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Globalisation

# After Genoa

- IV Online magazine - 2001 - IV334 - October 2001 -

Publication date: Sunday 14 October 2001

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**The battle of Genoa will go down in social history. It has sent shockwaves through every political sphere; thanks to television, it has penetrated the most modest households in the most distant corners of the planet.**

The final - provisional - result is not in doubt: a heavy moral-symbolic defeat for the assembled imperialist governments; the Berlusconi government, which wanted to throttle the movement, has given a kick-start to the remobilisation of workers and youth. And above all, a new political generation based on "contestation of the system" has arisen on an international scale.

The political-ideological climate is changing: a new period of reconstruction of the movement of the exploited and oppressed has opened, while the capitalist offensive continues apace, while part of the world economy is going into recession. Hope is on the side of the movement. This latter comes out strengthened at all levels, it will undergo a new geographic extension and amplify its influence in society. It is now imposing itself in political debate.

However, to disturb a meeting of the imperialist institutions is one thing, to stop their functioning, indeed to "stop" capitalist globalisation is another. All of a sudden, more quickly and more strongly than might have been thought, the strategic, programmatic and tactical debate opens inside the movement.

Having shattered the climate of resignation, recreated the hope of "a better world", reinvigorated the struggle of the proletariat, this new movement is henceforth engaged in a complex dialectic with the "real" workers' and popular movement.

It has become an issue for all the conservative forces of capitalism: bosses, governments, social democratic bureaucratic apparatuses. Starting from its new responsibilities, it should broaden its analyses and sharpen its proposals. The victory at Genoa has opened a new phase in the class struggle.

## A highly symbolic victory

It is the dominant class, and particularly that of the US, who have highlighted the role of the G7 (the seven biggest imperialist countries: the US, Canada, Japan, Germany, Great Britain, France, Italy). What had initially been a relatively discreet and practical meeting (in 1975, the big capitalist powers met for the first time to deal with the biggest monetary crisis of the post war period) became transformed into an attempt to impose a powerful international leadership which watches over the planet. Genoa was the perfect example of this.

However, to create world "state" institutions is a gigantic task for the dominant classes of globalised capitalism. They experience considerable obstacles in setting up world "state" institutions. The contradictions between them are too strong, the "new" institutions lack any popular legitimacy from the beginning. [1] To overcome these difficulties, there was first the enormity of the Multilateral Agreement on Investment (MAI), intended to impose secretly a universal protection for "foreign" investments which would override the laws of national states!

The odious structural adjustment plans imposed by the IMF in countries experiencing difficulty in their payments were able to create an illusion of efficiency. After the Asian, Russian, Brazilian and now Argentine crises, the political

orientation of the IMF is in a complete impasse.

The most solid point of this institutional framework was, in the absence of a world "government" the G7: the governments of the main imperialist countries, under the guidance of the US (and Russia, admitted to the table for certain matters, transforming the G7 into G8). Prior to Genoa, there were some patching up exercises: a last minute invite to a few African and Asiatic heads of government, as a gesture to "Third Worldism". Some "seduction": the declarations by Ruggiero, Italian foreign minister and former Fiat bigwig, that he "shared the same objectives" as the planned demonstrations. A sharp turnaround: Berlusconi's adoption of an "old fascist" tone, saying that "those who demonstrate against the G7 are against the West!"

The day after the killing of Carlo Giuliani, we witnessed the defeated expressions of the great leaders, while Chirac was supportive of rights of the demonstrators. The final outcome was the precipitate and dispersed departure of the members of this world government, when the brutalised and tortured victims of the "blitz" on the headquarters of the Genoa Social Forum (GSF) were shown on television screens around the world. Then the height of cynicism: to create a fund to fight AIDS.

The sum is derisory [2] but in reality, it is not even new money, but simply a reorganisation of an already existing budget! What significance will the battle of Genoa take? Its impact will spread out in time and it will act at different levels according to the country.

It is difficult to "gauge world public opinion" but the lasting image which will remain (beyond the violence) is the group of superpower leaders, isolated in a boat, surrounded by barbed war and a "new wall" besieged by hundreds of thousands of demonstrators - old and less old, but above all youth, coming from all over the planet, from all progressive political tendencies, an impressive variety of movements, associations, committees, and so on.

An immense mobilisation of youth, generous, combative, internationalist, which is demanding "another world". The masters of the world wanted this battle to win over public opinion; they have lost it. The attempt to impose a kind of world government has foundered.

That said, "capitalist globalisation" has not been stopped, nor the functioning of these political, technocratic and financial meetings. Hence the strategic debate imposes itself.

## Italian upheaval

In Italy the entire political society (which chased him from government in 1994 because he was not able to keep civic peace) was going to judge Berlusconi on his capacity to manage the G7 meeting. Thus, the impact of "Genoa" was making itself felt from before the beginning of the demonstrations.

We know the result. One month later, the consequences of Genoa have not been absent from the media for a day: the effect of the police brutality, the parliamentary commission on the "events", the questioning of some ministers (especially that of the Interior), the tense relations of the Italian government with some EU governments whose citizens were arbitrarily arrested. The struggle to organise solidarity has not ceased.

On the political level, the government has gone on the offensive, relying on the cowardice of the ex-governmental left (Rutelli, part of the DS, ex-PCI leadership). It has sought to criminalise the whole radical milieu (beyond the "Black Block"). It is trying to involve the "Olive Tree" in a political sacred union ("bipartisan"). And as if by chance, bombs

explode accompanied by communiqués signed by the "Red Brigades". Playing on the fears of people and the "sense of state" of social-democracy, Berlusconi seeks to block the trade union mobilisations planned for the autumn! The shock of Genoa, which is traversing Italian society, has suddenly overthrown the political chessboard in Italy.

Not because of the violence and its consequences, but because of the extraordinary political force that had accumulated and set up the Genoa Social Forum (GSF), which Berlusconi had totally underestimated. Hence the battle against the G7 has also become a battle against the Berlusconi government and its politics.

It was Berlusconi who wanted it, in having theatrically erected "his" summit as symbol of his political maturity. The opposition which met the challenge was not the ex-governmental left, nor the CGIL (the big trade union confederation, member of the European Trade Union Confederation), but a vast alliance between "the movement against capitalist globalisation" and significant trade union sectors, some of which were in struggle, which has allowed an extraordinary mobilisation of student, high school, unemployed or insecurely employed youth.

The GSF has shown a great political maturity, welding together its different elements, with the specificity of their demands and modalities of action, stretching from important Church sectors to very radical socio-political currents, via the FIOM (the metalworkers' union, led by the left). What was most spectacular was the "red" mobilisation where the radical (social and political) left, national and international, played a determinant role.

That is explained largely by the role of the Party of Communist Refoundation (PRC). The contingent of Communist Youth was impressive in its combativity; the federations of the PRC provided the infrastructure of the mobilisation. They formed a good third of the big demonstration of between 200,000 and 250,000 people! Fausto Bertinotti, PRC leader, has been entirely involved in the movement, he has shown a total respect for the autonomy of this latter; he has not given in to the very strong pressure to defend the bourgeois state, its stability, its right to repression and so on; he has understood the radicalisation of youth, its political culture, its modes of action. The PRC positions itself as the anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist party.

## The detonator

The most extraordinary contribution of the movement against capitalist globalisation, of a universal significance, is to have broken the feeling of resignation and political impotence which had massively affected the popular classes and activist circles, and to have restored cohesion and perspective to a resistance that had never ceased.

After the defeat of the proletariat on an international scale, the impasse seemed total and durable: historical crisis of the traditional popular/workers' movement and its dominant currents (social democracy, Stalinism, anti-imperialist populism), major doubt on the socialist perspective, quasi-disappearance of the revolutionary left.

One could legitimately ask how far the neo-liberal tidal wave would go. And especially: from where could come the spark, the founding event strong, deep, with universal significance, liberating to break with the 20 "years of lead" which came at the end of the 20th century. Now we know the answer; it is the "anti-globalisation movement"!

Once again, as in 1968, the detonator came from outside of the "historically constituted" traditional labour movement. And again it is related to a new radicalisation of youth. In 1968 there was a massive explosion of a combative student offensive in conditions of prosperity and optimism, which impacted on a working class whose cohesion and combativity - sterilized by the still powerful apparatuses of the trade unions and socialist or Communist parties - were released, culminating, in certain countries, in general strikes and popular mobilizations, indeed revolutionary or

semi-revolutionary situations. The socialist revolution was on the agenda.

Radicalised youth drew the conclusion that it was necessary to link up with the working class and to build "new" Marxist and revolutionary parties. Today it is all more complicated, more difficult, more fragile.

Firstly, an uninterrupted capitalist offensive of great width is continuing. Secondly, the traditional labour movement, thirty years after 1968, has gone several stages further in its degeneration. It has now lost any reference to self-emancipation and global contestation, determination and militancy on everyday demands, the broad aspirations of society (women, the Third World, war and peace, internationalism, ecology). Its attraction for youth is about equal to zero. Finally, since 1980, two generations of youth have experienced the neo-liberal "culture" of individualism, anti-political attitudes, consumerism, careerism, a fascination with new technologies which project an exciting but virtual future. [3]

The "movement against capitalist globalisation" was born "negatively", in pain, under the whip of a terrible regression on all levels (social, democratic, humane, individual, community) and the abandonment of its aspirations by the traditional labour and popular movement, now completely aligned behind neo-liberal policy.

## The opening in Seattle

The real breakthrough was the "discovery" that a mass demonstration targeting the international institutions could jeopardize the "functioning" of globalised capitalism. There were preceding indicators. In June 1997, 50 000 demonstrators from the "European Marches Against Unemployment, Job Insecurity and Exclusion" filled the streets of Amsterdam at the time of the EU Summit.

The quasi-total failure of this meeting, "gratuitous" police brutality and the total negligence of the European Trade Union Confederation suddenly made it a world event because CNN broadcast it throughout the world. [4] The first symbolic "victory" over the bodies of globalization was the "peaceful" encirclement of the Parisian head office of the OECD, which succeeded in obliging the French government to abandon the MAI. [5]

Since the battle in Seattle, this new consciousness of "taking on" the globalised political framework re-engaged the offensive spirit, the militant determination, and therefore the process of accumulation of political convictions and activist commitments. Through the Internet, this spirit was very quickly diffused on a planetary scale.

At the same time it reinforced and multiplied local and national initiatives, and gathered together, on each "global" occasion, the cadres of the still fragmented and dispersed movements.

It was in the United States that the combination took place between the beginning of a youth radicalisation and a labour-union movement in dramatic decline which, in 1995, turned to the student milieu to help it to reorganize. Seattle did not fall from the sky.

There was a pre-Seattle. It was necessary to "build" the movement through small scale and dispersed work, until the force of the globalisation of capitalism imposed a centripetal dynamic on the multitude of initiatives. Already daring initiatives had drawn the attention of broader circles on an international scale.

To mention a few: the spectacular commemoration of Bastille Day in 1989 in Paris, where the cancellation of the

Third World debt was demanded, subsequently taken up by the Belgian CADTM; neo-Zapatism and its international conferences since 1994; the initiative of Le Monde Diplomatique on the Tobin tax which led quickly to the constitution of a significant organization, ATTAC-France. [6]

Several not so spectacular efforts prepared the ground. Initially, there was the work of intellectual development (analyses, arguments, alternative proposals). It gave a solid base to the movement, encouraged self-confidence among activists, established a tone of authority in the media, and finally generated a spirit of the offensive against the upholders of neo-liberalism.

Let us not forget that the latter current of thought was massively dominant in the universities, the media, the schools, the educational programmes of the traditional labour movement. Prior to Seattle, through the extent, plurality and quality of this work, "the movement" constituted a enough strong trend in public opinion to impose a previously "forbidden" debate on the neo-liberal ideologists.

Its extraordinary aspect it is that it was (and remains, for the moment) bipolar: no intermediate current social democracy for example participates. The SPs (and governmental CPs) still have not made up for this lost time which pushes them to the margin, indeed outside of, the movement.

This initial "cultural" victory played no little part in establishing a dynamic of the offensive among activists. This is especially true of France with a "left" intellectual re-engagement of a significant intellectual current.

At base, there is the struggle of workers: the strike movement of the winter of 1995 against the Juppé government. Then, there is a "micro-sociological" generational factor. Twenty years of depoliticisation, de-ideologisation, demobilisation succeeded in discouraging youth from concerning themselves with the public sphere and diverted its energy towards the private or commercial sphere.

Thus, the movement began thanks to the thin layer of "the generation of 68". It renewed its commitment but within an organisational framework which was more "relaxed" than that of the revolutionary organizations they had known previously. Seizing this "second chance", they brought their experience and knowledge.

Within this more convivial and less constraining framework, centred on the burning questions facing humanity, combining practical proposals and theoretical and analytical debates, the engagement with the younger generations took place the beginning of a new youth radicalisation on a planetary scale.

There is no other explanation for the extraordinary success of this truly fragile unitary dynamic of a movement which was "incoherent and chaotic", according to a hostile media. The Genoa Social Forum is the most complete example.

Finally, "Seattle" was preceded by a growing activity of campaigns, conferences and demonstrations outside the meetings of the international institutions. While establishing itself in an increasing number of countries the "international movement" favoured an increased participation of "local" associations and organizations, and solidified the links between the active "international" nuclei.

The "movement against (neo-liberal or capitalist) globalisation" is indeed organized, in its manner, according to its activities, according to its own methods. [7] The proof was provided in Porto Alegre with the World Social Forum (January-February 2001) and the World Economic Forum at Davos.

"Porto Alegre" represents the equivalent of Seattle, but at the level of organization. It would never have taken place

however without the accelerated sequence of big meetings in Cologne (June 1999), Bangkok (February 2000) and Geneva (June 2000). Along the way, the first real social and trade-union movements joined in (ATTAC-France where significant trade unionists take part, Via Campesina, the Korean KCTU).

These three factors provided sufficient strength for the transition made at Seattle, from a trend of opinion to a mobilized movement capable of fighting for practical-political objectives. But one should not hide that our successes are also due to the weaknesses of our enemy, and that in spite of the extraordinary material strength it possesses.

The increased contradictions between the three great powers (the United States, European Union, Japan) have developed more freely since the collapse of the USSR. The globalisation of capitalism in its current form has an endemic instability because of the massive deregulation ("liberalization") as well as the increased weight and volatility of financial capital. In this context, the international organizations of Big Capital have much less credibility among the population inasmuch as they have assumed responsibility for the most antisocial policy for half a century. To this has been added, recently, the unilateral international policy of the Bush government and the systematic inefficiency of the IMF/World Bank coupling from the capitalist point of view.

There was something completely new at Genoa: political confrontation was stripped of all concrete content. The G7 agenda was not worth a nail. Their goal was "to hold the meeting" and attract the maximum media coverage, in short impose themselves as a world leadership. The demonstrators disputed that, in massive numbers. The political stakes were colossal: to win over public opinion.

## Imperialism's counter-attack

Since the battle of Genoa, the problem of violence has been omnipresent in the media and the debates within the movement. The reason is clear: in Seattle, the US government decided to launch an exceptionally brutal attack [8] against massive non-violent disobedience. This latter proved very effective: the meeting of WTO barely took place (and foundered due to the internal conflicts between great powers). Since then, the dominant classes have begun to grasp the dimension of the problem which had emerged. [9]

Experiencing systemic instability, lack of political legitimacy and the attenuation of social control over the working classes, they now take account of the possibility of social explosions of great breadth, urban risings, peasant revolts in the countryside and so on. Seattle was a very nasty surprise for them. The immediate reaction was to try to "choke" the movement which appeared "imperceptible" in the absence of the usual "reliable" interlocutors.

Their strategic schema was to dislocate the movement in the short term by a combination of two elements: the criminalisation of all the politically radical currents (not only the more violent ones); the co-option of the collaborationist currents, [10] in the image of the leaders of the traditional trade-union and political labour movement.

But for "class collaboration" to function, it is necessary as a preliminary to destroy the rising radicalisation and to dislodge the anti-capitalist currents often initiating and leading the movement. It is difficult without a political reversal of the dominant neo-liberalism and in the absence of solid moderate currents.

Thus, it is brutalisation which prevails. The violence in Prague was obviously a case apart (if only because the state apparatus originating from the Stalinist bureaucracy had never learned a gradual response, and because of the weak participation of the indigenous labour movement).

In Nice, the Jospin government was very careful suspending Schengen, putting his confidence in the trade-union bureaucracies. Gothenburg, on the other hand, was the first attempt, prepared within the European Union. The demonstration was massive and peaceful, the vandalism of the "Black Block" isolated and tolerated. That very evening the campaign of criminalisation of the movement was launched, throughout Europe and lasting several weeks.

It was in this context that the dominant classes in Europe had prepared for Genoa, together with the American government. With the Berlusconi government to apply it. Thus, Genoa became the real attempt at subduing the movement by state violence. It was a project prepared by the European social democratic regimes, in particular France, Germany, [11] Great Britain and, until Berlusconi's victory in May, in Italy.

To attribute this project to Berlusconi would be to give him too much credit. [12] Because it was Italian social democracy (DS, Left Democrats, ex-PCI) which initiated the EU's tactical project at the time of the demonstration in Naples (March 2001), conceived as a dress rehearsal for Genoa.

They had obtained the suitable instruments by replacing the heads of the various apparatuses of repression, installing their right-hand men. They had also refused any preliminary meeting with the GSF, the organizers of the counter-summit. They had inflated the symbolic significance of the G7 meeting.

Berlusconi accepted all this as a gift! What he did was to introduce a manoeuvre of rapprochement with the GSF, to exploit the internal contradictions of the latter and try to break up or impose discipline on the movement. This was accompanied by a mollifying discourse on the part of Foreign Minister Ruggieri, who said "we agree on the objective to help the third world - but not on the means". The end result is known: Berlusconi applied the violent strategy elaborated by the EU, adding selective terror and torture.

There has never been such a directly globalised transparency in a political combat between the imperialist leadership of the planet and a mass contestatory movement.

## Tactics within the movement

The passage from a trend of opinion to a movement of massive mobilization aiming at highly symbolic objectives of the adversary transformed it into an effective factor. The novelty was mass disobedience with the aim of disturbing the functioning of a meeting with a high media profile. That implied a limited confrontation, dependent on the actions of the apparatus of repression.

In Seattle, the effectiveness of the tactic was shown. It rests on considerations which modern capitalism had inculcated in us for ten years. An activity becomes "a fact" only to the extent that the media talk about it. Activity, interesting ideas, mass demonstrations are worthwhile only if accompanied by "incidents". The feeling is widespread that we live under a cynical democracy and that voting is irrelevant.

The parties in government do the opposite of what they promise during the election campaigns. And then there is the abuse of power, its arbitrary character: a Serb general is legally kidnapped and brought before the International Court in the Hague; but Israel, with the support of the United States, can defy the resolutions adopted by UNO and continue to kill Palestinian youth.

It is all the more unbearable than there is a global consciousness in gestation: there is urgency, a duty to act, stop



the destructive machine, the threatened planet, the existence of humanity in danger, the unbearable cruelty in the Third World, the generalized social insecurity, the desolation of refugees and immigrants.

In such a global context, youth have risen up to resist and to protest. Anti-authoritarian by nature, they have no problem in transgressing the rules of the game (which have become ridiculous), occupying (prohibited) public space, practising democracy, fighting to win, "to change the world"!

This completely legitimate youth radicalism is one thing. Another thing altogether is the application of a violent tactic by an organisation which bears political and moral responsibility before the entire movement and public opinion. Like any tactic of any current, it must be judged and be subjected to political discussion.

We do not compare the anarchists to the Black Block. We do not approach this latter as an agency of the police infiltrated by the fascist far right, even if their methods lend themselves to this (hoods, commando operations, blind destruction). But we consider this starting from a principle: our movement aims at the emancipation through self-activity of the working and popular masses, solicits its active participation and applies democracy in its own ranks.

We are opposed to minority violence which replaces mass action, or worse: which uses the mass of the participants as a cover to carry out violent actions which attack the demonstrators. We will withdraw our sector of the demonstration from any inopportune interference which tries to use us for this purpose.

Yet the problem will not be solved by an excommunication of the "violent ones" and their denunciation in common with the moderate wing of the movement which is a candidate for "dialogue" with our worst enemies. The problem is bigger: it is to convince the radical youth which wants to fight and win, of a revolutionary socialist strategy instead of a succession of increasingly violent battles against the repressive apparatus.

## Strategy and political problems

This problem raises the question of the strategy of the movement in its multiple aspects: Initially, there is in its activity and its current success a double time-lag: between its capacity to hinder the operation of certain meetings of the "Masters of the World" and the frustration of their objectives (MAI in Paris, WTO in Seattle, the abandonment of the WB meeting in Barcelona, the rout of the G7 at Genoa) on the one hand, and on the other the difficulty in realizing its most "globalist" demands, such as the cancellation of the Third World debt and the imposition of the Tobin tax, but also halting neo-liberal capitalist globalisation. Secondly, the dynamic of the movement has developed virtually outside the control of the official institutions and the bureaucracies of the labour and popular movement.

This fact gives it a subversive aspect. Because of its prestige and its attraction for youth, a section of the intellectuals and the vibrant parts of the trade union movement, it will be confronted more and more with a policy of integration which starts with small steps.

The World Bank invites a dialogue during the next summit in Washington. The Belgian presidency of the EU promises a great convention for the year 2002, preparing a "constitution" for Europe.

There will be many more attempts to create a "civil society" within the framework of "governance", with the material means to support it. Basically, the margin for a compromise based on another policy "more to the left" is thin, even non-existent: acceleration or slowing up of the economic situation, the dominant class does not yield anything. At

each stage, it finds arguments to reinforce the neo-liberal policy.

The choice remains: neo-liberalism or anti-capitalism. Will it be different in the case of a genuine world economic recession, coming after the so-called financial crisis of 1998-99? Will the imperialist bourgeoisies be driven back to calling on the intervention of their States to save their system? Will social democracy re-appear on this occasion, carried along by a massive wave of "re-regulation"?

Thirdly, the radicalism of this movement and its autonomy of thought and action constitute a direct threat to the survival of international social democracy.

It tries without much success to make us forget that it has been in the forefront of implementing neo-liberal policies for ten to twenty years (according to the countries), that it has actively deregulated by supporting and propagating the benevolence of this globalisation, and that its strongest leaders (Blair, Jospin, Schröder, D' Alema) are in the bunker of the "Masters of the world", whereas young people, workers, trade unionists and feminists demonstrate against them.

Since Genoa, the French PS supports the demonstrators, Schröder and Jospin agree to put the Tobin tax on the agenda of the EU (in order to propose it to Bush), the president of the Belgian PS (Walloon), di Rupo, invites himself to Porte Alegre. The Italian DS has emerged crushed by the shock of Genoa, so much so that they are fighting for their survival as a significant autonomous party.

Politics, including party politics, will enter in force into the movement. [\[13\]](#) It is moreover an objective given, impossible to circumvent: a strong demand supported by a strong movement inevitably comes up against the need to impose it on the political regime. The problem is, in which form will the movement approach the political-institutional ground?

Fourthly, the principal challenge of the movement (besides its consolidation), in the stage which has just opened, is rooting itself on the national terrain, which means more concretely: the active participation in the struggles of the exploited and oppressed and the construction of a relationship with their organisations for the defence of their conditions of existence.

The first successful collaboration between the movement and the trade unions take place in Seattle. The reorganization, under Sweeny from 1995 onwards, of the AFL-CIO had in fact prepared the ground. In Italy, the dialectic between the two was from the start stronger.

Prior to Genoa, in Porte Alegre, the GSF was constituted with the involvement (in particular) of the trade-union left of the CGIL (the FIOM) and COBAS. Following that, the FIOM invited the GSF to speak at meetings of metalworkers who were preparing a general strike and big demonstrations.

There was a very strong trade-union participation in the demonstration of 250,000 people on July 22. Will the GSF, with its multiple components united on globalisation, but very heterogeneous in relation to the social aspects, be able to assume the multiple and specific demands raised by support for a large scale social struggle, such as the predicted "hot autumn"?

## Spontaneous and conscious anti-capitalism

Coming events (EU summit in Belgium, second meeting in Porto Alegre) will show where the movement and its various components are at, in its multiple national and international dimensions, political and social.

And if it succeeds in maintaining its unity of action, around which initiatives and with what centre of gravity. As the political debate will become extensive from the strength acquired by the movement and because of increasing interference from outside political actors in the movement, revolutionary Marxists will have to intervene with their analyses and proposals.

Three questions should be developed.

First, the overall strategic question: how to overcome neo-liberal capitalist globalisation? That will depend more and more on the analysis made; if one fights against its excesses, effects or bases; if one establishes the adequate link between globalisation and neo-liberalism.

But in all cases, we have to note that it is the mass of workers, driven to defend their conditions of daily existence, who form the majority social force. That should rule out any vanguardist and substitutionist short cuts. That is not obvious any more - in particular in the eyes of the younger generations and the very significant currents focussed completely on the "Third World".

It is necessary to start by deploying a full analysis of the conditions of exploited labour (not defined by direct membership of the traditional labour movement) so that the movement against globalisation and the radicalised youth takes up the class struggle. The "new" working, insecurely employed or unemployed youth - super-exploited, in any event - will undoubtedly be a component. In addition it is vital to reconstitute, in a certainly complex analysis, the unity of the proletariat on an international scale.

It is certainly not easy, because it still goes against the current today. It is a decisive element of the reconstitution of internationalist class consciousness. It is a question of going beyond moralistic analyses (poor/rich) or of not confusing basic analysis and tactical proposals (dialectical between social sectoral movements: child slavery, the treatment of women, the informal sector, the young unemployed who have never had a job, the "working-poor", employees on temporary contracts).

It is a question of highlighting the determinant role of the labouring classes of the imperialist countries the most numerous, the most combative, the best organized and from which big multinational capital extorts the mass of its profits. It is only by starting from this reconstituted unity of a proletariat which has never been as numerous [\[14\]](#) and at the same time heterogeneous that solidarity and common struggle can find a solid basis.

Secondly, and linked to the role of workers, there is the anti-capitalist objective. It can be said that the "movement against globalisation" is animated by a spontaneously or empirically anti-capitalist spirit. There is certainly an anti-systemic consciousness, and among youth a global contestation. But it is necessary to note the distance which currently separates this spontaneous consciousness from an anti-capitalist orientation which implies an overthrow of the structures and bases of society.

## Two considerations

First, there is a widespread attitude or feeling which seems anti-capitalist by simple contrast with a neo-liberalism which remains radical, rigid, omnipresent, in fact totalitarian (examples: the massive demand for the taxation of

profits; the spontaneous questioning of the sacrosanct rights of employers on dismissals - radical, popular, demands but ones which Capital, driven back, could satisfy).

This game of contrasts could lead to an impressionistic overvaluation of concessions which the bourgeoisie could be forced to make, after years of brutal offensive, accompanied by a policy of "opening" to the movement.

Then, the dominant tone today is to criticise the international institutions and to denounce their policy against the South; the general solution being to propose another development of the Third World, by a transfer of incomes from the rich countries of the North towards those of the South (Tobin tax, cancellation of the Third World debt, aid funds). That reflects well the ambient consciousness, particularly among youth.

As revolutionary Marxists we put at the heart of all true (anti-capitalist!) solutions the question of private property, and the unavoidable need for the expropriation of Big Capital. The responsibility for the reigning barbarism is not dispersed between the IMF, the multinationals, the financial markets and the governments of the great powers.

There is unity and coherence in this neo-liberal policy. It rests on an extreme concentration of economic and political power. We must then demonstrate and popularise the idea that it is necessary to break capitalist domination to well as put an end to neo-liberal policies and trade globalisation, to realize the demands and proposals of the movement. That will inevitably raise a discussion on the post-capitalist, Socialist society.

Finally, it is necessary to raise the question of forms of organization, including the Party. Among the "historical" cycles which have been just concluded, there is that of a certain form of the Party which was born in the Second International at the end of the 19th century (1880) and which the Russian revolution (of 1917) absorbed while transforming it according to the period of war-revolution (the vanguard party; the anarchists adopted a similar form, it is often forgotten!). In spite of the differences between the two periods, they had in common the idea that the Party incarnated the maximum of socialist consciousness and militant commitment, and for this reason, had the right to direct the social movement in its entirety. This idea of preponderance is strongly rejected.

In addition there are neo-liberalism's attempts to suffocate politics in general (to the benefit of a technocratic-commercial management of society). The idea of the reconstitution of a Party, composed of active members who fight for the self-emancipation of the proletariat, therefore for a self-managed socialist society, has some ground to cover before being recognized as a useful, even essential, tool.

The current situation is full of imponderables. The "new" social movements occupy centre stage. The working class will settle, during the future revival of its struggles what is living and what is dead in the "historic" workers' movement, political and trade union, in decline.

The new young generation will make its own experience and will certainly adopt surprising organisational forms. The fragments of the revolutionary left who have survived the "years of lead" without succumbing to sectarianism will play a significant role.

The landscape is then strongly dispersed, with diverse dynamics and trajectories, but it is clear that a new period of the class struggle has opened up. The question of new parties and a new socialist-anti-capitalist International is posed.

[1] They do not all fall into the same category: the UN with its General Assembly, as well as a series of its social "agencies" has acquired a certain credit; that is not true of the World Bank and still less the technocratic IMF; the situation of the EU is more ambiguous: it is less its lack of democratic representativeness than its antisocial policy which is in question. The G7 meeting on the other hand undoubtedly represents the maximum of political and symbolic arrogance - more still than the UN Security Council.

[2] As our comrade Gigi Malabarba, leader of the Party of Communist Refoundation (PRC) in the Italian Senate, told Berlusconi in this assembly, "the funds are less than you have invested this year in your football club [AC Milan]".

[3] This is reminiscent of the ideological situation after the disastrous defeat of the Paris Commune in 1871: when the alternative was to hang on to the distant perspective of socialism or emigrate to America.

[4] Without any tangible result moreover. Outside Europe, it was too weak as a symbol of globalisation. In Europe even the EU felt itself obliged to organise, in Luxembourg, a "summit" for jobs while the ECTU held a "demonstration". But - the sign of a still very unfavourable relationship of forces - the intergovernmental co-ordination on jobs decided on has become an instrument of neo-liberal war against the world of labour.

[5] The draft Multilateral Agreement on Investment sought to create an international legislation, overriding that of the national states and freeing foreign investments from virtually all social and ecological constraints. While the main imperialist powers have not been able to agree on its adoption, the US keeps up the pressure, integrating its chapters in the agreements it imposes, NAFTA (with Mexico and Canada) and the draft FTAA (see [article in this issue](#)).

[6] See Christophe Aguiton, "Le monde nous appartient", Plon, Paris 2001, which gives a virtually complete image of the movement, its history, its components and its activities.

[7] We should then distinguish the "organized movement" from the innumerable and anonymous actions carried out by the oppressed and exploited throughout the world to defend their conditions of existence against capitalist globalisation. The two elements the organized movement and the actions rest on the same objective base: the internationalisation of the capitalist system. This latter makes possible the meeting between the two. It is an objective to strive for although not yet realised. Confusing the two would be to exaggerate the current force of the organized movement, and underestimate its remaining strategic and tactical problems.

[8] "Exceptionally" faced to white workers and students. For in the ghettos of the people "of colour", brutality and arbitrariness are the rule.

[9] In a prescient article written in 1996, an establishment ideologue made this warning: "The world is undoubtedly heading for one of those tragic moments which will lead historians to ask why nobody did anything in time" (Ethan Kapstein, "Workers and the World Economy?", Foreign Affairs, May-June 1996, p.18).

[10] They could find themselves in a structure of dialogue or better inside a "civil society" created from above by the same state institutions, underpinned by subsidies, material means of functioning and why not, personal careers. This civil society would become a cog of "governance", which would progressively substitute itself for classic parliamentary democracy.

[11] Otto Schilly, German Minister of the Interior, went to Rome after Genoa, not to protest about the police but to demand that the Italian government assume and defend the monopoly of violence of the "democratic state". See Corriere de la Sera, July 26, 2001.

[12] Although Berlusconi won the elections in May 2001, his government did not take office until the beginning of July. He is not then lying (although it is revealing of his personal cowardice) when he says that all the preparation of repression was the work of the preceding centre left government.

[13] One was given a foretaste when Bernard Cassen, president of ATTAC-France, parachuted his friend ChevÃªnement, ex-minister of the interior and scourge of "illegal immigrants" to the front of the demonstration and meeting at Porte Alegre.

[14] So much the worse for Jeremy Rifkin's "end of work" thesis (US edition, 1995).