of the Tobin Tax.

The acceleration in the dismantling of the publicly-funded school system and the privatistic, classist, clerical and business ethic that characterises the proposals of the Berlusconi government impose a much more radical response. To combat this project we insist on the necessity of a school system which is publicly funded, free and Republican in its ethic as the fulcrum for a system of education

which accompanies citizens throughout their life span. At the same time, and as part and parcel of this objective, we must pursue an information and an industry of culture and entertainment which are multicultural and free not only from a private monopoly but also from the spoils system and hidebound party or bureaucratic conformism that are rife in the public sector. Thus we commit ourselves to contrasting on every occasion the legislative, institutional and structural mechanisms which go against this orientation and to supporting the mobilisation of the forces committed to conserving plurality and multiplicity within the existing realities and structures.

MOTION 47 - THE DEFENCE AND INNOVATION OF DEMOCRACY

Democracy must be defended from increasing attacks and aggression: for example, we are opposed to any further manipulation of the constitution. But there is also a need for innovation, such as the "participatory budget" proposed at Porto Alegre.

The crisis of democracy has been exacerbated – for the reasons we have already seen – by the war and the adoption of the so-called federalist reform, and thus both from above and below. The Constitution of the Republic has suffered a severe setback with the modification of the Fifth Article, and now all the democratic forces must defend the integrity of its founding principles and its parts. The crisis of democracy, exacerbated by the current electoral law which jeopardises even the role of our national Parliament as the deputed headquarters of political representation, cannot be contrasted only – however necessary this remains – by defending the representative institutions or reproposing the principles of proportional representation. The important issue of citizens' security, currently exploited as a matter of law and order, has become an alibi for having recourse to emergency measures and limiting spheres of liberty. Thus the defence of fundamental rights and individual guarantees emerges as the cornerstone in a strategic battle for democracy, linked with the construction of a renewed communist identity. The violent aggression directed at the independence of judges conducted by the right, as well as the predominance of the powers of the government over those of Parliament, brings back into the limelight the necessity of safeguarding the clear distinction between the legislative, executive and judiciary powers of the state. However, it is not sufficient merely to reassert these liberal principles. We must immediately set about combining the forms of direct democracy with those of delegated democracy – while fully respecting the universal rights of people taken as a whole, with their social and sexual identities – constructing and experimenting with organisms which enhance, starting from the local level, the direct participation of citizens; we can do this by building on experiences from other countries, such as the "participatory budget" evolved by the municipality of Porto Alegre.

MOTION 48 – WHY A COMMUNIST PARTY IS NECESSARY

Only an organised communist force is able to embrace, with its own unitary project, the various backgrounds and multiple contradictions which currently characterise the groupings pursuing transformation. And only a communist party can begin to undertake the transition.

Today the communist identity takes many forms. It can thrive in the movements, inspire autonomous initiatives of information, sustain minorities within social-democrat or socialist political formations, and find expression in independent groups of theoretical or social research. It can even be conceived as a purely moral choice, a sort of "interior or intellectual forum". Among these options we have chosen, for the present and the future, the form of the Party, inside a project of refoundation, on the basis of a renewed, generalised political commitment.

A communist political force is necessary today for one essential reason: because it is able to embrace, with its own unitary project, the various backgrounds and multiple contradictions which make possible the construction and activation of the pursuit of transformation. The various spheres involved in the

initiative – social conflict, civil protest, the interpretation of economic and social processes, cultural elaboration, institutional representation – tend to remain separated and non-communicating: the party is a place in which recomposition, a general proposal or a project can come about. But it is also an active instrument of democracy: a site for participation in political life available to all who have not chosen politics as a way of life. In this sense, a modern communist party has to be a mass grouping, an autonomous community of women and men determined to transform the status quo. This is why the Party we have tried to construct over the last few years is grounded in social, class, cultural, civil and institutional contradictions. It seeks to put down roots in the workplace, among employees, in factories, in the world of education and research, among those unable to work or to find work, and migrants. It is deployed on the territory. It recognises antagonism of both class and gender. It promotes internal democracy. It acquires instruments of training and self-training. All this maintaining a full awareness of the function that it can and must carry out, but also of its “natural” limits. For it knows it is necessary, but not sufficient: the construction of an alternative is a complex and pluralist process which takes on a multiplicity of forms of organisation, aggregation, association and voluntary activities. Each of these can perform, in turn, an important autonomous political function. In sum, unlike the traditional parties, Rifondazione Comunista knows that political and social initiatives cannot be carried out exclusively by its militants and those of flanking organisations, but must rely on a constellation of individuals and associations with whom the Party must be ready to exchange and communicate without aiming to absorb or integrate.

A second element that affirms the necessity for a communist party is the need to pursue the objective of transformation, i.e. the construction of a society characterised by a new mode of production and by democratic institutions of a higher quality than those tried and tested in history. Today this construction is profoundly different both from the idea of insurrection and seizing power, and from the reformist hypothesis (a sequence of structural reforms and legislative victories): to a large extent it has to be reinvented, experimented with and verified in practice, in a process which must necessarily be complex and original, and cannot be conducted at the drawing board. Today we can only prefigure a transition which, in one respect, draws on the peculiar tools offered by the history of the workers’ movement (from the activation of social and territorial conflict to the “praxis of objectives”), and in another is based on a permanent dialectic between institutional representation and forms of self-government, centralised power and scattered counter-powers, parties and movements. There will be no single rupture but many and various moments of rupture. Perhaps there will be no ultimate synthesis, but rather significant instances of recomposition and unification. In a process of this nature and scope, the Party appears to us to be not a unique but certainly an indispensable tool.

Finally, we believe that an idea (and practice) of a truly democratic communist society can only be built on the basis of a conception of the party such as the one we have outlined. A party seen as a single subject, as the only repository of “truth”, will necessarily entail a society managed (but this is only an illusion) from the centre, hierarchical, rigid and bureaucratic, lacking dynamism and adaptability to historical changes. Whereas a party seen as an agent, necessary but not unique, of transformation, can be reflected in a pluralist and democratic society, able to correct itself and be long-lived.

MOTION 49 - TEN YEARS OF RIFONDAZIONE COMUNISTA

The PRC has come through the ordeal of mere survival and demonstrated its political vitality. Now we need a strong impulse of innovation, putting the question of refoundation at the head of our agenda.

In the years since 1991, Rifondazione comunista has successfully demonstrated both its ability to survive and, no less importantly, its inherent vitality. It has come through both internal and external crises that have at times been dramatic, and asserted its active function in Italian society,

confounding the chorus of those who wished to relegate it as a minority token force. This has been possible thanks to the commitment, dedication, constancy and generosity of thousands and thousands of companions who during these ten years have made concrete contributions to the construction of the Party and laid the foundations for a process of communist refoundation. Any stock-taking carried out in the ethos of self-criticism must of necessity start from these incontrovertible data, which should by no means be taken for granted. Thanks to these premises, the role of the PRC has been evident, recognisable and recognised in the emergence and growth of the antiglobal movement, and in the days of the Genova summit. Now it is time to attempt a quantum leap both in our initiatives and in our political and strategic thinking. Rifondazione comunista came into being, in Rimini, in order to affirm an identity: as a resounding No to the liquidation of the Pci and all it stood for in our history and organised anticapitalist activity in general. Right from the start, with the renewed participation of many companions and the confluence of the Dp, we exhibited a pluralist nature which has become our peculiar denominator. This is what imparts a vivacity and indeed a richness to our debates, but also a certain cultural diffusedness and lack of sense of belonging. The identity of the PRC has developed and proved itself in the crucible of day-to-day political and social choices, and this has been a necessity but also a limit. The two schisms we have gone through have been provoked not by a declared divergence of strategy (as such they could have been recognised and debated), but rather as a question, by no means secondary, of tactics and parliamentary positioning. Our most serious rupture, with the Comunisti Italiani, brought to the surface a tangle of orthodoxy, continuism and moderatism which struck at the heart of our vocation for refoundation: on one hand, communism as a token of orthodoxy and a distant horizon; on the other, the "here and now" of political and institutional realism, where the alliances and groupings precede and predetermine every battle over contents. It was this episode that exposed a profound limit in our scope for innovation and refoundation. Overcoming these limits, to engage in processes of building a communist political culture that can match up to the challenges facing us today, means putting the question of refoundation squarely at the head of our agenda.

MOTION 50 – BEING COMMUNISTS, TODAY

The communist identity manifests itself, on one hand, as a radical critique of the capitalist production mode, and on the other as a belief that the way to overcome this mode lies in the construction of a society based on the will of individuals, freed from the profit motive as the basis for development.

In the last few years a virulent ideological campaign has sought to demolish communism as a value and a topical proposal. While the cliché of the "end of history" tended to delegitimise every aspiration to (and hope of) changing the status quo, the whole of 20th century history was being "rewritten" in these terms. At the same time, anticommunism became once again the prerogative of the ruling classes, whether in the "visceral" forms and language of Berlusconi or in apparently more moderate terms ("communism is incompatible with liberty"). Resistance, in the cultural sphere too, to this campaign has been, and continues to be, one of the lynchpins of communist refoundation. In the era of globalisation the communist identity manifests itself, on one hand, as a radical critique of the capitalist production mode and on the other as a political conviction that it is possible to construct a society in which economic development, social relations and the day-to-day life of individuals are determined by the organised will of women and men, rather than profit, exploitation and the alienation produced by the market.

This identity does not derive merely from moral repugnance at today's world, nor from a subjective rejection of the innumerable injustices that prevail in the world: it is based on the class analysis of society, of the groupings that pervade it and the "irreducible" antagonisms which characterise it. In this perspective the conflict between capital and labour is crucial: there is no hope of moving beyond

capitalism, i.e. the logic of the market and business, without the abolition of salaried employment and liberation from work. In this sense, our communist identity remains irrevocably tied up with the class contradiction. But it is not inherently true to say that in liberating themselves workers thereby liberate all humankind. The new world that we want to build is one from which all the forms of discrimination and oppression that global capitalism inherits, exacerbates and reproduces must be banished, whether they are practised on the basis of gender, geographical or "ethnic" origins, generation, or sexual orientation, as indeed must the unrestricted exploitation of resources and nature. Thus, without a new working-class movement dialectically unifying the various antagonists which capital finds ranged against it today, there can be no liberation for humankind.

Furthermore, no liberation for humankind can ignore the contradiction of gender. From the late sixties, feminism has produced in Italy a veritable social, cultural and political revolution, forcing men and women to confront the issue of gender. It is up to Rifondazione comunista to get to know, recognise for what it is, elaborate and assimilate feminist thought as an indispensable part of our refoundation. In the same way, the adoption of the environmentalist's battle is another fundamental commitment. This is not a matter of seeking some form of compatibility between development and environment. Nor is it enough to come up with another idea of development. What is needed is a truly alternative economy and society involving the promotion and repriming of an equilibrium in the large-scale environmental cycles, the end to commercialisation of the common and collective environmental resources (water, air, energy and territory), the renewal of territorial identity and the upgrading of labour in environmental production.

MOTION 51 – COMMUNISTS AND THE OCTOBER REVOLUTION

(approved by the National Political Committee)

The October Revolution stands as a watershed in the 20th century, the first extraordinary example in our times of "conquering the sky". The subsequent failure of "real socialism" does not impose acts of "repentance", but rather the necessity for a communist refoundation.

At the heart of the communist movement lies a long history, stretching back indeed over centuries, which in many respects coincides with humankind's innumerable attempts at liberation, at "conquering the sky" undertaken by millions of human beings. In this multiplicity of references, the October Revolution retains a unique value: it stands as a watershed in the 20th century. It set the seal on the value and role of organised independence, the first extraordinary example of "si, se puede". It profoundly modified world-wide equilibriums, breaking down the planetary monopoly of the capitalist market and influencing the entire revolutionary course of the 20th century, including the liberation from colonialism. It forced the ruling classes in the capitalist West to make significant compromises with the working-class movement. It made a decisive contribution to the defeat of Nazi-Fascism.

These undeniable political and historical merits have not prevented the profound involution and degeneration of post-revolutionary societies, leading to their defeat. Besides the necessary stock-taking in historical, political and ideal terms which still to a great extent remains to be done, involving collective research work, it is precisely the dialectic between the validity of the October Revolution and the failure of the attempts at transition that reveals the strategic necessity for the refoundation of a communist philosophy, praxis and policy. This raises the question of defining a complex communist identity, not least from the historical and methodological viewpoint: an original perspective, capable of continuous innovation, not mere updating, without thereby making short shrift of memory. In arriving at this definition we must be able to learn from our mistakes and make a radical critique (or indeed to reject) the past. This must not entail formal self-criticism or repenting, but nor must it lead to opportunistic denials of the weight and responsibilities deriving from our history.

MOTION 52 – AFTER 1989 (approved by the National Political Committee)

A return to Marx, in need of stripping down following a series of “Marxisms”, the revolutionary lesson of Antonio Gramsci, and the legacy of the 20th century, era of the workers and women: these are the essential coordinates of a radical and renewed identity.

In the last decades of the 20th century, and above all since 1989, the communist movement has undergone its most dramatic crisis: it (and with it every organised anticapitalist-inspired impulse) has been opposed by a massive, organic offensive aiming at its total delegitimisation. The response of communist parties has been mostly of two types: either an innovation that assumed the necessity of their defeat and the perspective of the adversary, often involving changes of name, or a neo-orthodox and neo-doctrinaire reaction. The political destiny of communists risked foundering between the alternatives, both doomed, of a moderate revisionism and a dogmatic, or para-dogmatic, conservatism.

In this context Rifondazione comunista, as indeed other communist parties and revolutionary movements, has tried to come up with an autonomous hypothesis, combining innovation and cultural receptiveness with a radical and revolutionary approach. In other periods, this attempt was described as seeking a left-wing answer to Stalinism and the hidebound form of Marxism-Leninism. We must at least set out the essential coordinates of this challenge.

1. **A RETURN TO MARX.** The inescapable lesson of Marx’s research, and above all of the works of his maturity (which became known only in our century), is his perceptive interpretation, from the standpoint of method and theoretical paradigms, of the contradictions of full-blown capitalism. This is the category of revolutionary rupture, seen as going beyond the mechanisms of exploitation and alienation which inform capitalist production. It involves the centrality of the real person rather than the abstract citizen. Of course this does not mean setting up some sort of dogma: on the contrary, we must once again take Marx as a fundamental touchstone, “stripping him down” to free him from the Marxisms that have come to overlay his thinking during the 20th century.
2. **THE LESSON OF ANTONIO GRAMSCI.** Gramsci’s contribution to the history, originality and relative autonomy of Italian communism is of striking topicality today. Not only for the concrete analysis he provides of Italian society, full of insights which are still waiting to be fully followed up, nor merely as a “guide” in the relationship between politics and culture (and between ethics and politics), but for the underlying idea of revolution which rejects the autonomy of politics. Revolution is seen not as mere conquest of political power or the nerve centres of government, but as a process which involves all social relations and their intrinsic quality. Revolution as a long march, building strongholds along the way, operating both objective and subjective transformations.
3. **THE LEGACY OF THE 20th CENTURY.** Compared with the century that has just finished, today’s communists take over a peculiar continuity and inheritance: a revolutionary struggle for modernity and the emancipation of humankind which today has come up against a brick wall, and indeed has gone into involution. At the heart of this struggle there were the working-class movement and its organisations, the attempts at freeing the oppressed classes and “conquering the sky”, and the remarkable sequence of social and political battles. A crucial component has been the struggle against the patriarchy: the women’s lib revolution has evoked not only a new subjective force and new rights, but the transformation of interpersonal relations, calling into question the family as a historical-social construct destined to reproduce the division of roles on the basis of gender. In the same way the notion of limits has been another constituent of modern identity, meaning a critique of a concept (and practice) which identifies development with quantitative growth and progress with the uncontrolled exploitation of natural resources. A rigorous definition of the dialectical, rather than summational, nexus between these

protagonists of modernity – work, gender and the environment – means arriving at a positive appreciation of the legacy of the 20th century.

MOTION 53 – COMMUNISM VERSUS STALINISM

The project of refounding communism implies making a radical break with Stalinism, not only as a historical experience but as a paradigm for revolution, concept of politics and function of the Party.

The project of refounding communism, on the strength of a communist identity in line with the 21st century, implies making a radical break with Stalinism. We are not advocating an operation of historical stock-taking, which would itself be arduous, but of political verification and theoretical identity: the separation from Stalinism means also, and above all, calling into question a paradigm for transition, a concept of politics and the function of the Party. In Italian communism, the rupture took place, primarily, for the sake of the rights of individuals and the necessity of conserving a representative democracy: in the new communist movement these motivations must be fully developed in the name of the new society we are building, the liberation from work, the refusal of a separation between citizen and state, and the revolution as an indivisible world-wide phenomenon. In this sense, to be credible standard bearers of a revolutionary and communist outlook, we must make a radical break with the experience of “realised socialism”.

In this negative legacy we can identify, first of all, the idea of a “socialist sphere”, or state sphere, requiring the sacrifice, or subordination, of the strategic interests of the working-class movement world-wide: an unacceptable distortion of attitude, above all for the future. Secondly, there has been a dogmatic fossilisation of theory (which has crippled the most advanced experiences of critical Marxism of the 20th century and reduced so-called “Marxist-Leninism” to an ecclesiastical orthodoxy), representing an authoritarian and ineffective substitute for an analysis of real processes, methodological investigation and verification. Finally, and above all, we can recognise the reduction of socialism to the mere conquest of political and institutional power, standing outside the workplace and production (and more generally all social relations), coherent with a hypothesis of gigantic industrialism, strictly governed from above: but, just as the conquest of power can generate new and weighty oppressions, economic productivism does not liberate work nor create a new quality of life. In this sense, Stalinism has also been a model of development at the service of the idea of quantitative growth. It is the deficit – not surplus – of socialism that has engendered the all-powerful, despotic concept (and practice) of the Party, the uncontrollable dominion of the leader, the cancellation of every democratic aspiration at the grassroots of the organisation and society, the end of union liberty, and the reduction of individuals to mere insignificant appendixes of politics.

MOTION 54 – COMMUNISM TODAY

From the problematic reflection on our history to the demands of the antiglobal movement: communism as a means of liberation. A “reasonable” goal for history.

How can we define the outlook of communism today, in the light of the legacy and failures of the 20th century? If the analyses we have proposed so far are correct, there can be no further reason for sustaining the theory of “two stages” – socialism first, based on nationalisation or public ownership of the main production resources, followed by communism, but only in the far distant future. This does not mean, let it be said, that a revolutionary, communist attitude is just round the corner, or that it can be achieved without the necessary gradual progression. It simply means that it cannot be separated, in political and strategic terms, from the concrete battles of the present: it is a question of immanence, rather than transcendence or a distant horizon. The slogan adopted by the “Seattle people” was not formulated by chance: the aspiration to *another possible world* actually derives from the radical nature of the movement opposing neo-liberalist globalisation. Starting from instances of

subjective unrest or determined opposition to the multinationals and the hegemony of logos, it is bound to go, even without being fully aware of it, to the heart of real processes which, in turn, are rapidly redimensioned in terms of the viability of tactics, mediation and objectives of "reform". From this standpoint communism can be repropounded, above all to the new generations, as a means of liberation for which it is worthwhile committing oneself. More generally, what remains wholly sound and topical is the idea of building a society "in which the free development of each individual is the condition for the free development of all": not, then, simply a "fairer" or "more just" society, paying attention to a more egalitarian redistribution of resources and rights, but a society that has been set free from the straitjacket of the auto-valorisation of capital as the essential dynamic and impulse to growth. Where the organised subjectivity of women and men, not the logic of the market and capitalist enterprise, can rationally decide their own future. Where the dialectics between collective institutions and self-government of the masses, between central power and diffused counter-powers, become permanent. Where personal liberty – the irreducible singularity of each individual – is achieved by means of the progressive growth of the social individual predicted by Marx: not a solitary atom, in permanent competition with its peers, nor the mere appendix of a mega- or micro-structure (whether State, Factory, Party or Family), but an individual with a wealth of needs and know how who grows inasmuch as she or he cooperates, comes into conflict and communicates with the Other.

MOTION 55 - DEMOCRACY AS STRATEGY

Democracy is not a tool but a value in its own right: a strategy fit for a society which is organically pluralist. It is a concept of power, involving the strict inter-connection of ends and means.

The classic question posed about democracy – whether it is a means or an end – now finds us ready with a positive response: democracy as an end is a cornerstone of our current identity and at the same time a strategy. While it is true that it cannot be contained in its liberal expressions and modalities – or in that schematic representation which today's ruling classes largely repudiate – it is also true that these limits can only be overcome in a different perspective, beyond rather than within the bourgeois sphere. The darkest moments of our history undoubtedly provide us, in this sense, with very clear indications, also as regards the functioning of political organisations and a communist party: if and when the internal democratic life of the organism is compromised, the political proposal itself loses in force and credibility.

Here too we are confronted by the relationship between ends and means: contrary to the received wisdom originating in Machiavelli, which has had a profound influence on politics and the Italian left-wing en bloc, today we are bound to reject the idea of an organic separation between the "ultimate end of our efforts" and the means by which we achieve this. This is not a moral imperative but a choice of political coherence and laicism: the action of consuming in the here and now your identities and strategic convictions, to the point of overturning them in the name of an ultimate, meta-historical goal, actually denotes a religious-style alienation. In practice it implies adopting a hyper-realistic and moderate political practice, as has all too often been seen.

From the point of view of contents, democracy today represents a choice and praxis of political, cultural and associative pluralism. We have a plural conception of the left, and we oppose a radical rejection of the historical scheme of the single party, which has produced so many distortions in post-revolutionary societies. We also have a plural conception of the alternative and its realisation, above all in the qualitative sense of the term, i.e. its ability to set up dialogues, relations and profitable encounters between different cultures – in the interests not only of resolving conflicts and representing interested parties, but of defining new social interrelations. The political perspective accompanying the process of transition must also be pluralist, for we must call into question not only relations of exploitation but also the hierarchies between the dominant and dominated, authors and

executors, bosses and underlings. In short: we are dealing with the crux of power, which has to be radically revised with respect to the traditional precepts. In a perspective of transition, it is clear that the conquest of central political power remains an inescapable passage. This is not, however, a starting-point from which to set in motion changes in economic and social relations, but rather one stage, albeit a significant one, in the process of a richer and more complex political and social transformation. It appears a rupture which at one and the same time defines a more advantageous terrain of struggle, the tools for ensuring social self-control and the possibility of its own extinction. In this sense, communism is also a radical idea of democracy.

MOTION 56 – THE PARTY’S SELF-REFORM (approved by the National Political Committee)

The PRC is faced with arduous new tasks in the current phase, and its structure is inadequate and in serious difficulties. The question of self-reform must be tackled, not only to halt the drop in membership but in order to build a communist organisation able to match up to the current tasks.

Within the political and cultural process of refounding a communist approach, the question of the party's self-reform has become an impelling necessity. This problem is all the more urgent in view of the change in the political phase represented by the re-emergence of social conflict and the new tasks this brings with it. A keystone in our outlook is the construction of a mass communist party, with the ambition of refounding a communist philosophy and practice. This new Party should prefigure in its real, day-to-day existence that society of “free and equal individuals” we have in mind when we speak of communism. A Party which is able to formulate a theoretical and practical critique of the current state of things, a policy which is not separated from contents, a participation which does not rely on delegating, a genuine relationship with society able to engender movements and struggle for transformation, building powerful relations with and between all those who bear the brunt of modernisation and capitalist globalisation, working towards a broad and many faceted alternative left.

From the point of view of philosophy and practical organisation, our party has always suffered from serious structural limits, which were in fact comprehensively analysed during the conference at Chianciano. Above all it is up against an apparently insoluble contradiction due both to objective difficulties and to our inability over the last few years to create a true party of the masses: the contradiction consists on the one hand in the structure taken over from the tradition of the Pci, suited to a party which, among other things, can count on a large number of full-time staff, and on the other the reality of the political make-up of Rifondazione comunista, consisting overwhelmingly in voluntary work, mobile militants and pro tem collaboration. We have never succeeded, partly on account of the frenetic rhythm of a political practice that is becoming ever more “high speed” (and focused on a rapid succession of polling dates), in adapting this model to incorporate significant corrections or truly innovative forms: not even in order to move beyond the white- and male-dominated nature of the party.

Now, however, we must get down to a serious discussion. Over much of the national territory the Party is in serious difficulty: all too often tied down in its ability to project externally, to become socially rooted, to broaden its consensus; frequently shaken by divisions, lacerations and personality cults; or again split up into compartments that fail to communicate with one another. Even the Party at the national and central level is not entirely free from these contradictions. In this context we must also facilitate the participation of the Party rank and file in the political decision making. A party which is more vivacious and participatory, able above all to extend its social relations, cannot rely on forms of leadership which in practice remain hidebound and hierarchical. The mere fact of a turn-over in membership which has become endemic, concerning tens of thousands of companions “lost” along the way, demands a reflection that is organic and not merely subsidiary. As does the singular

contradiction between the healthy increase in the endorsement coming the way of the Party – in particular among the younger generation – and the drop in membership over the last few years.

Thus we are obliged, especially in this phase in which the signs of a social thaw have multiplied to the point of engendering the movement, to redefine our skills for organisation and conducting a unitary political direction at all levels (from the construction of social work to procuring members and distributing the party newspaper *Liberazione*) within an indispensable process of self-reform of the Party which can increase its powers of attraction and aggregation, starting from our local Circles which represent the fundamental springboard for our political initiatives.

MOTION 57 – BUILDING SOCIAL RELATIONS

The crucial element in this progress is to move from being a political force asserting its identity, which is still too often the case for the PRC, to a party which builds social conflict and relations.

First of all we have to move the Party's centre of gravity from aspects of identity and propaganda to the ability to construct political actions, relations with other protagonists of the alternative, the organisation of struggle, social ties and a culture of criticism.

The passage from being a party centred on the defence of its own identity to one focusing on the ability to construct relations and social organisation reflects the movement from the phase of resistance to a phase in which the social ferment must be understood, valorised and sustained also by providing organisational skills. In the phase of defeat we were often alone – or almost – in defending the necessity for the alternative; today it is clear that there are other protagonists who – in various forms – are active on the same terrain. The new conviction that we are indispensable but not sufficient requires a receptiveness towards the exterior, adopting the methodology of surveys as a permanent feature of the action of our Party. Proclaiming our identity as communists must not be the be all and end all of our existence as a party, but rather the premise that enables us to act politically for the construction of an alternative left on the social, cultural and political levels. This different approach must affect the functioning of the Party at all levels, from the circle up through the federation to the national directive, contributing to defining the organisational priorities and selection criteria for the groups of leadership.

In this perspective the militants of *Rifondazione comunista* are charged with spreading the Party line and also – to do this more effectively – with finding a way to harmonise and make inter-communicating languages and cultures that cannot but be heterogeneous: they have to find scope for horizontal connections between the various mass experiences and, on the basis of this, scope for the convergence of these experiences in challenges to the nerve centres and satellites of power.

MOTION 58 – VALORISING “KNOW HOW”

Building an open, community-based, practical party, which valorises “know how” and not just “know what”.

A second element concerns the construction of a party as a collective organisation, that can go beyond the tendency to generic political discussion and identify precisely its responsibilities. It must truly valorise the “know how” of its members, their various skills and the ability of each to become a political testimonial in the workplace or on the territory. To some extent the almost ten years' experience of the “*Liberazione*” fêtes is the tangible proof that such a modality is not only possible but can thrive in contexts wrongly held to be of “minor” significance: the fact is that in this kind of encounter, our Party is seen in its most open, community-based and practical light, as a meeting-place with others, with no commercial motives, the venue for militant and collective activity which is not limited to the internal pecking order. The valorisation of know how, of the intellectual abilities

regarding various fields of knowledge, of the knowledge and practical skills of companions is a crucial element in reforming our political preparation. So far, as a Party, we have called on only a tiny part of the available resources; indeed, we do not even manage to make use of all the competence of our paid-up membership. All too often a handful do everything and the vast majority do nothing. To change this state of affairs we must also carry out surveys within the Party, to appraise the potential and extend the possibilities for communist activity in terms of the accomplishments and availability of our militants, modifying the organisation of the political activity in order to redistribute and reinforce it.

Moreover we have to take advantage of the enormous potential which the new resources of ITC have demonstrated, from Seattle to the Zapatist movement and the counter-summit of Genova, in spreading the movement, with the circulation of ideas and counter-information and the passage from knowledge to action. Here we must valorise the use of these means by setting up inside the Party the circulation of information, interaction between the various levels of the Party and between the circles and our militants, fostering the involvement of every single member and the exploitation of the knowledge and skills of each individual.

MOTION 59 – MODIFYING THE ORGANISATION OF THE POLITICAL ACTIVITY

We must begin to discuss, at headquarters as well as in the federation, modalities able to overcome the “verticality” of the hierarchy and bureaucracy, the excesses of individualism and the water-tight separation of roles. Without preconceived ideas, and with the willingness to experiment.

The valorisation of know how calls for a modification of the organisation of party work at all levels. From one point of view, our Party suffers from an idealistic limit: it tends to see itself as a pure producer of ideas and political proposals, and hardly ever tackles the problems associated with its own reality and material constitution. On the other hand, its methodology is still dominated by a purely “vertical” hierarchical-bureaucratic model, largely devoid of verification and thus also of scope for either experimentation or correction. The organisation of work so that the output of the Party is not only internal discussion but also – and above all – the ability to project externally requires us to work on the basis of objectives, setting up a broader involvement for officials and members, calling into question the division of work between the directors and directed also inside the Party. We have to move beyond a situation in which there is practically no discussion within the Party of any appraisal of it as an operative structure, organising sessions for verifying and evaluating the work in progress.

The discussion of the hierarchical organisation of work, the tendency to separate political office from institutional representation, and the introduction of the criterion of verification as a normal, physiological component in the constitution of the leadership, can also form the elements that enable us to overcome the excessive emphasis on personality and “personal careers” which is currently corroding the Party's inner life. The generalised crisis of politics is recognisable in the onus on public recognition of the individual's role, the award of “important” office and the importance of hierarchies. These dynamics are undoubtedly not unknown in the life of our Party and must be confronted and discussed. We must overcome the excessively rigid hierarchies and give more room to the non-codified informality of interpersonal relations. The terrain of experimentation before us is not only useful but obligatory. It is not a question of formulae but experiences to be tried out, discussed and criticised in order to put in place a new organisation of work. To further this process the question of the political education of our companions must take on a much higher priority than it has had up to now in the life of the Party.

MOTION 60 – ROOTING THE PARTY IN SOCIETY

The heart of our mission consists in making the PRC an integral component in places of work and study, on the territory, wherever conflict is mature.

As part of extending the organised presence of the Party, we must make sure it becomes an integral component in places of work and study. We must go beyond the notion of representing a testimonial and rid ourselves of unjustified reluctance: we have to greatly reinforce the presence of the Party wherever there is the need for enquiry, building social relations and fostering conflict. A party that sees itself not only as representing the oppressed classes in the institutions but as an instrument engaged in the construction of their potential for conflict must necessarily put the question of its social roots at the centre of attention, and dedicate energy and resources, including the selection of cadres, to this end.

Ours is a party that manifests its readiness for dialogue, without any claim to superiority, convinced of its project but at the same time measuring its proposals against concrete social counterparts, aware that its growth is connected to the development of the level of protagonism among workers, social groupings and movements. Thus it is a party capable of operating to reconstruct the situations of social conflict, activating the various persuasions and social groupings in the struggle against capitalism, contributing together with the protagonists of social and political battles to identifying allies and adversaries. A party committed to piecing together a network of unitary means of struggle and achieving the convergence of the different movements in the common prospect of an alternative, in the outlined reconstruction of transformation and a new working-class movement. For this reason too we must overcome a certain specialisation and isolation of the roles of militants and leadership, meaning that some are permanently involved with the functioning of the party while others deal with the external political work. Breaking down this division of roles – at all levels – is the condition for achieving a party truly rooted in the social context.

MOTION 61 – SETTING UP A TRANSPARENT POLITICAL CONFRONTATION

Democratic centralism is not a desirable modality of conduct, and nor is a regime based on factions. The “right” choice for the PRC is, on one hand, to reinforce its rich internal pluralism, and on the other to make its internal life fully democratic.

We have to reflect on the forms of organisation of the internal debate. Rifondazione comunista has never practised democratic centralism, a modality of conduct which is not only “unrealistic”, in the age of global communications, but undoubtedly at odds with the widespread demand for democracy and the existence of sensibilities, political cultures and politico-cultural tendencies that have always been rooted in the PRC.

There can be no question that in the free internal debate that we wish to foster it is up to the companions themselves to choose, on the basis of the nature of the discussion of the moment and the dialectics this produces in the Party's reflections, the concrete form in which to manifest agreement and disagreement. Nonetheless, we believe that the alternative to democratic centralism cannot be a regime based on factions, which tends to crystallise the internal confrontation, inhibit individual impulses and favour systems of “organic” thought even when these are not necessary.

We believe that the best solution rests on two cornerstones: on one hand, a strong and convinced reinforcement of internal pluralism, in terms of historical and theoretical research, elaboration, unhampered confrontation on the crucial topics that still today largely constitute the object of refoundation; on the other hand, the launch of a campaign of internal democratisation. In redefining the venues of sovereignty – the role of circles and federations, the function of national structures, the rapport between national and local entities – it must at the same time reestablish the political and

organisational priorities, valorising above all the direct construction of political and social initiatives, the direct expression of social groupings, the promotion of movements and disputes on the territory. While of course respecting the political decisions taken in the various congresses and what are known as the political orientations, no cadre of the PRC should be obliged, in practice, to adhere a priori to internal factions, merely to affirm allegiance, just as no militant should have to claim adherence, or sub-adherence, as sufficient reason for admission to the organisms of leadership. This is after all a relatively simple criterion, but one which is constantly flouted, and it could ensure a quantum leap in the life of the Party.

MOTION 62 – FOSTERING SELF-ORGANISATION AMONG THE SOCIAL GROUPINGS

A party standing as a “society builder” must offer – and valorise – the possibility for social subjects to organise themselves directly within the Party, to express their own identity.

We must have a clearer idea of the Party’s role as “society builder”. The building – on our own or in conjunction with other entities – of new council housing, venues for recreation and discussion for use by the various social groupings, must become a concrete terrain of political initiative.

This project will only be practicable if the Circles, in addition to being the fundamental element in the Party’s make-up, inspiring the party line and its initiatives, can become a place of aggregation for the social, cultural and political groupings which are actively pursuing the alternative on the territory. In this context we must offer – and valorise – the possibility for social subjects, such as young people, women and workers, to organise themselves directly within the Party to express their own identity. Starting from the positive experience of the young communists, which must be extended and reinforced, we must foster the setting up on the territory of the Women’s Forum, the Workers’ Advice Centre and the Forum for migrants, extending the function of the Party to cover the creation of venues fostering the self-organisation of social groupings.

MOTION 63 – IMPLANTING OUR APPROACH AMONG THE YOUNGER GENERATION

The key word for the condition of young people today is precariousness. The role of the young communists in building the movement.

To complete the process of the Party’s self-reform, we must be able to count on the younger generation, giving priority to them, both in terms of political praxis and constituting a youth organisation of the PRC. The paradigm of precariousness, which we have identified as a general characteristic of the neocapitalist revolution, is particularly apt for “the condition of young people” and determines a crucial role for them in the context of class-based social relations.

Unemployment, the devaluation and expropriation of the rights and guarantees that ought to accompany employment, bordering on a new and superior alienation, the prevalence of profit over knowledge which is ever more predominant in the production of value, the all-pervading control of daily life, not least in the denial of venues for a rich social life, the capitalist appropriation of the very forms of life, are all defining traits of this era of market domination: if nothing changes, the newly emerging generation can only expect worse conditions for their future than those of the generation that preceded them, and this would be a first in the whole post-war period.

This is the key to understanding the movements that have emerged over the last years and months, in which the protagonism of the young and very young represents the sign of a resentful and alternative response to this state of things. The current movement constitutes for the younger generation the only chance of a mass reappropriation of the political dimension and liberation from the mortal embrace of an exercise of power which is ever more distant and hostile: “another world is possible” is the slogan which above all evokes, for this generation, the central issue of the

reappropriation of their future and identity as citizens grounded in participation in conflict and transformation.

Right from the start the Young Communists have been one of the most active political pressure groups in the construction of the "movement of movements" in Italy, constituting a healthy anomaly with respect to the history and panorama of the organisations of young communists and the left, all too often blinkered with respect to new revolutionary practices and the subjective dimension of the real movement, and unwilling to commit themselves to fostering its growth. For the Young Communists, the recent mobilisations have not only been a platform for self advertisement; they have represented a new phase of vitality, in which to experiment along with the whole social spectrum of the movement and open a new phase which blends their organisation in the common construction of the movement. This has also been the sense of the important experiment represented by the "Laboratory of social disobedience". Far from being a return to "organisational rigidity" in one part of the movement, or indeed the denial of the value of organisation in an exaltation of spontaneity and immediacy, this was an important test of communication and confrontation between cultures inspired by the common intent of promoting conflict while building active and participatory consensus. The Young Communists will make further contributions to this discussion by defining their own autonomous profile in their National Conference.