

MOTION 1 – A CRISIS OF HUMANITY

The last ten years, since the historic turning point marked by the collapse of the USSR, have wholly belied the liberal prophecies that followed. World capitalism increasingly lays the blame for its crisis on the general condition of humanity, threatening a true historical regression of civilisation. The renewal of wars that has stained the last decade – first in Iraq, then in the Balkans, now in Afghanistan - with the death and destruction they have brought, is both the material and the symbolic reflection of this.

The continuing capitalist economic crisis, the repeated reverses suffered by the working-class movement in the 80s and 90s and the lack of a State counter-balance, however distorted, to the power of imperialism after the collapse of the USSR, together with the vast processes of capitalist restoration that have, in different ways, affected vast areas of the world, have all contributed to the reverses in the living and working conditions of the majority of the world's population.

In imperialist countries in every continent (the USA, Europe, Japan), the drop in salaries, the degradation of work and the progressive dismantling of social protection all reflect a far-reaching attack on the previously achieved levels of social security. In the countries where capitalism has been restored (Russia and Eastern Europe) or is in the process of being restored (China), the reintroduction of the dominion of market forces has led to the destruction of every form of social protection, causing a dramatic drop in the quality of life for millions of men and women. In the bloc of dependant countries, entire continents, starting from Africa and much of Latin America, have borne the brunt of further falls in the conditions of the masses while their colonial dependence on imperialism has deepened. Generally speaking, the whole dimension of life is now subject to a widespread regressive trend, marked by the striking increase in degradation, intolerance, and irrationalism. The renewal of war, which has studded the decade, is the eloquent reflection of this dramatic regression. Even only twenty years ago, the idea of a war in the heart of Europe seemed merely a fanciful danger. Twenty years on, not only has war returned literally to the continent, with its terrible burden of death and destruction (the Balkans), but the very concept has gradually become justified again in the collective imagination of the masses. And today the powerful re-launching of international militarism led by the Anglo-American alliance, spurred on by the imperialist war in Afghanistan and the re-arming of Germany and Japan, are also symbolic signs of the historic turning-point in our time.

On another level, year by year, the symptoms and the consequences of a planetary environmental crisis become ever more dramatic: it is a dire confirmation of the incapacity of the current social order to function without destroying the environment. And the social consequences of this crisis tend more and more to combine with the consequences of the political and social crisis devastating many countries in the so-called Third World, causing true "humanitarian catastrophes" and forcing growing numbers of men and women to emigrate in a desperate "flight for survival".

For the first time since the Second World War, in every corner of the world, the future that lies in wait for new generations is no longer progress, but a forewarning of new regression. Nor is this an exceptional scenario. On the contrary, if we analyse the situation in the long-term, we can see capitalism has returned to the historic normality of its decline. What has, rather, been superseded is the exceptional post-war historical parenthesis that had appeared to be the norm in the eyes of several generations.

MOTION 2 –A CAPITALIST CRISIS AND “GLOBALISATION”

The theories that emerged in the 90s of a “new capitalism”, able to supersede its historic contradictions, have been belied by reality. The capitalist economic crisis now renders a Marxist interpretation of “globalisation” more relevant than ever, outside any “apology” of capital.

In the 90s - in the context of the collapse of the USSR, the backsliding of the working-class movement, US economic prosperity and vast technological innovation – the dominant representation of the world situation as “globalisation” has asserted itself, often interpreted as a “new capitalism” that is structurally different from “traditional” capitalism and hence able to supersede its historic contradictions. From a liberal stance, the myth of globalisation has been grasped as the sign of a new age of prosperity. From the opposing standpoint of much alternative critical thought, it has been seen as the coming of a new absolutist dominion. In both cases, new capitalism has been presented as the dawn of a new empire and evidence of the failure or irrelevance of the Marxist interpretation.

These ideological positions have inverted the real situation in many ways, while events have disproved them. The international capitalist economy has experienced a long wave of crisis for a quarter of a century, marked by the historic ending of the forward spur of the post-war period and the fact that stagnation has prevailed. The fall in the average rate of profit on a world-scale is a clear reflection of this. Since 1989-91, the collapse of the URSS and the processes of capitalist restoration that have come about in Eastern Europe, as well as the emerging restorationist tendencies that have developed in other non-capitalist countries (China) have certainly represented a process of capitalist recomposition of world unity. But this re-conquest – be it total or a trend – of much of the planet has not meant the historic re-launching of a capitalist economy. Eastern Europe, rather than an indicator of a new international economic development, is largely an underdeveloped semi-colony: the huge concentration of social poverty and the consequent low level of consumption are a brake on the expansion of the capitalist market. At the same time, the great reduction in the room for manoeuvre of the dependent countries, following the collapse of the USSR, has meant the area is more directly affected by world stagnation. In this way, the under-consumption of the Third World, driven by the fall or collapse in raw materials, is a further factor in this stagnation. All in all, despite the expansion of the capitalist market, the importance of international trade in the world economy is equal to that in 1914. As a result, despite the vaunted new processes of the international decentration of production, the multinationals still concentrate the bulk of their investments within the borders of the leading States and their own regional markets rather than in an undifferentiated world. Thus, economic globalisation has, in essence, concerned not real production but the financial economy, where it has truly reached a historically new level: but it is just this abnormal expansion of financial parasitism - which confirms even beyond his own predictions Lenin’s analysis of imperialism – that reflects the crisis in the average rate of profit from production. Just as at the beginning of the 20th century, far from being the measure of capitalist prosperity, the parasitism of the *rentier* is born from the crisis of stagnation and its aggravation. The great concentration of technological innovation (the ITC revolution) and the diffusion of new ways of organising labour (so-called Toyotism) can be understood in this context. As in other historical periods (such as the spread of Fordism in the 20s and 30s), intense technological innovation and new experiments in productive organisation did not come about from the prosperity of capitalism but rather from its crisis: as an attempt to re-launch profits through increased productivity and the opening up of new markets that would stimulate the economy. But, contrary to the bourgeois optimism of the 90s, the ITC revolution and its technological applications, however relevant, have not exercised the same force of economic stimulus as, in another context, the railways of the last century or the car in the 1950s. Not only have they failed to guarantee a way out from stagnation, but, after a certain point, they have paradoxically helped to aggravate it: the current grave crisis in the new economy in the heart of American capitalism is precisely the classic expression of overproduction whose more general recessive effects are directly proportional to the intensity of preceding economic growth in the sector. The theory of a “new capitalism” able to supersede the economic cycle could not have been more emphatically belied.

MOTION 3 – IMPERIALISM

Today imperialism is more than ever before the dominant framework of the world. The theories that it would be superseded in an indistinct globalisation have not found any confirmation in the real world. Applying the Marxist analysis of imperialism to imperialism today, with its deep-seated contradictions and in the context of the current international instability, is the crucial condition for an understanding of future tendencies.

In the 90s, in significant intellectual areas of the “critical left” and in our party’s leadership, emerged the idea that the very category of imperialism would be superseded by the model of a global, homogeneous, uniform “empire”, exclusively dominated by North America, in which the roles and functions of the old national States would fade away. This led to the idea of Europe as a simple subordinate compartment of the empire and thus the consequent demand for its autonomy on a “social and democratic” basis. On the one hand, this general concept is based on a profound incomprehension of the complexity of the contemporary world; on the other, ignoring the imperialist character of Europe, it seriously disorients the very political action of communists.

Far from recomposing inter-capitalist contradictions, the collapse of the USSR from 89 to 91 has to some extent set them loose, in the context of a strikingly new scenario. The huge processes of capitalist restoration in Eastern Europe and, in an incomplete form, in China, the new balance of power in relation to the dependent nations and the need to redefine totally the geostrategic balance and zones of influence have inevitably fanned the new world competition between the leading capitalist States. And the terrain for this competition lies entirely within the historic framework of imperialism: it concerns the control of their potential markets, investment and export of capital, the control of raw materials and a low-cost workforce, the levels of the monopolist concentration of financial capital and the political-military control of strategic areas.

The superiority today of US imperialism is objectively indisputable, in terms of its concentration of financial capital and military force, since the collapse of the USSR strengthened traditional American supremacy and its criminal action in the world. But Europe is much more than a mere dependent area. On the contrary, both the vast capitalist restoration in Eastern Europe and the Balkans and the unconnected decline of Japan have fanned a true development of European imperialism as an economic pole in competition with the USA. The very constitution of the European Union since 1992, far from being a simple fact of “undemocratic, liberal” institutional engineering, has represented the strategic attempt, not without contradictions, to guarantee European imperialism a unifying political framework that is equal to its new ambitions. The huge increase the levels of European monopolist concentration in strategic sectors (banking, insurance, telecommunications, defence industries) that the Maastricht framework has encouraged, the European economic hegemony (in particular German and Italian) in the Balkan peninsula and Eastern Europe, the new signs of European imperialism in Arab nations and the Middle-East (viz. Iraq and Iran) and much of Latin America, and the onset of a European militarism with the development of a common defence policy all attest, when taken together, to a new, stronger European position in the world balance of powers.

The striking development of the war-mongering initiatives of US imperialism in the 90s (in Iraq, the Balkans, and Afghanistan) was and is an attempt to counter Europe’s military ascent with its own military hegemony and to limit the EU’s room for manoeuvre. On the other hand, the European participation in military action under American hegemony did not represent a mere act of “servility”, but the desire to participate in the division of the colonial spoils, establishing a priori the best possible conditions for its own imperialist interests. Therefore, even the apparent unity of action of imperialist nations masks, as always, their competition. And the different capitalist national States, far from being united by an indistinct globalisation, represent the crucial instruments – political, diplomatic, military and also economic – of the different competing imperialist middle-classes.

In addition, it is the very framework of the new inter-capitalist contradictions that spurs on the emergence of new regional powers or new ambitions. British imperialism is trying to profit from the contradictions between the USA and the EU by placing itself as the lynchpin of military-diplomatic relations between the two poles in order to strengthen its position. Putin’s bourgeois Russia has occupied the void left by the USA-EU competition to re-launch its own international strategic position. In its turn, the Chinese bureaucracy aims to capitalise on Japan’s decline to invest its own exceptional economic power in a hegemonic design on much of Asia within a project of internal capitalist restoration that, still incomplete, poses serious incognitos on the future social and political stability of the country.

In conclusion, the whole international capitalist framework bears all the hallmarks not of a homogeneous “unipolar” uniformity, but of a growing potential instability.

MOTION 4 – WAR

The renewal of war in the 90s has an imperialist nature and goal. It does not reflect a generic “fundamentalism of the global market” opposed to a “fundamentalism of terror”. It reflects the large-scale re-launching of capitalism’s colonial policies, set loose after the collapse of the USSR, driven by the international economic crisis and fanned by the very contradictions between the different capitalist blocs. Today, the war against Afghanistan is totally coherent, in the light of this picture. Therefore, the fight against war “for peace” must be taken up by communists as the struggle of the anticapitalist masses beyond a mere pacifist goal. We must not give any support to the pro-imperialist role of the UN nor must we accept that imperialism has any “right of international policing”.

After the collapse of the USSR, the use of war has become a crucial instrument for the definition of the new imperialist world order. The wars on Iraq, Serbia and Afghanistan reflect the new power of imperialism and the new instability of the world. Paradoxically, the use of the criminal forces of imperialism is both its response to the imperialist crisis of hegemony and an indication of its inability to control a stable order and the new world balance of power.

The events of 11th September in America and what then happened must be seen in this general framework, and analysed according to Marxist methodology, not according to an imprecise impressionism or an abstract pacifism. The terrorist attack on New York, and in general pan-Islamic terrorism do not merely reflect an ideological principle (“the fundamentalism of terror”), but they represent a distorted, unacceptable response to capitalist barbarism, in particular the criminal repression of the peoples of the Middle-East, namely the Arab nation and the Palestinian people. The extent of this barbarism and its crimes all over the world are infinitely greater than the worst act of terrorism. Islamic fundamentalism has historically been opposed to the social and democratic aspirations of oppressed peoples and the Arab nation. Consequently, in the context of post-war world order, it has repeatedly been sustained by the colonial powers in order to block internal liberation movements and lay-democratic tendencies in the dependent countries. After the collapse of the USSR, the West no longer had any use for Islamic fundamentalism that became an objective factor of destabilisation. At the same time, the growing social and political desperation in large sectors of the oppressed masses, together with the more organic subordination to the imperialism of the Arab bourgeois regimes, has unfortunately in effect distorted and transformed fundamentalism into widespread revolt.

The roots of the leading states’ military reaction to the events of 11th September lie here. As in ’91 against Iraq, as in ’98 against Serbia, the war against Afghanistan does not represent an abstract “fundamentalism of the market” or a “mistaken response” to terrorism. On the contrary, it represents the will to reaffirm the imperialist grip on the world, against all possible factors of ungovernability. Hence the attempt to utilise the terrorist acts of 11th September and their huge emotional effect as an opportunity to re-launch imperialist interests in strategic areas of the planet.

The concrete goals of the operation are varied:

- a) To consolidate and extend direct control over the Middle-East and Central Asia, a crucial area for a stable international order;
- b) To intimidate liberation movements in the dependent countries;
- c) To attack the world-wide working-class movement, including that in the West, using the pretext of war to carry out massive restructuring (and mass sackings), attack social rights and attempt to disperse the international renewal of the class struggle in grass-roots movements;
- d) To combat economic recession by increasing military spending.

In this framework of shared imperialist goals (upheld by the Russian bourgeoisie and the Chinese bureaucrats for their own interests), the shifting sands of international contradictions are confirmed: between American and European imperialism, between British and continental European imperialism, between the frontline of European imperialism (Germany, France and Britain) and Italian imperialism, between Putin’s new Russia and the contradictory US and European interests, and between China’s new aims and imperialist expansion in central Asia. In short, once again there is no single clear picture of a unipolar globalisation but, on the contrary, a snapshot of new world instability subject to the weight of national or regional interests.

In this general picture, the PRC must redefine its political line in the light of war. Our party’s opposition to military intervention in Serbia in the past and Afghanistan now should not be underestimated. Yet this pacifist approach must be abandoned in favour of a categorical fight against imperialism. The appeals to the UN, “international law”, and alternative “international police action” have all been and are deeply mistaken. The UN has sustained and covered up all through the 90s the worst piracy of imperialism by promoting the abominable, genocidal anti-Iraq embargo. It does not represent, nor can it represent a so-called international sovereignty, even in a distorted form. In a class-based society, and especially in the era of imperialism, there has never been, nor can there ever be, a

neutral international law, above all class interests and all State interests. International law is only a legal justification for the interests of the leading states. And the only right that the leading states exercise and claim is the right to destroy through terror all forms of resistance to their own rule over the world.

As a consequence, communists must develop the fight against war within the anticapitalist and anti-imperialist class struggle side by side with the attacked oppressed peoples. There can be no “international police-force” to use “against terrorism”: the only international police-force against the barbarism of capitalism is the international revolutionary perspective of the oppressed masses. And that is the only true alternative response to terrorist fundamentalism.

Motion 5 –THE UTOPIA OF REFORMISM

The idea of the social and humanitarian reform of capitalism, which has always failed in the past, is today more utopian than ever. The idea of “reforming governments” that in Italy, as in Europe or world-wide, might carry out anti-liberal reforms within capitalism is more than ever not merely an illusion, but a trap for the lower classes and the grass-roots movements. The support that the PRC gave to the French “*gauche plurielle*” government has proved to be a grave error. In this period of history a strategic rupture with reformism becomes the cornerstone for a revolutionary communist refoundation.

The current international situation confirms more than ever before that the space for historic reformism has been exhausted. The experience of the last two centuries has confirmed the original position of Marx and revolutionary Marxism against any reforming or “governative” illusion, belying wholly and radically the strategic turning-point marked by Stalinism in the international communist movement from the 30s in the perspective of the so-called “reforming governments” or “progressive democracy”. Even when exceptional conditions of economic prosperity and great mass movements have led to reforming governments, they have always been opponents of the workers, without exception: their reforming concessions, when snatched by the pressure of the masses, were only made in order to contain the more radical impulses of the movements and protect bourgeois society. Therefore, far from representing a transitional phase in a socialist perspective, reforming governments have often paved the way for reactionary policies or the dramatic reverses in the working-class movement. This was the case in the reforming governments at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century (Giolittism) as well as the reforming governments of the “popular front” in the 30s (viz. France and Spain). This was the case in the reforming governments in Europe in the early 70s (viz. Portugal).

Yet more than ever before, the governist illusion is belied at its roots by the lack of a reformist space. The capitalist crisis and the collapse of the USSR have together eroded the material presuppositions for the reforming concessions in the West which had matured in the post-war years. The governing classes are acting everywhere to re-acquire – with interest – all that they had conceded in the past. The bourgeois governments – whether centre-right, centre-left or social-democratic – are everywhere carrying out the very same anti-popular policies of restrictions and sacrifices for the masses. Everywhere, even if in different forms and to different extents, the old reformist parties of the working-class movement are taking on board liberal ideas and attitudes, breaking with their very own tradition. Everywhere, the eventual presence of “communist parties” in government does not only fail to change government strategy in the slightest, but it makes these very parties equally responsible for the counter-reforming policies, exposing them to the deterioration of their relations with the masses.

In particular, the grave error made by our party in supporting the Jospin government in France must be honestly recognised. The analysis given in the IV Congress of PRC in support of the “French anomaly” has been belied by the facts. In the same way, our party newspaper’s praise for the French law for a 35-hour working week and more in general the repeated praise for the Jospin government (“A turn to the left in France”, “A socialist in Europe”...) have been belied. In fact, the Jospin government has protected and continues to protect the organic interests of French imperialism both at home (with a record number of privatisations and a policy of job flexibility in the clear interest of the bosses) and in foreign policy (active participation in military intervention in the Balkans and Afghanistan). Far from representing an anti-liberal alternative, it is a counter-reforming government, based on a tempered liberalism: this explains both the growing social protest against government policy and the dramatic crisis in the FCP that, albeit critically, supports these policies. Taking the French plural left as an example is even more paradoxical considering the fact that the only left-wing party that is growing in Europe today is the extreme left in France which opposes the plural left government.

Therefore, it is the very depth of the capitalist crisis and the historic turning-point of our time that proposes a strategic rupture with reformism as the cornerstone for a true communist refoundation. Not only would this recover the original position of Marxism and a true break with the Stalinist legacy, but it would be the impelling response to the barbarism of capitalism today, and the regression of civilisation which its crisis has dragged us into.

MOTION 6 – THE RELEVANCE OF SOCIALISM

The international re-launching of a socialist, revolutionary perspective, in its entirety, must be the central tenet of our refoundation: up until now we have avoided the issue. “Another world is possible”: not a reform of capital but an alternative system, namely socialism. It does not respond to an “ideological” request nor does it concern solely the identity of communists; on the contrary, it responds to the general interest of the working classes, the oppressed peoples and the great majority of humanity.

The crisis of both capitalism and reformism has re-launched the historic relevance of a socialist perspective as the only way out of the crisis facing humanity. In the framework of a capitalist crisis and the rule of imperialism, all the decisive questions that concern the condition of humankind and our future will not only remain unanswered, but they are bound to be exacerbated. On the contrary, in the grip of the crisis, all the needs and the demands for emancipation and liberation will clash even more with bourgeois ownership and the bourgeois nature of the State.

The most elementary social demands (the defence of salaries, job protection, employment, the defence of social protection) clash everywhere, every day, with their imperious opposites – profit and global competition. The national claims of oppressed peoples, starting from the Palestinian people, clash even more, after the collapse of the USSR, with the monopoly of the imperialist control of the world and its closer alignment with the national bourgeoisie of the dependent countries. Environmental demands are frustrated by the growing assimilation of nature to the capitalist market and the ruthless slashing of costs brought about by the crisis. The anti-militarist demands for peace clash more than ever with capital’s winds of war, the new colonial race and the military Keynesian policies of the imperialist States. Fundamental democratic demands themselves clash with the restrictions on freedom, the new xenophobic tendencies and the involution of law caused by the social crisis and war-mongering intoxication. In every area and in every direction, objectively speaking, today all the requests of progress demand a new world order, a new organisation of human society, freed from capitalism and all that goes with it. It is not a question of asking capital to be social, democratic, environmental or pacifist. It is a question of taking up each class, democratic, environmental or pacifist challenge to capital in order to overthrow it.

“Another world is possible”. Not a reform of capital, which is utopian and impossible, but socialism: the abolition of capitalist ownership, the acquisition of the means of production, communication and exchange as social ownership, and the organisation of a democratically-planned world economy in which the development model may be redefined according to the quality of life, social needs and relations with the environment and between peoples. Nothing could be more irrational than an economic system in which the increase in poverty (recession and unemployment) is determined by an excess of produced wealth (overproduction). Nothing could be more hypocritical than singing the praises of an international “democracy” where a handful of two hundred multinationals squabbling over the control of the world economy hold an unbridled and uncontrollable power in their hands. Only a socialist revolution can abolish these true monstrosities.

The ever more impetuous development in science and technology (ITC, biotechnology) demonstrates the impelling need for a new social world order. Subject to private ownership and the imperatives of profit, technological and scientific innovations, the potential source of new prospects and progress, are paradoxically changed into the instrument of new subordination and new colonialism (viz. patents). Moreover, the very orientation of scientific and technological research and its management and funding are increasingly subject to the law of financial capital and the managing boards of large companies, and so subordinate to capitalism. Only a democratically-planned economy can, therefore, mark a historic turning-point in the relationship between humankind and science. Only by abolishing private ownership and affirming the social control of producers and consumers on “what and how to produce and who for”, in every country and world-wide, will it be possible to free the extraordinary potential of science for the future of humankind. In short, the abolition of private ownership and the market ethos – that is the core of Marx and Engel’s Manifesto – inevitably remains a cornerstone of the communist perspective.

It is true, of course, that the repositioning of this general programme does not exhaust the task of communist refoundation. Indeed, the Marxist programme must be continually developed and enriched as a result of the historic changes and the great experiences of the working-class movements of this century. But it is the modernising and updating of the programme that presupposes first of all its recovery and redemption from the profound distortions it has suffered.

MOTION 7 – THE CRUX OF POWER

A democratically-planned economy presupposes and requires the conquest of political power by the lower classes. Failure to consider the question of power, how to attain it and the revolutionary rupture with the bourgeois State, means losing sight of the socialist perspective and the very idea of revolution, however much rhetoric is employed. In this sense, the PRC is called on to abandon the Gandhian rallying cry of “non-violence” as its cultural reference-point.

In the last decade, several “neo-reformist” political-cultural trends have tried to theorise the superseding of national States and their power as the corollary of “new capitalism”. This has led to the explicit abandonment of the very idea of political power and its attainment (viz. Revelli) in the name of the more or less contemporary use of old “co-operativist” theories as the lever for “another possible society”. In truth, not only do these theories fail to develop Marxism, they regress to a naïve pre-Marxism, subordinate in practice to liberal policies themselves (viz. the role of the tertiary sector as a frequent surrogate for public services and where a flexible workforce is now concentrated).

Instead, the nature and crisis of contemporary capitalism and imperialism render more than ever the idea of the State and power as the crucial, strategic crux. Against the ideological hypocrisy of liberalism, the national States and their bourgeois governments are and remain a crucial pillar for profit: both in the active promotion of policies of flexibility, privatisation, and cuts in salaries and welfare, and in the abnormal expansion of financial support given to capital in crisis as can be seen even more clearly today in recent American economic policy. But, above all, the renewal of militarism and the anti-democratic restrictive and repressive policies on public order – linked to the crisis in social consensus – reveal more than ever the true nature of the bourgeois State: that is “a body of men in arms” (Engels), the holder of the monopoly of violence against the oppressed peoples of the world and the lower classes in the imperialist metropolises. The experience of Genoa was a clear case in point, as are the politics of terror waged by imperialism in times of war as in times “of peace”.

No new social order, no socialism, could affirm itself in the shadow of the ruling apparatus of the bourgeois State. Nor is it imaginable that this apparatus could be an instrument for the lower classes in the transition to a society of free and equal individuals. On the contrary, rupture with the state apparatus and its overthrow are the necessary condition for a process of social liberation. In this sense, the rupture with the bourgeois state apparatus is the cornerstone of the very concept of revolution. And vice-versa, the evocation of revolution outside the strategic call for a revolutionary rupture with the State is only a “fiery but empty phrase”, void of any real meaning.

The PRC is, therefore, called to move on from the Gandhian rallying cry of “non-violence” as its cultural reference-point. In the first place, this reference, coherently applied, would break with the history of the class struggle itself, as the universal lever for progress, and in particular with the two centuries of struggle by the working class and oppressed peoples against capitalism and imperialism. In world history, the lower classes’ exercise of force has often been an irreplaceable recourse in their defence or struggle for elementary democratic freedoms, union rights, social conquests and national self-determination. Comparing the violence of the ruling classes to that of the lower classes, in the name of an indistinct, generalised rejection of “violence”, would mean closing ranks in a metaphysical pacifism. But above all the metaphysics of “non-violence” constitute a rupture with the very perspective of revolution. The apparatus of the bourgeois State has always opposed, and will always oppose, with all the means at its disposal, the prospect of the emancipation of the lower classes. And this is all the more true in the era of imperialism, with the re-launching of militarism and the ever more widespread repressive trends (viz. Genoa). Therefore, the question of force remains, in all its complexity, inscribed in the strategic perspective of revolution. The idea of eluding it through the philosophical call for “non-violence” would mean proposing yet again those old, reformist illusions for which the masses and communists themselves have in past paid a heavy price, as in Chile in 1973. Naturally, our condemnation of the theory and practice of terrorism is loud and clear, just as, on a different level, we condemn all nihilist, destructive, violent culture and practices (Black Block). But we do not do so from a pacifist standpoint, and even less from any identification with the State or its repressive action, but from a revolutionary stance: a political stance intended to develop, in the class struggle, the deep consciousness of the strategic need for revolution as a mass process, and for this very reason, irreducibly contrary to any form of action that re-enforces the State, damaging grass-roots movements and distorting the very identity of the revolutionary perspective in the perception of the majority of workers and young people.

MOTION 8 – THE OCTOBER REVOLUTION AND BUREAUCRATIC DEGENERATION

The recovery of the programme of the October Revolution is a crucial condition for refoundation. What failed in the USSR was not State economic planning but the bureaucratic management of the planned economy. What failed in the USSR was not the power of the workers but the bureaucratic caste that destroyed it.

Communist refoundation must recover fully the original programme of the October Revolution.

What failed in the USSR was by no means State economic planning in the place of a capitalist market ethos. On the contrary, the expropriation from the bourgeoisie and the concentration of the tools of production in the hands of the State guaranteed the population great social achievements that are not by accident today in the sights of the capitalist restoration. The World Bank – a source above suspicion – has now declared “The planning led to striking results: growth in production, industrialisation, basic education, healthcare, housing and work for the whole population ... In the planned system, the COMECON countries were societies with a high level of education ... Even in China, the levels of education were, and still are, exceptional when compared with developing countries ... In the USSR and COMECON countries, firms were urged to employ the maximum number of people, and so a lack of workforce was much more common than unemployment...”

What failed was the bureaucratic management of the planned economy that progressively expropriated the workers and their democratic organisms from any function of management and control to the advantage of a privileged, parasitic social élite. This social élite concluded its historic parabola transforming itself into the agent of capitalist restoration and, therefore, into a new exploiting bourgeois class. This process has confirmed the validity of the Marxist analysis of the degeneration of the USSR, summarised by Trotsky in 1938: “There are two alternative political forecasts: either bureaucracy, becoming ever more the organ of the world bourgeoisie in the working-class State, will destroy the new forms of ownership and push the Nation towards capitalism, or the working class will crush the bureaucracy and pave the way for socialism.” (Transition Programme).

And even more, what failed in the USSR was not the conquest of political power, the break-up of the bourgeois state machine, or the power of the soviet. Rather, the revolutionary superseding of the false bourgeois democracy and the construction of a new, higher democracy represented not only an extraordinary historic experience but also a crucial theoretical and practical reference point for the emergence of the communist movement of this century. What failed, on the contrary, was the power of a bureaucracy that step by step dismantled the democracy of the soviet and the party, transforming the dictatorship of the proletariat into the dictatorship of bureaucracy over the proletariat. Its brutal crimes against the workers and communists in the USSR and the international communist movement did not represent an abstract pathology of “power” as such, but the brutal means of defence used by bureaucratic privilege against the original programme of the October revolution. As a consequence, removing the very category of the revolutionary conquest of political power in the name of a “rupture with Stalinism” would mean, paradoxically, celebrating in reality its posthumous victory.

Instead, we must learn from the experience of the URSS, and re-launch the initial programme of Lenin and Trotsky and, in Italy, Gramsci: that is to combine the abolition of bourgeois ownership with the construction of a new power, a democracy of councils. A democracy that redefines the nature and subject of power, supersedes the scission between the masses and the institutions, abolishes the privileges of elected representatives and sanctions the permanent revocability of the latter. A democracy that can supersede and remove that network of legal and illegal power, blatant or hidden, that remains at the heart of every bourgeois democracy as an instrument of permanent intimidation against the workers. Finally, a democracy that is higher because it supersedes and removes the bureaucratic separatism of the bourgeois State and because it combines the respect for political pluralism with the public nature of ownership. In short, it is necessary to move on from the failure of Stalinism not in the direction of a reformist-pacifist “left socialism” but in the opposite direction of a revolutionary communist refoundation.

Motion 9 – THE STRATEGIC PRE-EMINENCE OF THE WORKING CLASS

The working class and the world of work, in its new composition and extension, represent the centre of a socialist perspective. The crisis in the hegemony of liberalism and the emergence of a young generation of workers indicate the current “thaw” and renewal of the class struggle that confirms and re-launches the huge potential of the working-class movement. In its turn, the working class can carry out the historic role of a “general class” only by a recomposition of its demands for emancipation and liberation on an anticapitalist basis.

In the last decade in particular, and in general in the last twenty years, in the context of advanced capitalism, the ruling international circles have launched a vast political-cultural assault intended to affirm the structural crisis or the “disappearance” of the working class. Not only international social-democracy, but also wide political and intellectual spheres of the “critical left” itself have accepted and proposed, in different forms, this myth. Even our party, that has rightly rejected the final conclusions of this approach, has not developed an adequate counter-attack against it.

The world situation radically belies this dominant propaganda. Far from registering the disappearance or down-sizing of the working class, the world scenario is marked by a vast process of proletarianization that increases, on the whole, the social mass of dependant workers while modifying its composition. In imperialist countries, the drop in the numbers of the industrial working class, affected by a vast capitalist assault, is combined with the process of proletarianization of vast sectors employed in education, service industries, transport, insurance, banking and communications, as well as growing sectors of the young unemployed or those in casual employment. Para-subordinate employment, formally self-employed work, is in itself in reality an expression of casual work paid by the hour. In dependent countries, however, the same international process of productive decentralisation has determined a huge concentration of the industrial working class, often subject to the most classic mechanisms of Taylorist exploitation. On the whole, therefore, the industrial working class is undoubtedly a growing force on a world scale.

The theory of the marginalisation of the class struggle and the crisis in the role of the working class is equally unfounded. The contradiction between capital and work has now permeated more than ever all fields of contemporary capitalist society. On the one hand, the capitalist crisis has spurred the dominant classes to continue their savage assault against labour, irrespective of any variation in the economic cycle. On the other hand, the world of work, that has suffered repeated defeats and lost terrain dramatically in the 80s and 90s, still has a huge potential for battle: none of the principal defeats suffered in the last twenty years was determined in itself by the so-called “structural crisis of the working class”, but was rather the responsibility of its political and trade-union bureaucracies. It is true that each defeat, with the lost terrain socially and the consequent demoralisation, affected the balance of power and often indirectly the social proletarian composition. But it was not this that determined it, but rather it was in large part determined by it. The class struggle, within the contradiction between capital and work, remains, therefore, more than ever the central axis for the formation, dissolution and recomposition of social blocs and the balance of power in each capitalist country and internationally.

In addition, in the face of every defeatist prophecy (viz. Marco Revelli), the trend of the renewal of the class movement in different forms today marks much of the world picture. During the 90s, even in a context that was on the whole negative, the working class mobilisation that had developed in capitalist Europe (Italy '94 and France '95) and in Asia (Korea '95) indicated the potential of the concentrated mass social action of the working-class movements, belying completely the sociological theories of much “post-Fordist” analysis. Today, the emergence of a new working-class generation on an international scale has gone hand in hand with a more visible, diffused renewal of the workers’ struggle. The “thaw” is a world phenomenon and has a deep material basis: the growing crisis in the hegemony of the liberalist policies, after twenty years, for the majority of the world population. The governing classes have increased their power over the workers for twenty years and their dominion over society, but at the price of social consensus. Their power has grown; their hegemony has shrunk. And today the crisis of the hegemony of the international bourgeoisie has fomented a new reaction, the struggle that has found its natural stimulus among young workers. Millions of young workers no longer resign themselves to a worse future than their parents’. And capital in crisis has nothing to offer them but a further deterioration in working and living conditions. This contradiction will profoundly mark the next historic phase. The re-launching and extension of class mobilisation, beyond contingent unpredictable dynamics and possible temporary ebbs, will tend to pervade the international scenario.

The re-launching of a socialist, revolutionary future can and must find its fundamental roots in this renewal of the international working-class movement as the central actor in an anticapitalist alternative. This does not mean, nor must it mean, a “working-class – trade-unionist” retreat. The international working-class movement can become the central stimulus of a revolutionary alternative only if it does

not limit itself to a mere trade-union or factory-based action, but recomposes all the individuals and the groupings world-wide with the same demands for emancipation and liberation on an anticapitalist basis.

In this light, the so-called theories of “poly-centrism” (embraced by the PRC itself) that assimilate the contradictions between capital and work into an indistinct set of other contradictions (environmental, peace, gender...) invert the real strategic crux. It is not a question of trying to assimilate “environmental culture”, “gender culture” and the “peace culture”, all too often in their neo-reformist ideological expressions, to the “culture of class”. On the contrary, it is a question of developing an anticapitalist, class hegemony in the fields of the environment, peace and women’s liberation in the process of a unifying recomposition for an alternative system.

Motion 10 – ANTI-GLOBALISATION MOVEMENT

The emergence of a younger generation in the terrain of the struggle (the anti-globalisation movement) shows more than ever the relevance of the re-launching of a revolutionary historic perspective. Convincing the young of the socialist future is a difficult but crucial task of Rifondazione.

The emergence and growth of the world-wide anti-globalisation movement cannot be separated from the renewal of the class struggle. It reflects the same crisis of the hegemony of liberalism that has fanned the renewal of social conflict, just as it reflects the re-awakening of large sectors of young people that marks a turning-point in the mobilisation of workers. The social composition of the movement itself is often marked by the striking presence of the young in casual employment.

But the importance of the anti-globalisation movement must not only be seen from the symptom it reflects but from the consequences it produces. The massive mobilisations against the international capitalist leaders during the Seattle, Prague, Nice and Genoa summits have shown the working classes of the whole world, with a great symbolic force, that the dominant policies can be contested, and that a growing mass of young people have rejected them. This fact has favoured a large, widespread consensus around the movement and a clear growth in the critical anti-liberalist sensitivity of wide sectors of the masses; an objective encouragement for the renewal of the working-class struggle in many countries. Moreover, in several countries, the anti-globalisation mobilisations have seen, in different forms, the direct participation of class sectors and their union and/or political organisations. More in general, the anti-globalisation movement has capitalised on and channelled all the issues to be contested in the current world order (social, democratic, environmental, peace) into a larger picture, on the one hand reflecting and on the other spurring on a widespread change in the public perception of capitalism. The anticapitalist potential of this movement, however latent, is therefore highly significant. However, restricting ourselves merely to praising the anti-globalisation movement or even promoting its spontaneity as a cult, as our party in fact does today, is a grave error. Indeed, the future policy of the movement is and will be crucial, in terms of the programme that will prevail, the consequent political choices and the mark of social hegemony that they reflect.

A great part of the current hegemonic thinking in the international anti-globalisation movement is neo-reformist. It is not a question of “condemning it” but rather of understanding the historic/social roots and the profoundly negative effect it could have on the movement itself.

In the context of the reverses in the working-class movement in the 80s and 90s, and in a historic context marked both by the crisis in the hegemony of liberalism and the crisis of credibility of “socialism” (in its inherited historic form), a great ferment of “critical” capitalist but not anticapitalist ideas has emerged: ideas and “programmes” intended to find another possible world within capitalism but not alternative to it. These political ideas are not homogeneous but are rather marked by profound differences: they include trends that openly collaborate with world capitalist forces and institutions within the logic of a critical pressure on their work; neo-Keynesian tendencies promoting an anti-speculative rationalisation of capital (viz. the leaders of ATTAC); tendencies based on tertiary sector experience and the recovery of historic co-operative ideas (neo-Proudhonian); or anarchic/rebellious tendencies that result in a sort of “neo-Luddite” behaviour (Black block). But what they hold in common is either the illusory search for an “equitable, fair” capitalism or the claim for their own antagonistic space within capitalism: in either case, they deny both the socialist perspective and the pre-eminence of the contradiction between capital and work as the lever for a social alternative. In this sense, these ideas threaten to deviate the latent anti-capitalism of the movement and the anti-liberalist sentiments of millions of young people towards a future that is both utopian and subordinate, objectively blocking the development of a political consciousness in the movement and the convergence of its struggle with that of the international working class and the liberation movements of oppressed peoples.

Communists must take the lead in the anti-globalisation movement, participating actively in constructing it and its structures, and share the sentiments of the anti-liberalist masses, seizing their extraordinary potential: any hint of disengagement, of doctrinal self-sufficiency in the movement must be openly opposed. The fight against the reformist positions for an alternative hegemony is the very reason for the presence of communists in the movement. Hegemony is neither ideological preaching nor bureaucratic imposition: hegemony is the open fight for the conquest of the politics and the ideals of the movement in an anticapitalist programme; to link all the fundamental issues the movement expresses, in its daily experience (social, environmental, democratic, peace) to a socialist future; to lead as a consequence all the fundamental demands of the movement to a strategic encounter with the working class. The affirmation of an anticapitalist hegemony of the working class, as the central subject of an alternative historic bloc on a world scale in the anti-globalisation movement, is now more

than ever an impelling necessity for the movement itself. The new scenario of imperialist war confronts the movement with a taxing task that requires a quantum leap in political consciousness and direction. The clash between imperialism and the oppressed peoples will tend to worsen. Internal class conflict will tend to become increasingly bitter. The movement cannot live by symbolic initiatives, intellectual criticism of world injustice and theoretical, utopian or minimal recipes alone, without risking the tailing off of its support. Nor can it trust in a general practice of "disobedience". This page of the movement's history has, anyway, now been closed. A clear choice in social organisation and strategic direction in every country and on a world scale is needed. A critique of liberalism without openly taking the part of the workers and their struggles cannot be enough. A critique of the dominant powers of the world without taking the part of the dominated peoples cannot be enough. In every field, the alternative between reformist and anticapitalist options, pacifism and anti-imperialism, will be forced by events to be crucial in the debate in the movement.

Communists can and must work on a more arduous but more advanced terrain so that the young develop a revolutionary political and class awareness. The construction of an international revolutionary trend in the anti-globalisation movement is more than ever before an impelling necessity.

MOTION 11 – CAPITAL AND THE ENVIRONMENTAL QUESTION

The political developments and the dynamics of capital in the 90s were devastating for the environment. All the old problems became even more widespread while new emergencies have arisen on a global scale. Environmental questions and social questions are ever more intertwined. Faced with all this, both ethical-cultural approaches and green reformism have proved inadequate and powerless. The construction of an effective environmental movement requires widening its social base and a programme of clear anticapitalist objectives: in the final analysis, a new development model will not be possible without a new production model nor without overturning capitalism. This is the strategic approach that communists must bring as their contribution to the movement.

Capitalism is neither willing nor able to find a solution for environmental problems; on the contrary, environmental devastation is today an intrinsic part of the logic of profit and the free market. During the 90s environmental problems and crises multiplied as the involution of political and social conditions and the worsening of environmental conditions became ever more intertwined. The truth is that the objective dynamics of capitalist production methods – increasingly less held in check by the social and political limits that in the preceding decades had led to the growth of environmental movements and the adoption of a series of actions for environmental protection – have led to the spread and worsening of historic problems (pollution, poisonous factory emissions, devastation of the territory, the development of high-risk technologies, the degradation of the natural and historic habitats, etc) and the creation of new emergencies on an ever increasing, potentially global scale (the problem of waste, the ozone layer, the greenhouse effect, deforestation, the impoverishing of bio-diversity, etc).

The working-class defeats and the search for the lowest possible production costs have, in fact, resulted in the abandonment of measures for environmental protection and health prevention, the exploitation of resources and land in the most destructive way possible and a general inattention to social limits and environmental compatibility. The liberalisation of trade tends to generalise an unbridled, unlimited exploitation of environmental resources, threatening local systems of regulation. With the privatisation of services, the logic of profit has appropriated natural, commonly-held resources such as water and raw materials while scientific and technological progress have been monopolised through patents, thereby ousting all democratic controls and all concerns for social order (the examples of GMOs and anti-aids drugs are emblematic). Alimentary safety itself has become a democratic problem not only in Third World countries, where it has always been the product of imperialist exploitation, but even in advanced countries (“mad cow” disease) where it is the result of the uncontrolled production that dominates the agro-alimentary sector under the impetus of competitiveness and profit.

On the other hand, the international balance of power allows multinationals, through the choices of Imperialist governments, to impose their will in the negotiations for international agreements on environmental issues (viz. the attitude of the US government over the Kyoto Protocol on greenhouse-gas emissions). Consequently, the irrational exploitation and destruction of the forests, the impoverishing of biological resources, desertification, climatic changes and the increasingly frequent “natural catastrophes” that derive from these changes all remain without effective responses. The future of humanity can be increasingly identified in the alternative “socialism or barbarism” as the trend towards barbarism is without doubt hastened by the progressive degradation of the planet’s capacity to sustain human development.

Faced with these developments, in which social and environmental questions are increasingly intertwined, both merely ethical-cultural approaches and traditional green reformist politics are ever more inadequate and powerless. The environmental movements must now tackle a two-fold challenge: on the one hand, the need to widen and unify their own social base, integrating the needs and demands of the different groups that are victims of the destructive tendencies of capital; on the other, the need to formulate clear objectives for their struggle and a credible perspective. This is possible only in an anticapitalist light: indeed, a new development model could not be possible, in the final analysis, without a new “production method”, or rather without overturning capitalism. This is even truer when considering the intrinsic international nature of environmental problems. And this is the strategic approach that communists must bring as their contribution to the action and construction of the movement.

On another level, the environmental question poses a challenge and a duty to Rifondazione Comunista: the need to bring its own theoretic instruments and concept of socialism up-to-date.

However, even here, we do not start from square one. Concerning the former, the recovery of Marxism's original thinking on the capitalism-nature relationship is a necessary passage to develop adequate instruments to deal with the current environmental issues and for a positive discussion with the critical contributions of ecological thought. On the other hand, it is important to rediscover and re-interpret the exceptional experience of Soviet power in the early years when, thanks to Lenin's farsightedness, a true "ecological spring" developed in the USSR. Ecological legislation was approved, an independent popular movement for nature protection developed and environmental sustainability introduced as one of the restrictions on economic planning. This extraordinary, anticipatory experience was first interrupted and then quashed by the Stalinist repression at the beginning of the 30s, but it remains a living proof that neither Marxist inspiration nor the end of socialism, but their Stalinist negation, is responsible for the failure of so-called "real socialism", in environmental terms and the removal of the environmental issue from the communist movement's agenda for many years.

MOTION 12 – A TRANSITIONAL PROGRAMME

The recomposition of an alternative social bloc involves drawing up a system of demands and a method able to link the immediate objectives of our action to the unifying perspective of an anticapitalist alternative. This means abandoning the neo-reforming concepts that, in different ways, propose yet again the traditional separation between a “minimal programme” (immediate objectives) and the “maximal programme” (socialism) that was so dear to the II International at the end of the 19th century and beginning of the 20th century and to combat which the communist movement emerged.

The current turning-point has made the traditional separation between a minimal and maximal programme of the working-class movement totally unthinkable. Within the capitalist crisis, each immediate objective, each real mass movement tends to clash with its limited compatibility with capital. At the same time, the political consciousness of the masses and their movements, all the more after the defeats suffered, is much less than the objective implications of their needs. This basic contradiction makes the communist conception relevant once again in the transition programme: a programme that is able to create a bridge between the current consciousness of the masses and the need for an anticapitalist rupture.

The transitional programme cannot merely be limited to an academic, rigid scheme. On the contrary, by its very nature, it requires a flexible structure that would allow it to relate to the concrete dynamics of the class struggle. But at its heart must lie its methodology: namely, the return to revolutionary goals in daily politics, in every social, territorial or union setting, irrespective of any sectorial, local or trade-unionist logic. This is why a transition programme cannot be compatible with capitalism: on the contrary, it is based on the supposition that the general needs of the masses are, in this period of crisis, incompatible with the capitalist structure of society.

Today, the deepening of the world capitalist crisis, the world-wide re-awakening of a widespread class awareness and the emergence of the anti-globalisation movement all determine a new framework of reference for a transitional programme, not as an abstract academic exercise but as a response to the new levels of social conflict and the new demands made by millions of young people.

On the crucial issue of the class struggle, the deepening of the capitalist crisis needs, objectively speaking, a higher level in response, both in relation to the international unification of the struggles and the international working-class movement’s programme of action.

The traditional, so-called defensive, demands to protect salaries, jobs and welfare naturally now more than ever retain all their immediate pre-eminence. But they require a unifying framework for a communist perspective that openly challenges the capitalist bases of social regression and indicate a comprehensive alternative. To give some examples:

- a) the international assault on employment, in all its historic significance, makes our goal to reduce working hours for the entire working class internationally, outside any logic of negotiation on flexibility and entirely financed by profit, even more relevant. This does not mean reducing the issue of the working week to a mere trade-union demand or, worse, leaving it in the hands of presumably “reforming” bourgeois governments, but instead we should adopt it as a general anticapitalist goal. “The work that there is should be re-distributed among all until all the unemployed have found a job”: this demand for a sliding scale in working hours would be the precursor of a socialist organisation of the economy based on this elementary rational principle that capitalist irrationality ignores. Therefore, it must be set forward forcefully as a “popular” example of a alternative system in the new generation of the international working class.
- b) The precariousness of work world-wide, as the strategic axis of the capitalist assault, demands a general, international answer. A merely defensive attestation, category by category, country by country, a logic of negotiation or barter, such as work for welfare, represents merely a different way of accepting the rules laid down by the adversary. Communists must, on the other hand, present a unified set of demands in every country: the abolition of all laws for casual labour and discrimination in employment, on the basis of the universal principle “an equal salary for equal labour”, a guaranteed minimum salary in all categories for all workers, regardless of national, sectorial or company barriers; a guaranteed salary for the unemployed and young people looking for their first job, outside any exchange for “minimum” (i.e. casual) work. This set of demands

would not only indicate the possible terrain for a strategic recomposition of workers and the unemployed, but would at the same time clash head on with the structural policies of international capitalism in crisis, taking on more than ever an objective, anticapitalist significance.

- c) The closure of firms and the relative laying-off of the workforce, the natural result of the capitalist crisis and the restructuring processes induced by global competition, is a crucial problem for the orientation of the working class movement. Isolated episodes of resistance, or worse, the union bureaucracy logic of a negotiated “shock-absorbed” selling-off of jobs, one by one, plant by plant, sector by sector, has gone hand in hand with the reverses in the working-class movement, the snatching-back of union conquests and the loss of union power in various countries over these years. The international unification of resistance around a possible unitary aim in every country is crucial. This could be nationalisation, without indemnity and under the control of the workers threatened by lay-offs. In France, in the Danone factories, significant numbers of the young working class have proclaimed in mass demonstrations this elementary demand: “lay off the bosses”. Communists can and must seize this and use it as an emblematic case that links the concrete, dramatic question of the defence of jobs to challenging capitalist ownership.

More in general, this transitional method can and must respond from a class-based standpoint to the set of emerging demands coming from the new movements and the younger generation, always referring back to the crucial question of ownership and power. For example:

1. the demand for healthcare, food safety, environmental renewal and quality has been expressed by the international anti-globalisation movement and has been widely sustained by workers and consumers in general. However, the hegemonic leadership of the movement’s programme for the very problems they denounce still lies within a reforming logic: campaigns for public education for “humanitarian behaviour”, no-logo campaigns, boycotts or “critical consumption”. The common element in all these proposals, although they include a positive criticism of profit, is the strategic avoidance of the crux of ownership and the class struggle. And this condemns them to a strategic blind alley in stark contrast with their apparent tangibility or the media attention they attract. Naomi Klein herself explicitly admits this impasse with great intellectual honesty (viz. No Logo). Therefore, communists must focus the level of analysis and direction in the movements, directing the issues onto the terrain of anticapitalist objectives. For example:
 - a) making the accounts of food and pharmaceutical industries public, so that the commercial, industrial and financial secrecy that hides profit speculation from the public is abolished.
 - b) nationalising pharmaceutical, food and polluting industries without indemnity and under social control, starting from the huge monopolies in these respective sectors, so that health and food, the basic necessities for life, are brought under public control.
 - c) The abolition of patents, since patents are the sequestration of discoveries that are useful or decisive for everyone by the few for profit. Their abolition is the crucial condition for social control and use of science.
- 2) The anti-militarist demand for peace will be increasingly strengthened by the predictable course of world events. On this terrain too, the pacifist approach of the hegemonic leadership of the movement, as well as removing an anti-imperialist approach and guaranteeing the UN’s role, has avoided all programme tenets that link the demand for peace to the fight to bring down the capitalist interests that push for war. Instead, communists must adopt the opposite approach. Today, the war industry and its increasing level of capitalist concentration (the USA, Europe, Japan) is driven both by the renewal of imperialism and by the re-adoption of military Keynesian policies to counter the crisis. In the wider mobilisation against the war, therefore, it is necessary to openly discuss the question of the military industry and the interests of war taking on board the following demands:
 - a) making the accounts of war industries and activities connected to war speculation public since the public has the right to see and understand the cynical profit-making of so many “patriotic” capitalists thanks to the humanitarian bombing of the poor.
 - b) nationalising military industries without indemnity and under social control, because it is a fundamental condition of social hygiene as well as providing for their possible conversion to civilian production with full guarantees for the employment of the workers in these industries.

3) The fight against the poverty of the so-called Third-World countries is one of the most debated and widely-held tenets of the anti-globalisation movement world-wide. But a significant group of the leading intellectuals in the movement hold a reductive vision of the problem and, above all, suggest deviating solutions. These include regressive pre-capitalist solutions which, independently of their dubious realism, would end up worsening the conditions of the masses (e.g. Latouche's neo-protectionist solutions), vain solutions which might be integrated or are in part subordinate to the capitalist economy (e.g. fair trade and fair banking) or political solutions for negotiated compromises with imperialism (such as Jubilee 2000's support for debt re-negotiation). Communists, while building up a deep understanding of the sensitivities of millions of young people fighting against poverty, can and must oppose these false, vain solutions, suggesting precise transitional demands within a general perspective of the socialist re-organisation of the world economy:

- a) the real, total abolition of the foreign debt of the dependent nations: because if debt is a noose around the neck of these countries, its re-negotiation would be a second noose, thanks to the barter of debt reduction and certainty of repayment, debt reduction and the cession of strategic share packages (as Susan George herself had to admit)
- b) the expropriation of the 200 multinational giants who manage the world economy, the direct agents and greatest beneficiaries of the politics of international theft and pillage, to be placed under the control of workers and consumers. There can be no escape from poverty, no new sustainable economic world model, without abolishing the immense power of these giants. A large-scale campaign to make their accounts public, their bank accounts transparent and nationalise their goods should be encouraged from country to country.

Motion 13 – WOMEN’S LIBERATION

Rifondazione can and must take on board the central issue of women’s liberation within the communist perspective, opposing any economically-defined analysis or reduction and any idealistic drift.

Against any economically-defined analysis or reduction, Rifondazione must openly recognise the specific nature of female oppression, that exacerbates class exploitation for proletarian women. This oppression, through domestic slavery, is organically functional to capitalist reproduction.

At the same time, Rifondazione must criticise and reject the idealistic theories today present in a significant part of feminist thinking that interpret female oppression as due to the male imposition of their own symbolic code on women. This theory, that sets aside the (complex) historic origin of female oppression and attributes its roots to biology alone, often reduces women’s liberation to a symbolic, cultural revolution (the re-appropriation of their own, removed language) separating it in fact from any social content and taking it away from the concrete terrain of conflict.

On the contrary, the re-launching of a women’s lib perspective is inseparable from the class-based interpretation of the contemporary world. The intertwined crisis of capitalism and reformism is doubly violent in its effects on the conditions of women. In imperialist countries, mass unemployment, casual labour, flexibility and the privatisation of services affect first of all the female population. In Eastern Europe, now undergoing the brutal introduction of market laws, there has been a dramatic fall in women’s living conditions. In the countries in the so-called Third and Fourth World, the war and misery caused and fomented by the neo-colonial policies of the West and exacerbated by the religious fundamentalism of theocratic regimes (Iran and Afghanistan) make women’s conditions literally unbearable and inhuman. Immigrant women world-wide are in particular the weakest link in the chain of female oppression. The reverses suffered by the working-class movement have everywhere brought with them the loss of women’s social and democratic rights that had been snatched in the preceding phase of progress. And this has exasperated and worsened female oppression specifically. It is no accident that today, while the dismantling of the welfare state proceeds, the ideology of the family that exalts the “natural” female vocation for caring has been promoted so vehemently, in order to place yet again the weight of the ill, old and disabled on women’s shoulders to lighten the burden on public spending and business. These are the many reasons why the turning-point at the end of the century has again revealed the close link between women’s liberation and an anticapitalist alternative. The renewal of a strong women’s liberation movement internationally that links democratic and gender demands to the fight against social oppression is a crucial component for the re-launching of a socialist perspective. At the same time, only a socialist perspective that breaks capital’s dominion over the world, can create the necessary conditions, not self-sufficient, for an effective liberation of women from their specific oppression. Therefore, women’s liberation and the class struggle are inseparable in the light of a revolutionary perspective.

Therefore Rifondazione has a two-fold task: to develop a consciousness of the necessity of women’s liberation in the working class, contrary to all manifestations of prejudice, and to develop an awareness of the pre-eminence of the class struggle in the women’s movement and the working-class movement as the strategic cornerstone for their own liberation, promoting in this light the greatest possible zeal in women’s daily struggle for the defence and widening of their social and gender rights.

