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A Congress of Optimism and Renewal

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In the early-mid 1990s the world situation was still marked by the successive defeats of the international workers movement by neoliberalism, the collapse of the Soviet Union and the so-called 'end of Communism', and the drastic effects which this combination of factors had on the organisation and consciousness of the workers' and popular movements. This inevitably had serious negative effects on the organisations of the far left, despite the opportunities provided by the semi-collapse of Stalinism and the discrediting of social democracy, thanks to its complete prostration before neo-liberalism.

Even more, in the mid-1990s triumphant capitalism seemed in the middle of a substantial boom, reinforcing the ideological confidence of its ideologues and demoralising the Left even more.

By 2003 the whole situation had changed, and it was these profound changes - creating a novel and unstable situation - which were the centrepiece of the deliberations of the Congress. Key documents discussed noted:

- The 'dot.com' boom has gone into reverse, starting in 1997-8 with the financial meltdowns in Asia and Russia and leading to the stock market crashes of 2001, and what is now a worldwide recession from which there seems little prospect of escape. In turn, this has helped undermine the credibility of neoliberalism, which faced with disasters like Enron and WorldCom in the United States, has suffered deep ideological defeats.

- Announcing itself with the anti-World Trade Organisation demonstrations in Seattle at the end of 1999, the Global Justice movement has sent shockwaves around the world, winning legions of young people to draw anti-capitalist or anti-big business conclusions - a new radicalisation in which the forces of revolutionary marxism have played a significant role. In retrospect it can be seen that the preconditions for this were established by preceding events of resistance, above all the emergence of the Zapatista resistance movement in the Mexican state of Chiapas in 1994. A major area of concern for the Congress was the question, 'how do we utilise this new movement for global justice to renovate, rebuild and dynamise the workers movement into a new spirit of resistance?'.

- If the imperialist world system faces prolonged economic difficulties and redoubled resistance, it is turn has becomes more violent and dangerous than ever. The Congress met in the run-up to war in Iraq, when the Bush-Blair axis faced a totally unprecedented anti-war movement, which on just one day - April 15 - resulted in more than 10 million anti-war protestors on the streets.

- While this new radicalisation is a major positive outcome, enabling radical forces worldwide to break out of the cycle of defeat and demoralisation, it takes place within an overall world situation where neoliberalism remains the 'religion of the bourgeoisie' and is in the ascendant, constantly attempting to impose new defeats on the historic gains of the workers movement. In 2003 a major area of struggle against the neoliberal agenda emerged in several European states on the question of pension rights.

- Very importantly for the International, due to the deep unpopularity of the neoliberal right in Latin America, a new wave of popular struggles comes together with the election of left and populist governments - notably those of Lucio Guttierez in Equador, Hugo Chavez in Venezuela and, most important of all, the Workers Party-dominated government of Luis Ignacio da Silva ('Lula') in Brazil.

- Thanks to the prolonged degeneration and crisis of social democracy and Stalinism, for around a decade now a series of broad leftist or anti-capitalist parties, fronts, alliances and movements have emerged, which constitute a formidable factor in the historic process of ideological and organisational renovation of the left. In a number of countries (Italy, Portugal, France, Brazil, Scotland and others) Fourth Internationalists participate in these regroupments and in some places are part of the leaderships.

The very difficult situation of the late 1980s and early 1990s provoked some sharp internal debates, which were a

factor in a certain organisational attrition in the parties of the International - most of them stagnated, or even declined. These debates often came down to issues related to the role, the usefulness and the self-identity of a world regroupment of marxist activists like the Fourth International. At the 2003 world congress these debates seem to have been largely overcome, reflected in the strong consensus on major issues.

Not surprisingly, a significant factor in this has been a number of very positive political experiences, for example the electoral success of the LCR's presidential candidate Olivier Besancenot in the 2002 presidentials, and the vital role played by Brazilian and Italian revolutionary marxists in the World Social Forums in Sao Paolo, and the European Social Forum in Florence respectively.

The ability of the Fourth International to survive the years of defeats, and to come through relatively unscathed, was related to the implantation of its sections in the social movements, their policy of systematic united front and their ability to understand that the high tide of neoliberalism would eventually wane. Nonetheless these attributes had a price in the relative weakening of some sections against nationally-based, sectarian and dogmatic organisations, which were immune to, and often seemed to prosper from, defeats of the workers movement. Once the political situation changed, the relationship of forces in the far changed with it, in the main to the benefit of the FI sections.

One of the most important features of this change has been a limited, but significant, renewal of the organisation's leadership and cadre teams by a younger generation, who came into politics in the 1990s. There is still much to do on this front.

The Fifteenth Congress documents basically define the International as an indispensable tool for the renewal of the world workers movement and popular forces towards the emergence of a new mass revolutionary internal. As the document on the tasks of the International puts it, the International is "a living tool, but a very unstable one given the weakness of its parts and the difficulty of rebuilding a coordination and leadership structure corresponding to its activist reality. The fact that we have preserved this structure and that it is undoubtedly the only international grouping of its kind is a precious asset in the new political period as new activist generations emerge."

The mutation over time in the self-definition of the International is paralleled by a prolonged effort at programmatic renewal. This Congress adopted, for the first time, documents on the ecological crisis and lesbian and gay liberation. Of course, activism on these issues has been a feature of Fourth International organisations for more than two decades, but this is the first attempt at a systematic programmatic codification of these issues. Programmatic renewal is a process which is ongoing. Its sources are twofold.

First, since the programmatic foundations of the International was laid down in the late 1930s, immense advances in human knowledge have taken place which enable us to better understand, for example, the origins of women's oppression and its interaction with modern capitalism.

Second, vast social and economic changes worldwide, and a plethora of new social movements, have changed the constellation of struggle and resistance to capitalism, out of all recognition compared with the pre-war period.

It is without question that sections of the revolutionary marxist movement, during long periods of isolation and marginal political existence, fetished their programmatic inheritance into a reified object to be defended against all comers. While loyalty to basic values of anti-capitalist, revolutionary intransigence has been essential, progress now demands programmatic renewal. Without it marxist organisations will fall into self-imposed marginalisation and irrelevance.

If the 15th Congress met under the sign of organisational and political renewal, there was no complacency about the scale of the tasks to be achieved. Given the scope of the defeats inflicted by imperialism from the late 1970s onwards, the task of rebuilding the workers and popular movements, and turning the still defensive struggles into substantial long-term victories, remains immense. This task goes hand-in-hand with politically renewing the left of the workers movement, a task still in its infancy - despite the significant breakthrough represented by organisations like Rifondazione Comunista and the Scottish Socialist party. The Congress set the goal of attempting the highest possible degree of fusion between the vanguard of the workers movement and the new activists of movements against neoliberal globalisation, as a key instrument for deepening this process.

Finally, the Congress debated the need - as a precondition for advancing the above two goals - to renew and strengthen the organisations of the International itself. It is only by revolutionary marxist organisations combining all three tasks that significant progress can be made.

A new world situation

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This turning point is the result of four factors:

1 the development of the inherent contradictions of the new globalized mode of capitalist accumulation;

2 social resistance to the dominant classes' offensive;

3 the emergence of a new wave of radicalization through movements against capitalist globalization, particularly in a series of sectors of youth ; and

4 in Latin America, a peasant, indigenous, and youth radicalization which is changing the relationship of forces. The new governments in Brazil and Ecuador, the electoral breakthrough in Bolivia, the radicalization of the Chavez government, and the mobilizations in Argentina and Peru are evidence of the political and social instability of the transition toward larger class confrontations. The paradox we must resolve is that this radicalization is taking place in a context where the revolutionary left is weak.

These factors do not cancel out the underlying trends that began in the mid-1970s with the defeat of (semi-)revolutionary upsurges and the end of capitalism's long expansive wave, which made possible: the neo-liberal offensive of the 1980s; a new restructuring of the world by the dominant classes, called 'capitalist globalization'; a new deterioration of the class relationship of forces to the detriment of the working class; and, following the collapse of the Stalinist bureaucracy and the restoration of capitalism in Eastern Europe, an unprecedented crisis of the class consciousness of the workers' movement and organization and of the two currents that had dominated it throughout the twentieth century, social democracy and Stalinism.

But the current situation is different from the situation at the beginning of the 1990s. The revival of the workers', social and popular movements is uneven, and takes different forms in different national political situations. But beyond this or that conjuncture, there is an undeniable change in the social, political and ideological climate. This encourages the emergence of anti-capitalist/ anti-imperialist currents, on the social and trade-union fronts as well as politically.

2 A transitional phase

The international situation has changed significantly. The current characteristics of the period are defined by the contradictions of an transitional situation between a system where the state plays an important role, there is institutionalized class collaboration and a workers' movement dominated by social-democratic and Stalinist reformists, and a new capitalism, new political institutions and a new organic cycle of the workers' movement and new social movements. This transitional situation is characterized by:

– US imperialism's reinforced will to hegemony, manifest in a series of wars and interventions aimed at controlling the planet;

– the ongoing ruling-class offensive, now running up against major economic and social obstacles;

– the enormous increase in the bourgeoisie's economic and military strength, combined with a crisis of its forms of political domination;

– a contradictory development of the relationship of forces: challenges to past social gains as a result of deregulation, and at the same time resistance and recomposition of the struggles and centres of militancy of the world of labour;

– a social-liberal transformation of the dominant sectors of the traditional workers' and social movement, whose historic crisis is nevertheless opening up space for new experiments outside the control of the social democratic and Stalinist apparatuses;

– a new radicalism in the demands movements are raising and their forms of struggle, alongside difficulties in the formation of anti-capitalist consciousness and the construction of a political alternative.

3 The situation of the world proletariat and the role of women

In the former bureaucratically ruled states, the working masses' main concern is their struggle for everyday, physical survival, while the workers' movement remains embryonic and fragmentary. In the peripheral countries, relatively stable productive nuclei with an over-exploited working class bereft of rights or social legislation is surrounded by popular masses living in unprecedented, extreme poverty as a result of the destruction of the social fabric. Young women are preferred maquiladora workers, where they face a variety of reproductive health and safety problems as well as ongoing sexual harassment. Women in maquiladoras generally suffer twice the number of miscarriages and a significantly higher proportion of babies who are underweight or suffering from birth defects. With few salaried jobs available, working class women have had to turn to the 'informal sector' of the economy, including involvement (mostly involuntary) in the domestic and international sex trade. A disturbing aspect of this youth employment, particularly in peripheral countries, is the inclusion of children. More than 110 million girls between the ages of 4-14 are part of the labour force. They are more vulnerable to all the problems women face: rape, sexual harassment, unsafe and unsanitary living conditions, domestic violence and the possibility of being sold into slavery or forced into prostitution. Of the one million children recruited into prostitution each year, the vast majority are girls.

In the imperialist countries, notably in the EU, capitalism has succeeded for the first time in a half-century in (re-)creating an almost universal job insecurity, wage insecurity, insecurity in unemployment, health and disability benefits, and insecure access to quality education or health care. Those workers who have jobs are facing challenges to their social gains, including their rights to work and as workers; a generalization of flexibility and job insecurity; wage austerity; individualization of the labour process and remuneration; and a decline in the number of union members. Millions of workers in the imperialist countries

have experienced these partial setbacks.

Women make up 70% of the world's poor. In most of the industrialized countries, women's participation in the labour force has surpassed - or shortly will surpass - the fifty percent mark. While some women have broken into professional and managerial sectors, the majority is ghettoized in low-wage sectors of the economy. In the US, women without health care benefits, mass transportation systems or access to affordable childcare, these women work often cobble together two or three part-time jobs only to find they are still living below the poverty level. The wage differential between women and men workers is growing and the demand for equal pay has mostly been achieved only at the minimum wage level. Women are the majority work force in many public service jobs and make up the majority of all part-time or contractual workers. Most women confront sexual harassment during their working lives, whether the man is their boss, their co-worker or even their union representative. In today's labour market women suffer disproportionate job loss as neo-liberal policies curtail public services or privatize them. In addition, women are adversely affected by the loss of public services as people who have greater need for them due to their role and responsibility in the family.

More globally, the contradictions of the current phase of the capitalist system are expressed in partial struggles and movements for the defence of social gains, in opposition to layoffs, and for higher wages, social benefits and pensions.

Finally - a significant phenomenon - millions of young people have been entering the production process. On the one hand, they have no memory of past struggles or of the history of the workers' movement. But on the other hand, they "do not bear the burden of past defeats on their shoulders", and they are ready to fight with their own methods.

In this context, the burden of Stalinism is being lifted and capitalism is being discredited by its own social brutality, without the socialist project's already having been relegitimized. At the same time thousands of activists and cadres who have not experienced any historic defeat are still active in the grassroots and trade-union movements, ready to relaunch or create the conditions for a recomposition of the workers' and social movements on new bases.

4 Youth participation in global resistance

A new wave of youth radicalization and politicization has taken off through the anti- 5 globalization movements. It constitutes a key element in the new political and ideological situation and in the renewal of the workers' and revolutionary movement.

The spectacular mobilization in Seattle (November 1999) and unprecedented confrontation with the G8 in Genoa were turning points in resistance to neo-liberal globalization. This international breakthrough by the movement against capitalist globalization was the result of a series of earlier mobilizations, which were less visible in the climate of ideological regression and activist resignation that reigned in the 1990s. They created a new internationalism and new movements by confronting the summits of imperialism's international institutions (World Bank, IMF, G7, EU…), in the streets, in counter-summits and in the beginnings of international regroupments, of which the World Social Forum in Porto Alegre in January 2002 has been the most impressive so far.

This movement is already influencing the cadres of the workers' and social movement on the national level by offering the beginnings of an alternative analysis of the world situation, alternative demands, and the perspective of a 'different' society. It is, above all, the motor force behind the new youth radicalization and politicization. In fact young people have never stopped being involved and 'thinking about politics' in the broadest sense, through antiracism/ anti-fascism, ecology, solidarity with the Third World, humanitarian activity and the great ethical issues facing humanity. But they were very much marked by a general rejection of politics, no longer identified with the working class and workers' movement, and turned their backs on Marxism and revolutionary organizations.

Outside the countries of the capitalist centre, youth are organizing inside peasant, indigenous, student, union and unemployed workers' movements, in response to concrete neo-liberal measures. There is an important involvement, but it has been insufficient to displace the old leaderships.

Other young people are creating embryonic and usually local forms of participation which are not always part of the movement against capitalist globalization, and, through economic projects on a basis of solidarity, creating NGO projects linked to more general social conflicts.

The young people radicalizing now are not only expressing their own needs and aspirations in an unjust society, but also showing a commitment to changing society. This means a leap forward on the levels of (anti-capitalist) consciousness, (more radical) forms of struggle, (more global) demands and (more militant) forms of involvement. It is the beginning of a new phase.

5 The neo-liberal shift of social-democracy and populism

The new political phase constitutes a test for social democracy's projects and programmes. It can give some leeway to social democratic governing teams, in their respective interactions with the parties of the traditional right, but it confirms the depth of the Socialist Parties' turn towards social liberalism. Despite the possibilities open to them, the SPs have renounced any, Keynesian or neo-Keynesian policy. Fearful of any serious clash with the bosses and dominant classes and in the context of a far-reaching political and ideological shift, the social democratic leaderships have embraced neo-liberal policies, while adding some minor social measures. Above and beyond this, a far-reaching political and ideological revision is under way in the social democratic parties.

In Europe, this has been particularly highlighted by their participation in government, simultaneously and for several years, in 13 out of the 15 EU countries. With very little variation they have confined themselves to the framework of the dominant classes' strategic choices, as their socioeconomic outlooks and unconditional participation in the three wars that imperialism unleashed in the past ten years (Iraq, Yugoslavia and Afghanistan) have confirmed.

Apart from their evident specificities, comparable assessments can be made of the populist parties and the parties of the left or centre-left (populist-anti-imperialist) in Latin America. Moreover, big parties of Stalinist origin, whose strategic approach and practice in mass movements is most often indistinguishable from the social democrats', have also entered an existential crisis.

Twenty years of policies of social assault have profoundly weakened the links between these organizations and their social bases. The result is an unprecedented, drastic decline in their prestige, capacity for social control and organizational strength among the proletariat and progressive youth. Thus a political, social and electoral space has opened in which radical/anti-capitalist currents, movements and parties can come forward, win a serious hearing from society and become a major factor in the workers' and social movement.

6 Reconstruction of the mass movement and the anti-capitalist left

Against this backdrop, a new political and ideological situation arose in the late 1990s. This turning point did not come out of thin air. It was the result of an accumulation of discontents, rising consciousness, a new spirit of solidarity, and major struggles, albeit ones that all ended in impasses, setbacks or defeats: in the US, the long pilots' and UPS strikes; in Europe, national or sectoral general strikes in Britain (the miners, 1984-85), Denmark (1986 general strike), Belgium (in 1986, then in public services in 1987, a general strike in 1993, a protracted teachers' strike spread over two years), Spanish state (general strikes in the early 1990s) and Italy (1992 and 1994). In Latin America, Ecuador, Brazil and Bolivia, and in Asia, South Korea and Indonesia, experienced mass movements and major workers' struggles. The Bread and Roses Women's March in June 1995 in Québec showed that the women's movement was capable again of mobilization around feminist demands. This march was to have a direct impact on radicalising a sector of the NGO-ized women's movement that had been channelled towards the structures of the UN.

For Europe, the mass mobilisation of women in defence of abortion rights combined with the strike movement against the Juppé government in France (winter 1995) was the first sign of this change. With the European March of the unemployed, casualized and excluded to Amsterdam (June 1997), there began to be a change in the state of mind of activist layers in France and the rest of Europe. Other direct initiatives, already underway, such as the campaign for cancelling the third world debt, certain very radical peasant movements (Brazil, India...) added to this. The confrontation in Seattle in November 1999, opened the road to the 'movement against globalization' which came together in Porto Alegre in the first World Social Forum (January 2001), moved by a clearly expressed radical, internationalist and potentially anti-capitalist spirit, carried by a new generation. This spirit of radical internationalism on a feminist basis was also by the 2000 World March for Women, the preparation of which predated Seattle, based on a critique of the 1995 UN Women's Meeting in Beijing. The 'spirit of Seattle' was followed in North America by anti-FTAA mobilisation in Québec, April 2001.

In Genoa (July 2001), for the first time, this movement was able to combine with radical sectors of the mass trade-union movement in a direct confrontation with the government and its neo-liberal policies. Then it once again was broadened and strengthened. After the 11th September it was able, in specific forms depending on the country, to transform itself rapidly into an anti-war movement with hundreds of thousands of demonstrators throughout the world against the imperialist war in Afghanistan. It was also one of the sources of political and organizational support for the Palestinian people, crushed by the Israeli state.

A new socio-political conjuncture is developing in certain countries, like Italy and Spain, where the 'movement of movements' directly stimulated struggles in the labour movement. It created a new political framework, a radical will, a new perspective and the embryo of an alternative to the defensive social struggles which had never stopped all through the previous period. For the moment it is the main actor in the opposition to capitalism. But the 'traditional' trade-union movement - organizationally weakened and politically isolated - continues to organize millions of working men and women and hundreds and thousands of activists. The general strikes and massive citizens mobilizations in Italy, Spain and Greece, the restarting of sectoral strikes in Germany, also bring onto the political scene men and women workers in unity with other social layers and social movements.

In Argentina, the revolutionary process emerged directly from the crisis in which entire sections of the economy collapsed, following a long-term application of neo-liberal policy prescriptions. In this case the battle for survival drove the working class and poor (and middle classes) to struggle and organize themselves. This mobilization against brutal neo-liberal policies clashes with capitalist globalization through the foreign trans-national corporations, the IMF and the constant intervention by US imperialism. The Argentinazo is the spark point in Latin America where the rise of mass movement is affecting several countries (Venezuela, Uruguay, Paraguay, Peru...).

The peasant movement is one of most important actors in this anti-capitalist mobilization. The Brazilian MST, the CONAIE (National Indigenous Confederation of Ecuador), the French Peasant Confederation, and other movements organized in the international network Via Campesina

play a key role in the fight against the WTO and neo-liberal commercial order, not to mention the Chiapas peasant and indigenous movement under the leadership of the EZLN, which was in the vanguard of the anti-neo-liberal struggle, organizing the 1996 Intergalactic Conference against Neo-Liberalism and for Humanity.

On the African continent, mobilization against neo-liberalism and its effects has often taken the form of broad gatherings, such as the Cancel the Debt summit in Dakar in December 2000, the counter-summit against the G-8 and NEPAD in Siby in 2002, and the large-scale social mobilizations surrounding the World Summit for Sustainable Development in Johannesburg in 2002.

The relaunch and rebuilding of the international workers' and social movement is part of the 'class struggle', of the development of workers' struggles, but also of the 'anti-globalization movement', of direct initiatives by the citizens as well as those of the anti-imperialist, anti-capitalist and revolutionary organizations among them. Women have played a leading role in fighting for social justice in a period of ever greater inequality and brutalization. Women have organized themselves in a variety of community and women's organizations to oppose war, repression and a world where capitalist relations are the only possibilities. Women have played a central role in the fight against religious fundamentalism. For example, women in India mobilized against the attacks on Muslim women perpetrated by the BJP government in Gujarat, women in Afghanistan opposed the Taliban and woman in France, the United States, the Canadian state and Britain mobilised against Christian fundamentalists in defence of women's clinics against 'anti-abortion commandos'. Without the majority social force composed of the wage-earning class, without its mass struggles for its own demands and aspirations, without its growing self-organization, capitalist globalization, neoliberal policies and war will not be stopped.

In rebuilding the mass movements and the left, attention must be paid to the decisive presence of peasants and indigenous peoples in Latin American countries such as Paraguay, where we see a rise of mobilization and struggle for land; Brazil, where the MST is demanding radical agrarian reform; Bolivia, with the peasant coca producers' struggle and the electoral breakthrough of the MAS (Movement for Socialism); in Ecuador where the CONAIE (National Indigenous Confederation of Ecuador) through its political expression, the Pachakutik Movement - New Country, is part of the current government and is a fighting front against neo-liberalism.

This spectacular renewal of social and political confrontation opens new perspectives for an anti-capitalist left both on the social and party-political front.

THE WAR AND THE NEW IMPERIALIST COUNTEROFFENSIVE

1 The Al Qaida attack and the 'war against terrorism'

1 In the wake of the terrorist attack of 11 September 2001, US imperialism launched a vast offensive that will have a great impact on the world situation in the coming years. Beyond the first apocalyptic shock, its true meaning will become clear only as 'the long war against international terrorism' runs up against the many obstacles, contradictions and forms of resistance and opposition that it will find blocking its way.

2 The US aggression, which was at the start an act of military vengeance against a whole people on the pretext of punishing their rulers, is situated in the framework of a series of imperialist wars since 1991 (against the Iraqi and Serb peoples), confirm its hegemonic and interventionist attitude in the post-Cold War period. In this case it aimed to eliminate the fundamentalist current of the Bin Laden type, even though this current supports capitalism being linked to bourgeois factions and to sectors of several reactionary state apparatuses, like the Saudi monarchy and the Pakistani and Sudanese dictatorships. The discourse of this political current is fanatically religious, anti- Western rather than anti-imperialist, and anti-Semitic rather than anti-Zionist. Fundamentally opposed to 7 basic democratic rights and women's equality, they want to impose ultra-reactionary theocratic regimes. Oil has always been an essential motivation of imperialist policy in this part of the world.

2 US war goals

September 11th not only rescued an isolated and shaky presidency dubiously elected into office but it legitimised a US world-wide offensive in a way only dreamed of by US strategic planners up to that point. It transformed an administration of the Republican right, based on the big oil companies, from a weak administration with big ideas to an administration able to use US military power as they wished and when they wished in order to pursue US strategic interests. The war against terrorism was launched. The world was told: "You are either with us or you are with the terrorists", that the danger was now from 'rogue states', and the US would decide who they were and what to do about them. Afghanistan was invaded with more people being killed than died on September 11th.

The lesson Bush's 'oil junta', as they have been called, took from their rapid military success over the Taliban was that bombing works and that they should do more of it. We then had an escalation of US war aims with Bush's 'axis of evil' declaration in his State of the Union speech, followed by his speech at the UN, which spelled out US strategic goals in unambiguous terms and stressed that not only would the policy of 'regime change' be extended, but the US intended to ensure that the current massive US military superiority would not be challenged or redressed. The US would in the future remove any regime which stood in the way of its interests.

Iraq was next on the list for invasion. No link with Al-Qaida has been established because probably none

exists. The removal of Iraq's weapons of mass destruction, which probably do not exist either, was stated as the objective. The negative cannot be proven, and the demand is maintained as the reason for the war. The world was being told: if you did not believe after Afghanistan that we were going to change the world in our interests, you will believe us after the defeat of Iraq. US imperialism intends to use its unchangeable military power to reshape and redefine the world in its own strategic and economic interests.

The advantage of invading Iraq is not only the political fall-out but also its massive oil reserves. The war is not ultimately about oil, but Iraq has the second largest reserves in the world and they are relatively untapped. Oil is therefore a massive issue in Iraq in a way that it was not in Afghanistan. US oil reserves are predicted to run dry in less than 50 years and control of the key oil reserves of the world along with huge military superiority are the key elements in the kind of world domination which US imperialism has in mind.

There are also the US regional aims in the Middle East. A successful occupation and stabilisation of Iraq would dramatically reshape the region. Saudi Arabia would be under more direct US pressure, Iran would be in US sights, and the Palestinians further isolated. The power of Israel would be massively strengthened and the political balance of the region changed.

The war on terrorism is a long terms strategy for US imperialism as it seeks to play its advantage to the full. The US is setting out to push back third world liberation movements, subordinate European capitalism to its interests, redefine 'global justice', and use its military power to ensure dominance for US multi-national corporations. National sovereignty is now only granted by US approval. Putin is given a free and even more brutal hand in Chechnya. Meanwhile people are detained indefinitely without trial in the US and other 'democracies' and the CIA are authorised to carry out political assassinations in the way that Sharon does in Palestine.

In the short term the victims are the poor and the oppressed in countries where the US has invaded or is launching military interventions. This has included Colombia and the Philippines where the US is intervening against left wing guerrilla movements. In Palestine the Sharon government has been given a free hand to launch a murderous assault on the Palestinian population.

But this is just the tip of the iceberg. A US strategic military build up is concentrated in central and southeast Asia. The Afghan war enabled the US to build up permanent basis in countries of the ex-Soviet Union which would have seemed inconceivable before September 11th. Bases have been established in Tajikistan and Kyryzstan and even in Georgia.

US positions are being strengthened in South Korea and in the Taiwan Strait. The implication of this is clear. The oil of the Caspian comes increasingly under US influence - and China is being militarily surrounded. This does not mean that China is on the list for attack, but it does mean that the US is looking towards geopolitical control of the region with an eye on its vast markets. This is of course a high-risk strategy that has many pitfalls. The greater the repression, the greater the denial of justice, the greater with be the backlash - or 'blowback' as it is known by Bush and Co. The war against terrorism has inevitably produced more terrorism, with people increasingly prepared to die in order to strike back in the way they see fit. This does not mean that we support such actions, but that we understand what generates them.

At the same time the preparation for the invasion of Iraq, which is now to be carried out with the authority of the UN, has produced an unprecedented anti-war movement - even before the war has started.

Britain has seen a demonstration of 400,000 and the demonstration in Florence at the European Social Forum was towards a million people. Even in the USA the size of the antiwar movement is growing. The FI must redouble its efforts to build this anti-war movement to the maximum and ensure that if the invasion of Iraq cannot be stopped that it is opposed all around the world on the streets and that the aggressors are forced to pay the highest political price for their actions.

3 New internal contradictions of US imperialism

In the short term, there has been a strong tendency to 'rally round the flag' and President Bush. Bush, initially contending with an illegitimate election at home and lack of respect abroad, has managed to turn the situation around spectacularly, taken an energetic leadership role and launched a powerful counter-offensive at home and abroad. He has reaffirmed the United States' unparalleled military supremacy, of which the enormous increase in the military budget is the instrument and symbol.

As a result the social movement against globalization ('global justice movement') in the US had to retreat quickly. It was weakened by the AFL-CIO's withdrawal and the cancellation of the Washington demonstration planned for late September 2001 as the biggest and most militant action since Seattle. But the movement has not gone away. Thanks to its activists' determination, it was able to remobilize quickly and form an antiwar movement, which though still in a small minority is present around the country.

But the alliance between the anti-capitalist globalization movement and the trade-union movement -which went over to the opposition because of "fast track" (the right of the president to negotiate freely the liberalisations linked to the FTAA) and attacks against the public sector- was broken in the chauvinist climate after 11th September. Its renewal around an axis combining these social questions with general political consideration ('Jobs with Justice') will depend on a decline of patriotic sentiment.

The 'national union' will be put to the test by the Bush Administration's brutally pro-bosses economic policies, the ongoing recession and massive layoffs, and the spectacular bankruptcies of economic giants, their

antisocial consequences - for employment and pension funds - the bosses' financial banditry and their corrupting links with the political establishment. This 'economic picture' will doubtless be sowing doubts in public opinion about the system's strength and the ruling class's moral probity.

4 The international effects of the US offensive

On the international level, US imperialism's political and military offensive is making itself felt immediately, strengthening all the reactionary trends already underway.

4.1 Constant media attention has drastically exacerbated and amplified the volatile and insecure global climate. It fosters reinforcement and increased interventionism on the part of repressive and coercive state apparatuses (army, police, schools, etc.). This in turn encourages the growth of reactionary, chauvinist currents in the population. This development is affecting the whole planet, country by country. In particular, ruling class projects that had been blocked have been resurrected and are being successfully imposed (such as US military intervention in Latin America, Plan Colombia, the breakthrough this time around 'anti-terrorist' police and legal norms within the European Union, etc.).

4.2 The use of war as a political instrument has become commonplace and has now been reintegrated into state strategy. The right of ''humanitarian intervention''' in other countries' affairs, reserved for imperialist countries alone, has now been legitimized as an element of 'good governance'. This right has been expanded in the name of the 'struggle against terrorism', subject to the discretion of imperialism (primarily US imperialism), to other countries as well (Russia in the Caucasus; Israel in Palestine; and in Sub-Saharan Africa, Uganda, Rwanda and Angola in the wars in Congo). The result is a spread of areas of tension and conflict and an increase in chaos, poverty and barbarism.

4.3 Military spending, which stabilized in the years at the end of the 'Cold War', took off again in 1999. The massive remilitarization of the US contained in the 2002 budget announces a level of militarization that no other country is capable of imitating or reproducing. The political logic of this new arms race is different from the logic of the 'cold war'. It is no longer a question of preparing a nuclear war with the USSR in the name of a 'balance of terror', but a means of setting off wars that effectively impose unchallenged US political supremacy (with all the corresponding advantages in the economic and monetary spheres). The reformulation of world political strategy which is underway demands a redefinition of military priorities in relation to the financial means available: to reign in space, which helps ensure military mastery of the Earth; 'total' defence of the 'homeland' (its national territory); the capacity to wage several major wars simultaneously (particularly in East Asia), launch and dominate 'asymmetrical' wars (of the Afghanistan type) and carry out one-off military interventions (in Latin America or the Balkans). This stepped up level of remilitarization will put the world's other countries, particularly the NATO countries, under considerable pressure. This US 'military Keynesianism', involving a remarkable scale of state intervention and inflation of public debt, is maintaining domestic demand and strategic sectors of the US economy, which are also producing massively for export.

4.4 The international struggle 'against terrorism' 9 is a threat to democratic freedoms, to the activity of progressive organizations, and to civil society in general. In different local situations it serves to repress or physically eliminate any dissent or opposition, criminalize mass movements or diminish their political impact. Bourgeois democracy - to the extent and in the countries where it existed - now includes the legal possibility of switching over to 'martial law' in appropriate circumstances. The strategic aim is clear, since it had been visible even before September 11th: to stifle the mass 'anti-globalization' movement, which, for the first time since the years after 1968, is contesting the rule of capitalism and imperialism on a mass scale and heralding a rebirth of the organized movement of exploited and oppressed workers on an international scale.

4.5 The specific effect on women during wartime Not only the war against terrorism but also the increasing number of wars through the last three decades all around the world, fought to protect the interest of the multinationals and the march of capitalist globalization in each part of the world, have had and will continue to have specific negative effects on women of all ages as rape is used as a conscious tactic of war as part of the strategy to control communities. Not only do women subjected to these violent rapes suffer a lifetime from the traumatic event, but may bear the children that are the result perpetuating the trauma through generations.

Though rape is now recognised as an official war crime at the international criminal court, the rapists, the soldiers and thereby the country, are hardly ever convicted. In addition to this, war forces women to get any kind of work, often including prostitution, to ensure the survival of the remaining family, because of the loss or disappearance of the male.

GLOBALIZATION: A NEW STAGE OF INTERNATIONAL CAPITALISM UNDER US HEGEMONY

1 The commodification of the world, especially women and children

Globalization determines the current configuration of capitalism on a planetary scale. It is reflected in a radical extension of the world market,

an untrammelled free circulation of capital and goods, as well as an impressive process of concentration of capital. It tends to unite the world in one single unrestricted market.

2 Capitalist logic and class struggle

While the internationalization of capital is an inherent tendency of capitalism, this new stage of internationalization of capital is closely linked to the economic and social conjuncture of the 1970s and 1980s. Feeble growth and recession provoked the neo-liberal response that was carried out under Reagan and Thatcher from the end of the 1970s and rapidly extended to all the industrialized countries. This large-scale offensive against the working class and the social gains it has won over the previous 50 or even 100 years led to a drastic increase in exploitation of the working classes in the imperialist metropolitan centres and an increase in the mass and rate of profit. In the countries of the periphery ('the South'), the imperialist law has been to strip them of any right to impose any obligation whatsoever on movements of commodities as well as capital. The countries of the periphery have been pitted against one another in order to attract capital by means of low wage levels and an almost complete disappearance of taxation, social protection or environmental legislation.

This new stage of capitalist globalization is not the result of some pure economic or technological determinism. It is the result of a determined class struggle carried on by the ruling classes and their states against the world proletariat.

3 The reign of the trans-national corporations, imperialism's central core

The trans-national corporations are waging an open war against any attempt to control their activities. This new structuring of the world economy is allowing them to drain off super-profits, guarantee markets for their products, put downwards pressure on raw materials prices, and preserve their technological monopoly. It is the result of an unprecedented process of concentration of capital through mergers and acquisitions that has not spared any sector or any part of the world. It is increasing the power of the major Northern conglomerates.

Their new status gives them more power in relation to the governments and countries where they are active. National governments have relinquished state control over financial operations, currency markets and capital flows. At the same time the world's major trusts continue to rely on the power of their home states in order to further their interests, through international negotiations, diplomacy and sometimes military presence. With the world market as their arena, these great industrial or financial oligopolies are enjoying an unprecedented freedom of action and decision-making.

4 The international inter-state institutions as support structures

Trade is also being globalized. The GATT, originally an informal forum aimed at a gradual removal of barriers to free trade, was transformed into the World Trade Organization (WTO) on 1 January 1995. In the context of rapid growth of international trade, this unelected and unaccountable body is now governing world trade on the basis of strictly neo-liberal criteria, which treat rich countries and poor as equals. The failure of the Seattle WTO summit in November 1999 is only temporary. A new cycle of talks has already been launched, with the goal of pulling activities like health care and education into the competitive sector and totally liberalizing private investment. Though temporarily frustrated, these efforts will nonetheless soon resume as part of a new offensive. Despite all the speeches about free trade, Third World countries continue to encounter barriers to their products' entry into the richest countries' markets, while the richest countries themselves are managing to clear away the obstacles to invasion of the Third World by their industrial and agricultural products, thanks to pressure from the debt and IMF. The result is that small producers in developing countries are being wiped out by Northern agribusiness and that developing countries' self-sufficiency in food is being destroyed.

5 The impact of the financialization of capitalism

The current power of the 'financial markets' is the result of the generalized deregulatory measures taken during the 1980s in conjunction with the very high interest rates at that time. Financial institutions, operating alongside traditional banks, have multiplied and diversified; some of them, such as US and British pension funds, have considerable financial power, which has been one of the motors of investment policies. Their accumulated striking force enables them to condition companies' decisions as well as governments' economic policies, inasmuch as both countries (when they accumulate public debt) and companies raise funds on the financial markets. This structuring of the markets has thus increased the autonomy of the financial sphere. This does not make it less interdependent on other parts of the economy, however. First, it is only recycling part of the surplus value that is extracted in the productive sphere, a share which has increased enormously because of the increasingly unequal division of income between the classes; second, because its freedom to manoeuvre is the result of a political will and a deliberate choice.

6 A strongly hierarchical system

Globalization implies a big leap forward in internationalization of production under the command of the major multinationals, which leads to an increase in specialization and hierarchical organization. It reinforces the centre's hold on the periphery's resources. This restructuring also serves the centre, particularly the US, as a cushion for downward cycles and as a prolonger of phases of prosperity. It strategically facilitates the global reproduction of Capital.

Establishing the difference between the countries of the imperialist centre as a bloc and the dominated, underdeveloped periphery is the starting point for determining each region's and country's insertion into the world market, while taking into account the varied situations that exist

among different parts of the periphery. Latin America is on a higher level than Africa, which has been reduced to a territory to be pillaged, but lower than East Asia. A comparable hierarchy is reproduced on each continent, country by country (for example through processes of partial industrialization). This hierarchy also exists within each country and each working class as different layers have access to different levels of job security, wages, public services (such as health and education), thus creating a hierarchy between women and men, young and old, immigrants and native-born workers. These factors have a profound effect on the structure of societies, particularly the links between their dominant classes and imperialism and thus the forms taken by the class struggle.

The systemic oppression of women is reflected in daily life, in a society that nurtures the degradation and violence and state bureaucracies, reinforces ideologically and practically the power of men over women. Patriarchal ideology, a set of ideas defining women's roles as different from - and subordinate to - those of men, permeates all institutions and gives rise to resistance by women's movements globally against women along with rigid gender roles. As a result, women are socially devalued, economically marginalized and find their very bodies commodified. The patriarchal family remains the central economic living unit within society today and with other patriarchal institutions, including religious hierarchies

7 The violent face of neo-liberalism

As a result of the neo-liberal offensive society all over the world has become more violent and in particular we have seen an increase in the different forms of violence against women. Never before has the use of domestic violence, including honour crimes, incestuous rape, female infanticide, marital rapes, and beatings reached such high level as today. For many women, their most intimate emotional relations within the family are also the source of their greatest danger-more women are killed by their current or former partners than die from any other single cause. The growing "Take Back the Night" vigils and demonstrations are yearly actions to dramatize the situation of violence against women.

A cultural war is being waged on women: Women are being blamed by those who seek to impose the status quo as well as those fundamentalists who imagine a better world when rigid roles were enforced. Reacting to the tensions of the neo-liberal world, these forces focus on controlling women through dictating state policy particularly around women's reproductive issues.

In general society all over the world has become more violent because neo-liberalism increases exploitation through speedups, longer working day etc. Even longstanding labour policies are being revised to provide more flexibility for the corporations (hiring part-time workers, fewer rights for the laid off worker). Internal competition among workers creates physical and psychological violence in the labour market; without the existence of worker solidarity the power of the bosses is unchallenged. Sweatshops and domestic work stand as examples where the overwhelmingly female work force is subjected to low wages, demeaning, violent and unfair working conditions, including sexual harassment and physical punishment. The mantra of "free trade" hides the violent mechanisms of that mark the capitalist system.

8 US hegemony: the dollar and war

The installation of the imperialist "new world order", in particular its global hierarchization, require two wars (Iraq, Balkans) and two military interventions (Panama, Haiti). The initiative for these wars was taken by US imperialism, relying not only its economic power, but also its military supremacy. As the main artisan of victory in the "Cold War", the US managed to unleash a war against Iraq. Having overcome the open or hidden opposition of the USSR and its traditional allies, the EU countries (except Britain) and the great majority of Third World countries, the US emerged as the planet's only military and political superpower. The EU, incapable of containing the increasing explosive contradictions in the Balkans, had to appeal to the US. The US used this opportunity to demonstrate its superior military technology and to affirm its European power, with designs on Russia. Together with its 'new economy' and the strength of the dollar, 11 military and cultural factors (including its media, music and communications) have made the US the keystone of globalized capitalism.

9 Industrialisation of the sex trade and human merchandise

Capitalist globalisation is at the origin of the global development of the sex trade industry. This rapidly growing sector of the world economy has resulted in very significant population movements (migratory flows have become more and more female) and generated prodigious profits and income. It is now third in magnitude after arms and drug trafficking, and a microcosm of fundamental and new characteristics of this new stage of the capitalist economy.

The dynamics and pressure are such that, since 1995, international organisations have adopted positions that, after analysis and despite a position of speaking out against the worst effects of this globalisation of the sex market, tend towards liberalisation of prostitution and sex markets. [1]

This industrialisation, legal and illegal alike, bringing in several thousand billions of dollars, has created a sexual commodity market, in which millions of human beings, especially women and children, have become goods of a sexual nature. This market was fostered by the massive deployment of prostitution, the unprecedented development of the tourist industry, the rise and normalisation of the pornographic industry, the internationalisation of arranged marriages and the needs of capitalist accumulation.

Prostitution and related sex trade industries (bars, clubs, brothels, massage parlours, pornographic production companies, etc.) rely on a massive underground economy controlled by procurers with ties to

organised crime. The tourist industry is very dependent on the sex trade industry as are governments - (60% of the Thai government budget in 1995).

Prostitution has become a development strategy for certain countries. Faced with the obligation to reimburse the debt, many governments in Asia, Latin America and Africa have been encouraged by international organisations such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank to develop their tourist and entertainment industries, leading to the take-off of the sex-trade industry.

THE FALL OF THE STALINIST BUREAUCRACY, RESTORATION OF CAPITALISM AND INTEGRATION INTO THE WORLD ECONOMY

1 Crisis and capitalist restoration in the USSR and Eastern Europe

A The late 1980s were a historic turning point towards capitalist restoration in the USSR and Eastern Europe, which is the result of internal causes and international factors marked by the neo-liberal, imperialist offensive of the 1980s.

1 This historic turning point encompasses the following factors:

– The failure of the various attempts at post-Stalin reforms, which prolonged single-party rule and non-capitalist relations of production for several decades without managing to carry out a transition to an intensive mode of growth. The contradictions grew between workers' values and aspirations linked to collective property of the means of production, on the one hand, and its management by the bureaucracy at their expense, on the other. The absence of workers' democracy throughout the society as a whole emptied any self-management rights that might have been granted to factory collectives by a party-state seeking to preserve its privileges and power of any substance or coherence.

– The aggravation of these contradictions in the international capitalist context of the years 1970-89 under the pressure of several Eastern European countries' foreign debt in hard currency and of the arms race.

– Popular rejection of bureaucratic dictatorships, symbolized by the fall of the Berlin Wall, and the end of single-party rule, without workers' resistances and social aspirations having any way of leading to a coherent socialist alternative.

– A swing by significant sectors of the bureaucracy over towards capitalism in the 1980s in order to break working-class resistance while consolidating their privileges and power by translating them into property.

– A generalization of market relations and private property in the means of production; re-emergence of mass unemployment; abandonment of the old ideology that had legitimized socialist aspirations in favour of the neo-liberal line; and a challenge to social gains that amounted to a sharp defeat for workers both in these countries and around the world, which made possible an extension and intensification of the imperialist offensive started at the end of the 1970s.

– At the same time, ten years of capitalist restoration have produced deep disillusionment with the promises of efficiency that accompanied neo-liberal programmes. But the combination of large-scale social deterioration with newly won trade union and political freedoms has deepened the generation gap and the confusion in people's minds. The forms of solidarity that could have been associated with the crisis of the Stalinist mode of domination have lost ground to reactionary or even neo-Stalinist ideologies.

The recomposition of an anti-capitalist and democratic trade union and political movement can only progress with difficulty in a context that is much more problematic than that in Western Europe. It will be very much dependent on the emergence of a credible alternative to (and inside) the European Union, and a growth of new internationalism of resistance to capitalist globalization.

2 Whatever the variants of the reforms introduced in the USSR and Eastern Europe from the 1950s to the fall of the Berlin Wall, they all maintained a single-party dictatorship and bureaucratic relations of production, which were protected as a whole from the logic of capitalist profit and from market discipline.

After several decades of catching up with the living standards of developed capitalist countries, thanks to a very extensive growth, the gaps began to grow again in the 1970s. The social gains, which in any event were combined with bureaucratic waste and repression, crumbled, while the new generations' aspirations and needs as well as upward social mobility were blocked by bureaucratic conservatism.

a) But the imperialist offensive of the 1980s made the impasses of the bureaucratic dictatorship and the gaps in development between Eastern and Western Europe, further deepened by the technological revolution, even worse:

– The pressures of the last phase of the Cold War and of the arms race at the beginning of the Reagan era weighed all the more on the USSR because its growth rates were stagnant. Priority was given to the arms industry at the expense of industrial investment and modernization of infrastructure and consumption.

– The growing debt of several Eastern European countries in hard currency during the 1970s put them under pressure from the IMF's structural adjustment programmes. This led to different reactions from the different regimes in power, ranging from the drastic, explosive austerity imposed by Romanian dictator Ceaucescu, to the rise of national and social conflicts in the paralysed Yugoslav federation, to Hungarian Communist leaders' decision to sell their best enterprises to foreign capital. The arrival in power

of right-wing forces in the first multiparty elections drastically increased the teams in power's acceptance of the privatization programmes laid down by the IMF. The cancellation of part of the Polish debt and the resources devoted to corrupting Solidarnosc's spokespersons accompanied the shock therapy imposed on Poland.

– The construction of Maastricht Europe reinforced the IMF's criteria as accelerators of capitalist restoration in Eastern Europe.

b) While capitalist restoration relied on powerful international institutions and the pressures of the world market, it would not have been able to move forward without internal levers, in a context of very great confusion in workers' minds and weakness of their self-organization. Winning most of the leaders of the communist parties to a project of capitalist restoration in the 1980s, after systematic repression of democratic socialist forces during the course of earlier decades, made it possible for the break-up of the single party to usher in the rise to power of restorationist forces irrespective of their labels.

B Capitalist restoration was carried out after the explosion of the former Soviet Union and in Eastern Europe, largely industrialized countries, in an unprecedented historical context characterized, to begin with, by the absence of all the elements necessary to the functioning of a capitalist market and the lack of an ''organic''' base, even though the great bulk of the old regime's bureaucrats aspire to transform themselves into capitalists or put themselves at the service of foreign capital.

1 The new governments' submission to the programmes imposed by the IMF or EU involved dismantling every form of self-management - and even of the soviets however bureaucratised - for fear that the workers would take control of them, transforming the means of production into commodities, along with extending the functions of money and the generalization of privatization programmes as "proof" of the break with the past and supposedly universally effective criteria.

2 But in these countries, which had been through several decades of industrialization without domination of monetary relations and under hybrid property forms belonging 'to the whole people', privatizations ran up against the question: who can buy the enterprises (legitimately and in practice)? The privatization of large-scale enterprises, which sometimes structured whole regions and under the old system provided social services and housing through distribution in kind, is at the heart of the difficulties of capitalist restoration. The risks of social explosion are compounded by the high cost of restructuring, given the non-existence of adequate capital or of a national bourgeoisie capable of buying these enterprises and imposing capitalist management on their workers.

3 Faced with this general difficulty, the Hungarian leadership chose to sell their best enterprises directly to foreign capital. But except for this case, most of the new regimes in the ex-USSR as in Eastern Europe invented various forms of 'juridical privatization' in the first half of the 1990s, without any influx of capital, often largely to the benefit of the new states, which became shareholders. The distribution of 'coupons' to the population, which gave people the right to buy shares, or workers' access at virtually no cost to a substantial part of the shares in their enterprises, made it possible to speed up 'privatizations' in the eyes of Western creditors and institutions while luring workers into 'people's shareholding'. Whatever the variations in the new forms taken by property, the restructuring of big enterprises was slowed down or 'avoided', more often taking the form of asphyxia through a lack in funding and non-payment of employees than in a class confrontation through redundancies. This has exerted a great influence on the difficulty encountered by workers' collective resistance, while pushing them towards the search for an individual survival solution (cultivation of small plots of land, odd jobs...). The gradual concentration of legal property title and real powers of management in the hands of the new powers of the bourgeois state, banks and oligarchs - under very opaque forms - initially kept sales to foreign capital limited.

4 Barter, which became more common in Russia in the 1990s at the same time as the IMF was imposing privatizations and ''deflation''', was a tenuous form of protection from the new market constraints combined with the real extension of monetary relations, mafia-like financial operations, and the Yeltsin regime's subordination to the IMF's and oligarchs' dictates.

The absence of restructuring or financing of enterprises went alongside massive flight of capital abroad and intense speculation by the new private banks in government bonds, leading to the crisis of summer 1998.

5 In all the EU accession countries, pressures to open up the economies and particularly banking to foreign capital intensified in the second half of the 1990s. More than 70 per cent of the banks are foreign-controlled in several Central European countries, including Poland, where unemployment is over 17 per cent.

The race to join the European Union, which is still the alibi for the unpopular policies imposed by Central European leaders, has accelerated the break-off of the richest regions, which have been casting off the ''budgetary burden''' of other regions in their haste to push themselves into the EU.

The accession countries have radically reoriented their trade towards the EU, and are now subject to the fluctuations of the EU's growth rates and contending with more or less structural trade deficits. By deepening poverty and unemployment, the criteria imposed by the EU on the accession countries are in fact making EU membership more and more costly - while the lid remains clamped down tight on the European budget. The EU will no doubt cut the aid given to Southern European countries rather than extend Common Agricultural Policy subsidies to Eastern European farmers.

The EU's failures in terms of the crisis in ex-Yugoslavia and the wars there have encouraged NATO's redefinition and eastward expansion. NATO's

eastwards expansion enables the United States to have an influence on the future member states of the EU and on those of its periphery, in particular in the Balkans, offering the latter a substitute for EU membership.

6 Alternation in office without any real political alternative has become the norm behind the new political pluralism. Abstention rates continue to rise, it is hard to put together parliamentary majorities for governments, and financial scandals are spreading to taint all the parties in power, whatever their labels. The rapid and general return to office of ex-Communists through the ballot box has shown people's deep disillusionment with neo-liberal prescriptions and their hope for more social policies. But their hopes have been quickly dashed by the ex-Communist parties' social-liberal transformation.

7 Putin's arrival in power in the wake of the summer 1998 financial crisis opened a new phase, characterized by the installation of a nationalist ('patriotic') government and an authoritarian state on several levels: restoration of Russian power (notably in Chechenya) and of a certain kind of moral and economic order, and reassertion of control over the media and regional authorities. The new Labour Code and the Putin's most trusted advisers illustrate this regime's bourgeois socio-economic objectives. The devaluation of the rouble that followed the summer 1998 crisis made possible an unstable recovery of domestic production and a decline in barter, but the needs of finance and industry remain under imperialist pressure.

The Russian government is seeking to reclaim the attributes of a great power through negotiations with NATO, whose eastward expansion has created tensions. It hopes to encourage resistance to US omnipotence by relying on the EU. But the Atlantic, neo-liberal framework in which the EU is being built holds these impulses in check. Bringing Russia into the new 'anti-terrorist' coalition behind the United States left the former a free hand to carry out its dirty war in Chechyna. But the tensions between the United States and the EU like those that have arisen on the Iraq question will once again enable Russia to attempt to play power broker between the major powers.

2 The Chinese dynamic: growing openings to capitalism behind the upholding of the single party

From the great powers' standpoint, China continues to represent an uncertain factor as much on the geopolitical level (given the issues of Taiwan, Tibet, Central Asia, etc.) as on the socio-economic. The ruling groups in the United States, the European Union and especially Japan are conscious that in any scenario (except break-up, difficult to envisage despite the potential centrifugal forces) China will try hard in the coming decades to play the role of a great power and assert its hegemony in Asia. Moreover, it too seems to have drawn the lessons of the Kosovo war by pushing onwards with a further modernization of its military potential. Russia and all countries in Eastern Europe experienced a fall in production in the early 1990s, with a GDP in 2000 that caught up with the level reached ten years earlier in only 5 per cent of Central European countries. Conversely, China has experienced a growth rate of almost 10 per cent per annum over the past 20 years, including higher than 8 per cent growth during the Asian crisis. The Chinese figures on the decrease in the absolute number of poor during these past twenty years are what enable world statistics to claim that global inequalities have been reduced - while these have been increasing in the past 20 years, not counting the Chinese statistics.

At the same time, income gaps have grown in China parallel to the challenges to the social progress achieved in health and education and to employment protection. The logic of capitalist privatisation is underway, and more and more enshrined in law.

Whence the rise of an outbreak of social protests against inequalities, often making specific reference to the gap between the socialist "line" and the developing capitalist reality.

It is, paradoxically from the standpoint of neo-liberal rhetoric, the upholding of state and strong party power, at once repressive and supporting growth, that have proven most attractive to foreign capital. At the turn of the millennium, the accumulated stock of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) stood at 300 billion dollars in China compared to 12 for Russia. But the Chinese opening had been controlled and massively "Chinese" up until then and financing of growth relied only partially on foreign investment - which, with its considerable commercial precedents, gave China a power to resist neo-liberal precepts. In relation to the size of the country, the FDI figures become more significant. In 2000, they stood at $160 per habitant in China, compared to $85 in Russia, but 571 in Kazakhstan, approximately 1000 for Poland and about 2000 in Hungary and the Czech Republic. In substance, Chinese growth relies on neo-mercantilism based on interventionism and State protection more inspired by measures taken in South Korea and Japan in their years of strong growth than by neo-liberal precepts.

Up until the end of the 1990s, China's opening to international trade took place on an extremely protectionist basis (for example through the non-convertibility of its currency and strict limits imposed on financing by non-residents), as is borne out by the fact that it was largely spared by the 1997-1998 Asian crisis.

WTO membership was accompanied by a radicalisation of the reforms aiming to convert the major firms more and more into share-issuing corporations) and opening up the financial system to foreign capital, alongside the CCP's membership becoming open to business people. In parallel, former measures of social protection continue to be dismantled.

The ongoing process is hampered by growing social resistance towards the growth in inequality and the development of contingent work.

These forms of resistance, whose origin goes back to the Tien Anmen movement, which could shake the unified façade of the regime and lead to a break in the institutional framework of the party-state. The

socialist rhetoric must obviously be challenged, both in terms of measures of extension of capitalist production relations; and facing any 'moderate' or conservative wings that would fail to place the introduction of workers' self-organisation rights and management rights on collective property at the heart of the necessary anti-capitalist resistance.

THE CONTRADICTIONS DESTABILIZING THE NEW IMPERIALIST ORDER

1 The rise of contradictions among imperialist powers

1 The new structure of globalized capitalism contains the seeds of a substantial worsening of inter-imperialist rivalries among the three regional economic blocs, each structured around one of the three big economic powers. The US, the only "global" power, ensures the stability and persistence of the system of exploitation, while abusing its position of strength to impose its will on its rivals. The political result of the new war could substantially change the political and economic relationship of forces between the USA on one side and the imperialist powers (EU and Japan) and great powers (Russia, China) that are becoming integrated into the world market. The recession will sharpen them.

2 In the last ten years Japan has been suffering from economic stagnation, linked to its incapacity to overcome the effects of a speculative bubble and a gigantic banking crisis. But this conjuncture is hiding for the time being Japan's ongoing industrial and financial power. Japan remains the epicentre of East Asia, one of the most dynamic zones of the world economy. 'Globalization' means the country's opening up through a series of legal and institutional deregulations and privatizations. Big foreign conglomerates are fighting a battle to push their way in, and the US is pushing to eliminate the existing protectionist structures. The US is throwing the full weight of its military presence around in the region, justifying this as a means of containing the rising (economic and military) power of China as it confronts Taiwan. In the medium term the US is preparing to confront the formation of a new political and economic power - China/Hong Kong/Taiwan - that would radically upset the balance of power in Asia and the Pacific.

3 The European bourgeoisies have achieved an indisputable success with the adoption of the single currency. At the current stage the members of the Union are trying to take better advantage of the common economic space and to become more competitive on the world market. A succession of major merger and concentration operations has taken place among the most powerful industrial, commercial, financial and banking groups. The Single Market is moving forward in particular in the harmonization of financial markets. Since the Kosovo war the EU has set itself the goal of forming an armed force autonomous from the US. This is directly linked to the EU's eastwards enlargement, which is running into many obstacles, as the accession countries are obliged to introduce the required deregulation, privatizations and structural changes. By transforming the EU into a fortress (by means of the Schengen accords) the EU is trying to halt the flow of populations from south of the Mediterranean, Black Africa, Eastern Europe and parts of Asia.

The dominant classes' will to advance towards a 'European great power' implies a reform of the EU institutions, which today are very hybrid, in order to arrive at a genuine supranational political leadership. The EU has managed to acquire the first core of a truly supranational state apparatus, surrounded by a series of steadily more coherent interstate coordinating bodies. But its construction is still transitional and fragile. It is cut across by major contradictions among the (larger) member states. It represents a retreat from parliamentary democracy. Its popular legitimacy remains very limited, thanks to its virulently anti-social policies. At the same time its dynamic remains at work, propelled by the general capitalist globalization and the needs of big European Capital. It is obliged to confront the obstacles and move forward, because retreating would lead to a serious crisis that would endanger everything that has been gained (particularly the monetary union).

Rivalry with the US is a major stimulus for the construction of a European state. US capitalism has a powerful state apparatus at its disposal, present on every continent. It constitutes an indispensable support structure for all the imperialist bourgeoisies. But at the same time the US uses it to favour its own multinationals in fierce battles on the level of economic competition and for spheres of political influence.

European big capital cannot pull back from its attempt to create its own European imperialist state. This state's emergence inevitably implies a new balancing act relative to the current US supremacy. This cannot happen without frictions and conflicts.

2 The relations between Russia and the imperialist countries

The contradictory relationship between the US and Russia, a product of the "Cold War", is now set in the framework of a global extension of capitalism, the ex-USSR's transition to capitalism, and the Stalinist bureaucracy's recycling as a bourgeois class. This process is anything but painless.

1 The break-up of the ex- Soviet Union has led to serious instability and a series of wars.

In the Caucasus, where conflicts around oil have been interwoven with Russian internal politics, no country has emerged from economic crisis or political instability. The war in Chechnya was started by Yeltsin to boost his flagging popularity and to get his chosen successor elected in the forthcoming presidential elections. Putin then pursued it more vigorously than Yeltsin had done - and it became the means by which he built his power

base and stabilised his rule.

The invasion took place in the wake of the NATO war in the Balkans, and under different political conditions than the previous (disastrous) invasion of Chechnya by Russia in 1994. This war, carried out with the complicity of the Western powers, notably the United States, in the name of the "war on terrorism" is characterized by war crimes, massacre of civilian populations, rape, torture and deportations.

The war was also an attempt to rebuild the morale and offensive ability of the Russian army. The generals had been opposed to the invasion of Chechnya in 1994 but in 1999 they were fully behind it. It was also useful in rebuilding great Russian chauvinism which had taken a dive with the collapse of the USSR and again with the 1994 defeat by Chechnya. And it gave a warning to the other Autonomous Republics of the consequences if they looked for independence themselves.

It was also in line with Russian strategic interests, in particular the control of oil. Russia needed to maximise its influence in the Caspian region. There were no plans for a new pipeline that would by-pass Chechnya altogether and provide access to the Black Sea. For Russia to remain a major player in the region it had to have stability and political control. Our task is to expose Russian oppression of the Chechens and support unambiguously Chechnya's right to self-determination.

Ukraine, which has gone through an even more serious economic regression than Russia, is far from having established a stable political-institutional framework, and is still threatened by the fracture between its western regions, more orientated towards Western and Central Europe, and the eastern regions under the influence of their Russian neighbour. Ukraine's fate is one of the most important issues at stake in Eastern Europe. The balance of this whole part of the world depends to a large extent on this country's evolution: it could either be integrated into the NATO powers' zone of influence or return to the bosom of Mother Russia, repairing the links torn by the break-up of the USSR.

2 The Russian neo-bourgeoisie aims at reclaiming its world power status by mobilizing its history, its national consciousness, its international links with countries traditionally opposed to the US, its productive forces and natural resources, its skilled labour force and above all its capacity for military troublemaking. But its transition is very much 15 dependent on big international capital and imperialism. Second, its insertion into the world market is a conflictive process in which US-EU rivalry also plays a role. The EU, with Germany in the lead, is trying to carry out a diplomatic and economic rapprochement in the region while preserving peaceful relations (given the EU's geographical proximity, its policy of eastwards enlargement and its own military weakness), while the US is confronting Russia in the framework of its own policy of global hegemony.

3 Latin America faced with US imperialism

Latin America is experiencing a very exceptional situation, especially in South America. It combines the depths of the socioeconomic crisis and growing political/institutional instability with the intensity of a broad and radical social resistance. The process of liberal counter-reform has lost legitimacy, especially following the eruption of a popular rebellion in Argentina, and the crisis of bourgeois political leadership is deepening. A mood of civil disobedience and insurrection has taken hold in many countries in the region. The election of Lula in Brazil and Gutiérrez in Ecuador, as well as the strong electoral showing by Evo Morales in Bolivia, are all signs of the backlash against neo-liberal policies and the bourgeois parties' crisis of credibility and attrition. The current period of the class struggle is clearly transitory in nature, marked by an open-ended battle between revolutionary and counterrevolutionary focuses fighting for a more favourable correlation of forces.

It is too soon to assess the impact throughout Latin America of the electoral victory of Lula and the PT. Since both the party and its candidate have for years represented the country's social movements, their victory is a source of renewed hope and may help spark a cycle of social struggles in Brazil and beyond. Weighing against such a scenario is the new Brazilian government's self-declared "moderation", its broad alliances with sectors of the dominant classes, decision to at least initially attempt seamless change while sustaining many of the policies of the Cardozo administration, and appeal for voters to "be patient". Meanwhile, with public disappointment with the Lula government growing as the administration consolidates its politics of "moderation", the end result could be a demobilization.

U.S. imperialism is fine-tuning its strategy with two key objectives in mind: the economic recolonization of Latin America along with the realization of a hemisphere-wide free trade plan (FTAA, Plan Puebla-Panama, foreign debt, complete subordination to the IMF and World Bank); and a military/repressive response to any popular struggles and resistance (Plan Colombia as well as military bases, DEA and CIA operations throughout the region). Washington's counterinsurgency strategy for the Americas includes a number of multilateral initiatives aimed at developing a Latin American intervention force that would act as a sort of "anti-terrorist" armed wing for the OAS. The institutional manifestations of this strategy have already begun to take form. The OAS has been given new life under the paradigm rubric of "democratic solidarity" that has been devised for the region (e.g. the Inter- American Democratic Charter approved on September 11, 2001, in Lima) that focuses on "the defence of human rights" and good "regional governance". Meanwhile, repressive institutions are being modernized, the terrorist impunity of the State is guaranteed along with the need to "cleanse" society of "disposable elements" (as in Argentina, Colombia, Guatemala, Chiapas, Argentina and Brazil). This style of Inter- American governance is tailored to establish the right to intervention, trampling on the concepts of non-intervention and

respect for national sovereignty that are still deeply engrained in many countries whose entire history has been marked by struggles against imperialist and other forms of foreign intervention.

The socio-economic crisis of what is often termed the neo-liberal model as well as the crisis of subordinated regional projects (Mercosur, Andean Community of Nations, Central American Common Market) intensified following the financial crises of 1997-1998, and Washington's push for the FTAA. This "new colonial pact" implies a massive transfer of all manner of resources into the hands of huge imperialists concerns (industrial - commercial - financial groups) and their hand full of local partners. This project incorporates monstrous corruption and the parasitic behaviour of a ruling class that prefers U.S. or Swiss bank accounts and those of offshore fiscal havens to investing in their own country. The transfer of wealth is such that it decimates entire social layers, leading to an unprecedented concentration of wealth, social disaster, economic/financial crises and increasingly protracted recessions. The resulting shock implies industrial ruin in countries such as Argentina that had achieved relative degrees of development. The region's potential has been dismantled as capitalist globalization, along with the demands of imperialist countries and their multinationals, oblige these "underdeveloped" countries to contract their economies in the logic of "structural adjustment" and foreign debt servicing. Virtually everything has been privatized or is still on the auction block: everything from oil reserves, water and electric power utilities, land, mines, ports and health services. Forty-six per cent of Latin Americans now live in poverty, with more than 40 per cent experiencing unemployment or underemployment.

The bourgeois elites' crisis of legitimacy and governability has prompted the imposition of social-control mechanisms and laws as well as a curtailment of 'civil society's' democratic rights. The supposedly democratic state is increasingly assuming the authoritarian features of a police state, repressing any sign of protest or civil disobedience. This crisis of the current phase of capitalist globalization-the neo-liberal paradigm-and the failure of 'modernizing underdevelopment', are among the key factors underlying of this loss of legitimacy and of cohesion in the prevailing discourse. Consumerist promises have lost their lure for very broad sectors of the 'middle classes', who instead are increasingly drawn into the ranks of the militant opposition as they take to the streets and cast protest votes or abstain from electoral participation. This crisis has extended to the arena of 'representative democracy'. Institutionality has been breached by the democratic struggles of the masses, which in the past three years have brought down a succession of presidents elected or re-elected at the polls, or imposed by legislative bodies.

The checklist of Washington's objectives agenda appear clear: to crush the new rise of popular combativity, the breadth of civil disobedience, and the radical character of the social struggles; to reverse the revolutionary process opened in Argentina; to co-opt, neutralize or directly sabotage the Lula administration in Brazil; to defeat Colombia's armed insurgency and ensure access to the country's oil; to destabilize the government of Chávez owing to his nationalistic discourse and alliance with Havana; to crush the Zapatista resistance in Chiapas and that of the indigenous communities, peasants, settlers and trades unionists who oppose the plunder of the Puebla-Panama Plan; to maintain the blockade and inflict final defeat on Cuba; to create conditions of 'democratic stability' that assures the reach of U.S. capital as it disputes control of the region's markets with the European Union.

We are witnessing a revival of popular mass struggles, a reorganization of the social movements and a re-emergence of class consciousness. This means the worst part of the period of setbacks is now behind us. Although problems of fragmentation and confusion remain, this process of outright recovery, in which there is an widening socialization of the diverse experiences of struggle, has a broad and radical character, linking demands and programs that incorporate economic, social, political, democratic, ecological, cultural and ethnic components. This process was not halted by the ideological intoxication of the attack on the Twin Towers and the terrorist campaign of imperialism and its media pundits. On the contrary, social polarization was accentuated following September 11, 2001. The argentinazo and the popular revolt against the attempted coup d'etat in Venezuela, as well as the growth of massive protests, strikes and caceroleos in Uruguay, and the increasingly broad radical struggles in Paraguay and Bolivia, confirm this new period of class struggle.

In these struggles by social movements, programmes and demands emerge that become visible as anti-neo-liberal, but which are part and parcel of the anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist dynamic of the resistance. The long list of examples includes movements and struggles like those of the Coordination for Defense of Water and Life in Cochabamba, the Chapare coca farmers, and the peasant marches in Bolivia; the Ecuadorian CONAIE; the MST in Brazil; the Zapatistas in Chiapas; the mobilization organized by the Democratic Peoples Council of the People in Paraguay; the teachers, students and Mapuches in Chile, the Vieques squatters; and the public employees and popular movements in Colombia. The innumerable mobilizations of trade unionists, peasants (who have found a fundamental driving force in Via Campesina), unemployed workers (the example of the piqueteros has extended to several countries), the black and women's movements, activists for human rights and against impunity, students and neighbourhood activists, and even community radios all articulate the varied dimensions of this resistance that contains incipient elements of a counter-offensive. The resurgence of indigenous struggles-their organizations and demands-has been another outstanding dimension of this process, especially since the protests sparked by the 500th anniversary of the conquest of the Americas. Equally significant is the resilience of the armed insurgency in Colombia, faced with an unrelenting war whose victims number in the tens

of thousands.

All these struggles - which by no means are confined to the periphery of 'social outcasts' or de-proletarianization', nor can be characterized as struggles of an amorphous and eclectic 'multitude' lacking class points of reference - extend to ever broader sectors of the exploited classes, and intersect with the growing movement of resistance to capitalist globalization, the solidarity campaigns and networks, and big confrontations against the international financial institutions that mark the emergence of a renewed internationalism, whose massive expression has extended from Seattle to the World Social Forum at Porto Alegre. It is in this rebellious movement that a new radical social left is emerging that participates in the class struggle, leads rebellions, challenges the relationship of forces, and is daily engaged in the construction of a latent 'counter power'.

The argentinazo has accelerated this recomposition of the popular movement as well as its radicalization. It represents a decisive historical event in the course of the class struggle in Latin America. And although one should not underestimate the capacity of the bourgeoisie and imperialism to organize a counter-revolutionary outcome (or repressive intervention such as that of June 2002) the force of the popular movement is slowly establishing new forms of self-organization, and rank-and-file democracy.

There is a thread running through the mass struggle in Argentina, and throughout Latin America, with the protests in Seattle and Genoa, with the movement against capitalist globalization, as well as with the insurgencies, civil disobedience, protests and the formidable radicalization of ever broader layers of youth on a world-wide scale. In Latin America, this process especially includes women who are workers, unemployed, and heads of households, who play an essential role in the recomposition of a radical social left.

The extreme polarization of the class struggle sharpens the relationships and the debates within the Latin American left regarding what strategy to follow. More importantly, it helps to narrow the gap between social resistance and an alternative political project, while the need to link them in a strategic perspective of taking power assumes a new sense of urgency. The schematic understanding of 'reform or revolution' must today give way to the urgency of reform and revolution to "transform the prevailing order", as Rosa Luxemburg proposed.

A gap also continues to widen between the radical left, with its unquestionable commitment to confronting and breaking with the established order, and that part of the left whose strategic perspective is now limited to competing for power within the confines of existing institutions. This dichotomy cuts across the government of Lula in Brazil and that of Gutiérrez in Ecuador, and may well confront the Frente Amplio in Uruguay; should this hypothesis be confirmed even if at this stage the predominant option of these governments remains neo-liberalism.

Nevertheless, in Latin America the dimension of the crisis and imperialist dominance has acquired such magnitude that the space for 'progresismo' needs footnote has evaporated. The disastrous experience of the government of the Alliance in Argentina is the best example. And when there appears a timid process of nationalism and social populism, as in Venezuela, the right, the reactionary sectors of the Church, the military and the multinationals move to destabilize it with the backing of imperialism, ultimately radicalizing the situation.

4 The disintegration of the African continent

The neo-liberalization of sub-Saharan African has proved particularly brutal and murderous, worsening the already catastrophic situation of the part of the capitalist periphery. The Strategic Adjustment Programmes, through privatization of state enterprises, favour the liberalization of markets, control by multinationals of the most profitable sectors of local economies, and recolonization processes accentuated in some cases by proxy wars. Local neo-colonial factions, linked to various imperialist interests, give themselves over to wars of primitive capital accumulation, and pillage of natural resources (minerals, energy, etc), wars whose ethnicization tears apart the national fabric, and create fiefdoms under the rule of extremely criminal politico-mafia gangs (Angola, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Congo-Brazzaville…). These further worsen the situation for populations in the conflict zones, often condemned to wander, giving sub-Saharan Africa a huge number of refugees. In addition there is the situation of workers suffering through restructuring of social expenditures, massive layoffs, the freeze on hirings … Despite this catastrophic situation, the ruling elites, in adopting NEPAD, sanctioned by the G-8 at Kananskis, June 2002, and the multinationals at Dakar, 2002, remain attached to the Washington Consensus. This promises a worsening social situation for a majority of the African people.

5 The explosive nature of the situation in Asia

The global changes now under way are having a particularly profound and explosive impact on Asia. They are being felt on every level: diplomatic, economic and social, political and military. The international alignments forged in the period of the Cold War have been put in question, particularly in South and Western Asia, without making way for a new system of stable alliances. In the framework of the new world disorder, tensions among states have been exacerbated to the point of giving new impetus to nuclear proliferation (as seen in the Pakistan-India confrontation and North Korean nuclear blackmail of the US, the major occupying nuclear power in South Korea).

The first major so-called 'financial' crisis of neo-liberal globalization began in 1997-98, with lasting consequences: a process of economic (re)colonization and tearing up of the social fabric (South Korea), political destabilization (the structural crisis of the regime in Indonesia), delegitimation of the international institutions and the IMF in particular (Malaysia's temporarily enlarged

manoeuvring room), and prolonged stagnation (Japan).

Beyond Afghanistan, the military dimension of capitalist globalization also has very serious implications for Asia. US imperialism is redeploying its forces throughout the region. It is establishing new bases in areas where it did not have them (the former Soviet republics). It is once more strengthening its presence in countries where it had had to cut back; this is particularly the case in the Philippines, its former colony, where US troops have even been sent into combat zones. Thanks to the Visiting Forces Agreement (VFA), the Pentagon has obtained unlimited access to the country's military infrastructure. Here as elsewhere Washington is pursuing local objectives - gaining better access to the agricultural, oil and mineral wealth of the southern Philippines - and regional ones: keeping an eye on Indonesia, preparing for possible future action in the South China Sea, and controlling the straits between the Indian and Pacific Oceans through which Middle Eastern oil is transported to Japan

Washington wants to rebuild and complete the old Cold War barriers in East Asia to contain China, stretching from Seoul to Manila by way of Tokyo and Taipei. In this case too US imperialist ambitions are as much economic (control of petrol and gas reserves and of trade in them) as geo-strategic (consolidating the key elements of a truly global military redeployment).

From Kashmir to the Korean peninsula by way of Mindanão and the Indonesian archipelago, Washington's new interventionist doctrine and its 'anti-terrorist' ideology are adding an additional obstacle to the search for political solutions based on recognition of the concerned people's right to self-determination to territorial conflicts. They contribute to criminalizing popular and revolutionary movements, as well as eroding the most basic democratic freedoms. Capitalist globalization also tends in this region to worsen gender oppression and inter-communal tensions and foster the rise of far-right communalist and fundamentalist currents. This holds true even in countries where the pressure towards economic globalization was only felt relatively late, as in India: a significant fraction of the bourgeoisie has turned to the BJP in order to push through neo-liberal counter-reforms, thus enabling Hindu fundamentalist Hindutva currents to threaten the secular foundations of the state.

The war that Washington is preparing to wage against Iraq and the military occupation that will follow it will further exacerbate contradictions in the region, which the intervention in Afghanistan had already made acute. The consequences of this war cannot be overestimated, at a time when there is a whole set of focuses of major crises in Asia: US/Chinese relations (including Taiwan), the Korean peninsula, Afghanistan-Pakistan-India, Indonesia-Philippines-South China Sea, etc.

In this situation, progressive and revolutionary parties and movements in Asia tend, in many cases, to establish closer relations of solidarity with each other than in the past. Social movements, grassroots organizations and peace movements are coordinating their joint campaigns against the militarist dynamics and for peoples' rights more and more effectively. The meeting of the World Social Forum in India in January 2004 can give a new dimension to these activist convergences.

6 The strength of globalized capitalism and the weakness of international interstate institutions

1 The emergence of a globalized capitalism would require a global government in order to master its contradictions, which have become more numerous, more acute, more contagious and harder to control since the end of the Cold War. But this kind of state or government is completely beyond imperialism's reach.

Nonetheless, the dominant tendency of the past decade has been the emergence of and self-assertion by a series of international, state-like institutions. Despite their rivalries, the ruling classes have been won over to the idea of establishing an imperialist 'new order'. Economic globalization, which is very volatile, has 'spontaneously' pushed onwards and increased the weight of regulatory bodies on both the regional/continental and world level. Their keystone is the IMF (plus World Bank) and WTO. NATO has amended its charter and imposed itself as the armed force of global capitalism. The G7 (plus Russia) is attempting to ensure a common political leadership. The process of institutional globalization is widening on the judicial level (International Court of Justice in the Hague, the CCI) as well as other levels less in the media spotlight (the OECD and Bank of International Settlements).

2 The attempt to legitimize and stabilize these institutions is running up against major contradictions: economic and political rivalries among the major powers themselves (including regional economic blocs), their lack of democratic, electoral legitimacy, and their openly partisan character in major conflicts (such as Iraq, Rwanda, Palestine and Serbia). Their popular legitimacy has been limited from the outset. These contradictions have been highlighted by the mobilizations 'against globalization'. Their capacity to govern the planet will be put to a brutal test by the turbulence looming on the horizon because of the US government's war policy and the attempt to control the current economic recession.

Furthermore, the self-assertion of these non-elected institutions, in which the executive bodies dominate, and US unilateralist strategy, have further marginalized the UN (including its Security Council). Previously the UN supplied an institutional framework (its General Assembly and related agencies) in which the imperialist countries could be questioned and 'kept in bounds' and certain 'progressive' policies could be implemented.

The factor that has subjugated all this institutional architecture is the supremacy of US imperialism, which is more and more playing an international and unilateral role.

3 The US's arrogant and heedless

policies, including in its relations with its allies, are making their own limitations obvious. The US more and more clearly needs a division of labour, a sharing-out of spheres of influence and a system of coalitions with its main rivals and secondary regional powers. But the process of concentration and internationalization now under way also has an impact, in the context of fiercer and fiercer competition, on sectors of the ruling classes. This is leading to divergences among them about the means, rhythms, concrete goals and structures that are needed to reach their common goals; this is reflected at the level of the leading political groups, where the divergences are resulting in frequent infighting, hidden struggles and recurrent splits. US hegemony over the planet is undeniable, but its direct control of the situation turns out to be very difficult.

NEW CAPITALISM AND THE INTERNATIONAL RECESSION

The end of the US upswing identified with the 'New Economy' has put an end to illusions about the birth of a new capitalism. The productivity increases made were obtained only by means of a very great investment effort and an increase in the rate of exploitation in the form of a lengthening of the work week. Far from laying the foundation for a stable model and opening up a new phase of growth, this over-accumulation of capital eventually ran up against a very classical constraint: a profitability squeeze. The end of the upswing has uncovered the underlying components of the instability of contemporary capitalism.

The dynamism of rapid growth in the US was fuelled by a trade deficit on a scale that would never be tolerated in any country other than the world's dominant imperialist power. It was the surplus value accumulated in Europe and Japan that was drawn on to finance the high-tech boom. A model like this could therefore, by definition, never be extended to the whole of the world economy. On the contrary, it has been accentuating inter-imperialist contradictions, which are often manifest on the monetary level. The Japanese growth rate has been hovering around zero for the last ten years, partly because the yen is overvalued. The recent rise of the euro is not evidence of any particular strength, but rather the reflection of a changed US orientation; the US is letting the dollar fall in order to make its products competitive again.

The collapse of the financial bull market that had resulted from the mushrooming of the 'dot.com' economy is a brutal reminder of the law of value: stock exchanges do not create value, and financial profits are a form of income derived from exploitation of labour. The rapid rise of stock market prices bore no relation any more to the real economy and could not last forever. The creeping crash is an excellent course in the real world for those who were fooled by the illusions of finance. Wage earners around the world should reflect on Enron's bankruptcy, which is costing millions of workers not only their jobs but their pensions, which were dependent on the company's share prices.

More generally, we can say that neo-liberal perspectives are now running aground on experiences that enable masses of people to perceive how toxic neo-liberalism is. Millions of workers in many countries, from Argentina to South Korea and from Indonesia to Ivory Coast, are not about to sit and listen today to the praises being sung of beneficent globalization. The impossibility of carrying out a world public health policy without sufficient resources for the fight against Aids and other pandemics shows that the rules of the marketplace are more important to the WTO than social and health emergencies. All around the world people are realizing that privatizations obey no other logic than the logic of profit. In Europe, wage earners have been able to see that the recent recovery has not benefited them and that the fruits of growth continue to be swallowed up by interest and dividends. Far from being a hard time to be lived through or a necessary adjustment, wage austerity has now been revealed for what it is: a new, profoundly unjust rule for redistributing income.

World capitalism is thus facing a difficult situation, combining its internal sources of tension with a considerable loss of legitimacy in the eyes of the majority of the world's population, who view this system more and more as a pure and simple obstacle blocking the satisfaction of their social needs.

WAR POLICY AND THE CONTINUING NEO-LIBERAL POLICY

These two questions are going to dominate the world situation in the next 12 or 24 months and influence the lives of millions of human beings and the activity of all social and political forces.

1 The policy of the war against terrorism

1 The US government won the war in Afghanistan at a low cost and strengthened its domination of the world. Certainly it has showed that it has the diplomatic monopoly over the situation in the Middle East (the Israeli war against the Palestinian people). But it has not been able to exploit this victory by immediately starting a new war with Iraq. The Bush Administration continues to express its desire to overthrow Saddam Hussein. In the mean time, the US government has been able to impose on all its allies (big and small) the ideological and political framework of the 'war against terrorism' and, up to a certain point, make a military-political line out of it. In Palestine, Kashmir, Chechnya, Georgia, the Philippines, Colombia, Venezuela… it supports or intervenes militarily to create an atmosphere on ongoing war, justifying an increasingly arbitrary hegemony.

2.1 Palestine is once again at the centre of world politics because of the renewed intensity of Zionist aggression and the continued resistance by the Palestinian people.

The de facto expansion of the Zionist state through colonies, roadblocks and the wall, attacks on the rights of Palestinians in Israel and Israeli occupation forces' successful attempt to make life unbearable in the occupied Palestinian territories - daily arrests and assassinations, incessant demolition of houses, commercial establishments and factories, or through looting plantations or other cultivated areas - have created a climate of desperation which has profoundly affected the Palestinian people's forms of resistance.

2.2 The brutal occupation and intensive colonization of Palestinian land, combined with the world context of the 'war on terrorism' and the Labourite Oslo Process, are creating the conditions for the most radical wing of Zionism, in power through Sharon and his allies, to put on the agenda the plan for 'transfer' (massive deportation) of Palestinians outside their homeland. The threat of war hanging over Iraq may provide the Zionist leadership an unexpected opportunity to put this project in action, in the shadow of American bombing.

2.3 This is why, with the protection of the USA, Sharon has been able to happily ignore the UN resolutions, whilst he carries out systematic assassinations of Palestinian activists. Bush now hopes that a victory by the USA in Iraq will put him in a position to impose a settlement on the Palestinians which will leave them completely subordinate to the whims and wishes of the Israeli state and remove them as an obstacle to US policy in the region.

2.4 The Bush/Blair/Sharon axis must be resisted. The FI must make solidarity with Palestine a key part of our anti-war work. We must be at the centre of the support activities for the Palestinian people both in the West, through involvement in the solidarity organizations, and in Palestine itself - where the development of organizations such as the International Solidarity Movement has given a unique opportunity for practical involvement.

2.5 The Fourth International will do everything possible to work to reinforce the international solidarity movement with Palestinian people, for their protection, their right to selfdetermination and the right to return for all refugees. This solidarity campaign must completely oppose any transfer plan, demand the withdrawal of Israeli troops from the territories occupied since 1967, support the Palestinian demand for their own viable and sovereign state. To put an end to racism and all forms of oppression, the solution consists in the creation of a secular, united and binational state, which guarantees equal rights (including to land) to all its inhabitants.

3 But the war against Iraq could become the decisive test for the relationship of forces, the political alignments and the future force lines, constituting a 'defining moment' for the whole world situation.

From this point of view, the change in the situation that US imperialism is now working to impose on the planet, will be felt by all existing actors, governments as well as political and social forces. This will necessarily involve a long-term, international political battle on a grand scale. The question is, will the US be capable of using its overwhelming military supremacy to impose this war policy? Will it be able to take the initiative, alone if it has to, win victories, shift the relationship of forces even further in its favour, win an international political base and fight until it wins a 'final' victory, which would also mean the defeat of the popular masses' social aspirations and organizations?

4 The US faces three major obstacles in launching this war. First of all there are the contradictions within the main ruling classes, which weigh on the US government's capacity for initiative. It will have to wage a battle ("it's the objective that determines the coalition"). Because alongside its anti-terrorist line the Bush government is also building the NMD (National Missile Defence) - another global military project which would give enormous advantages on the military, technological, political and economic fronts.

Then, are the American people, currently living in a climate of 'anti-terrorist' propaganda accepting the 'self defence' of the national territory and of their lives, ready to go to a murderous war in the Middle East?

Finally, there is a major gap between US material supremacy and its moral (social and ideological) weakness. On a world scale, disaffection, suspicion and even hatred towards the United States have rarely been as intense or as widespread. This 'handicap' will be a big problem for governments under US pressure, who will have to legitimize a 'crisiswar' of this kind in the eyes of domestic public opinion. The fight against the US and its allies is a priority on the international level.

2 The capitalist class continues its neo-liberal offensive

The capitalist class continues its neo-liberal offensive while adapting to new difficulties and resistances.

1 The neoliberal policies of the 1980s and 90s led to a brilliant success for capital. The subsequent decade of growth in the US, the European recovery of the last few years, and the partial insertion of the periphery into the world economy have in no way benefited the popular masses who were called upon to make 'sacrifices' in order to get the machine moving again. Surfing on this relationship of forces, the capitalist class has no intention, now as the recession is hitting, to share 'the fruits of economic growth'. On the contrary, the current economic 'difficulties' supply a pretext for continuing with and reinforcing neoliberal policy prescriptions point by point.

2 Global neoliberal policies are now running up against a gigantic credibility problem. Not only has capitalist globalization led to a war (in Afghanistan), but neoliberal policies, pushed to their extreme by the multinationals and international institutions (IMF, WTO and BIS, G7+1), have brought about the collapse of the Argentinean economy (and society), with direct involvement of the US government. The Enron bankruptcy, the biggest ever, in the

heartland of global capitalism, requires a drastic overhaul of the very structures of finance capitalism and the rules of 'corporate governance' (not to speak of the social disaster involved in the total loss of the workers' saved-up pensions).

Whatever their attachment to a stubborn, cynical pragmatism, the rulers of global capitalism cannot stand by passively as their doctrines crumble and the dead ends of their economic policies. Unless they mean to go along with allegedly controlled chaos (which they are already doing in Africa), they will be forced to open a discussion that can only reveal the insanity of their policies.

3 This recession will have a contradictory impact on the (social, ideological and organizational) relationship of forces between the two fundamental classes. Objectively, it is putting the proletariat on the defensive, with a risk of a new dramatic decline in its living standards and capacities to reorganize itself. On the other hand, it has certainly already destroyed any illusion, that after twenty years of uninterrupted neoliberalism and three different economic phases (recession, recovery, and another recession) that capitalism is about to improve things for the working class.

This is already leading to fierce social conflicts, even in the absence of any assured alternative, perspective or solid organization. A new cycle has begun of fiercer, broader, but also more difficult struggles, around immediate, partial demands that almost spontaneously emphasize the need for an overall solution and raise once more 'the political issue' (the issue of who governs and what role political parties have).

The prolonged experience with neoliberal policies and with the political and social forces that have imposed neoliberalism will play a key role in political clarification on a mass scale and in the rebirth of a reorganized, reinvigorated workers' and social movement at every level (in terms of size, level of activism and activity, self-organization, demands and anti-capitalist programme).

THE SOCIAL CRISIS AT THE WORLD LEVEL

1 Faced with this general capitalist offensive, which has won several victories in recent years, many forms of resistance have been growing. The failure of the Seattle WTO summit, after the abandonment of the projected Multilateral Agreement on Investment (MAI), amounts to a major political event. For the first time a major international - and in many ways internationalist - campaign contributed to making the masters of globalization lose a battle. This setback for globalization is the result of numerous contradictions that combined to result in the failure of the negotiations: the contradiction between European and US capitalist interests, particularly on agricultural subsidies and the trade barriers between Europe and the US; the contradiction with the interests of the developing countries, which are incapable of competing with developed economies given their low productivity levels and the burden of the debt, and thus demand special, differentiated treatment; and the contradiction with the massive growth in public opinion of awareness of the misdeeds of unbridled neoliberalism, symbolized by the trade-union and grassroots demonstrations that succeeded in disrupting the WTO conference proceedings.

2 The unprecedented ecological crisis is directly linked to the commodification of the world under capitalist globalization. It is laying waste to the environment, that is, the conditions of life on the planet as a whole, but is hitting the poorest and most vulnerable regions and social layers hardest. Environmental destruction can now put the survival of humanity in the balance. The transformation of life forms into commodities is steadily advancing. It is made possible by the refinement of new technologies, whose ecological impact is often out of control and sometimes unknown. It can also be accompanied by a heightened dependence of the South not only for technology but also for food. The agribusiness giants' offensive aimed at imposing genetically modified organisms (GMOs) on the world is symptomatic of this situation.

Successive international conferences have ended with pitiful results; the big powers, and above all the US, are responsible for this. A resolute approach to environmental problems as well as to issues around food and health care on a world scale provides a great occasion for calling capitalism into question.

3 This overall picture should lead us to take into account the tensions and contradictions that the system as a whole is prey to on a world scale and in many countries in different parts of the world.

The world economy has experienced a prolonged upward conjuncture in the wake of the US economy's long expansive cycle. But the emergence of a 'new capitalism' is not leading to a long phase of socio-economic stabilizationcomparable to the post-war period of expansion. The current slowdown of the US economy, the restructuring and planned layoffs in industry and the stock markets' erratic ups and downs raise the question of a new US recession. More generally, the global context remains characterized by imbalances and growing inequality at the expense of the great majority of the planet's population. A deeper and deeper gulf is widening within the most developed countries themselves. A situation of this kind at the socio-economic level is, in the last analysis, a source of rather generalized crises of traditional political leaderships and even of their breakdown, and of the difficulties faced by attempts at to rebuild their institutionsand states.

The contradictions that are tearing apart contemporary society on a world scale and ravaging the world in many different ways are putting the definition and construction of a systemic alternative on the agenda more than ever before.

4 The main contradiction in the world, which in the last analysis is the main obstacle to the militarism of the US and its allies, is beyond doubt this: never before has a ruling class had

such complete supremacy on the material (military, technological, economic and diplomatic) level, while ruling over millions of exploited, oppressed, humiliated, crushed women and men, victims of a system that has never been so iniquitous and barbarous on the social and human level. This contradiction is at work every day in every country and society. The acuteness and explosiveness of the global social crisis, engendered by the globalization of capital under neoliberal policies, are certainly giving enlightened ruling class circles to think.

5 But only conscious, organized activity by the exploited and oppressed can prevent further capitalist disasters. To achieve this, overcoming the historic crisis of the 'subjective factor' in the broad sense is our fundamental task.

The massive, repeated reactions by young people and wage earners have finally led to an initial accumulation of forces and energy. The 'anti-globalization' movement hesitated for a moment but, stimulated by the growing discredit of warmongering and neoliberal policies, has taken off again. It appears more than ever as a mass alternative at the level of society ('post-capitalist'). This international confrontation symbolized by Porto Alegre against Davos/New York, will play a determining on the outcome of the present political stage. It is in this general framework that the social and political forces that reject the 'globalization' preached by the dominant classes exist in every region of the world and are ready to fight now, independently of the relationship of forces at the national and international level in the current stage. They include a great diversity of analyses and political responses, ranging from bourgeois nationalist protectionism to revolutionary socialist internationalism.

In the context of this kind of international mobilization and a more general relaunch of class struggle, we must find the way to rebuild the workers and anti-imperialist movement from top to bottom, to welcome the emergence of vanguards whose experiences are those of the new epoch we are living in, and to re-launch a new internationalism and a revolutionary International.

VOTE: 86 - 2 - 8 - 0 CARRIED

Footnotes

[1] In a 1998 report, the International Labour Organisation (ILO) states that "the possibility of official recognition would be extremely useful in order to expand the tax base and thereby cover many lucrative related activities".

Statement on Capitalist Restoration

10 August 2003

We have always in the past supported workers' and peoples' revolts against Stalinist dictatorships; in particular in Hungary, in the GDR, in Czechoslovakia, in Poland, in the former Soviet Union and in China.

Moreover, we support resistance movements by peoples, workers and peasants in these countries against the effects of the ongoing capitalist restoration.

We have always combated the bureaucratic regimes that claimed to be socialist while maintaining the repressive nature of their regimes against peoples and workers, in the name of rights to self-organisation, workers' self-management and democracy.

It is in the name of these same demands and principles that we continue to raise the call for resistance against the ruling policies and orientation that have accompanied the expansion of capitalist globalisation in Eastern Europe, the former Soviet Union and China. We reject and speak out against the policies of the so-called socialist bureaucratic regimes whose logic is the deterioration in social benefits, commodification and generalised privatisation of the means of production and a sharp increase in workers' exploitation. In just the same way, we reject the nostalgic recollection of single-party dictatorship and the pseudo-defence of social benefits under the control of powers putting forth a line hostile to globalisation; but using this to hide their own privileges and oppressive relations.

Everywhere, we fight encroachments on social benefits and rights while giving our unconditional support to all forms of resistance against such social regression, whatever the label of the regimes and States that implement these policies, in particular in China.

We also reject the other form that this policy can take, in particular in China, behind a pseudo-modernising and opening up of the rules set out by the WTO, in the name of a so-called "market socialism" - which really means super-exploitation of workers in order to achieve production "at the lowest possible cost" for the world market and the enrichment of a new Chinese bourgeoisie.

The Fourth International considers it essential to continue and go into greater depth, in liaison with all ongoing forms of resistance to capitalist globalisation, in particular in the former Soviet Union, Eastern Europe and China:

- the radical critical analysis of the regimes that have held power until now in the name of the workers; but actually on their backs, while claiming to be socialist;

- the refoundation of a socialist project worthy of that name; on the basis of individual and collective

democracy which has never actually been put into practice and in liaison with all struggles resisting oppressive orders. Experience shows to what an extent, on all continents, neo-liberal policies have failed to bring forth a new world order of progress and democracy. Instead, they have led to unbridled capitalism with its cortege of social regression which menaces the planet with its wars.

The Fourth International will encourage all organisations of the social movement to build links of solidarity with the peoples and workers of these countries:

- to the youth and women's associations but also to the trade unionists we call for help in the organisation and the demands of new trade unions as they face privatisation, attacks on working conditions, redundancies imposed by the multinationals and the bureaucrats and new bourgeoisie;

- to the movement for another globalisation we call for assistance in achieving common awareness, international solidarity in action, against globalised capitalism.

Furthermore, the World Congress mandates the upcoming IEC to organise the continuation of this debate (internally and externally, in the International's press and in its sections), on the theoretical and programmatic questions relating to revolutions in this century, Stalinism and capitalist restoration.

VOTE: 91 - 0 - 5 - 0 CARRIED

Resistances to capitalist globalization:

10 August 2003

Introduction to the resolution

The resolution *Resistances to Capitalist Globalization: Opening for a New Internationalism* was written just after the Seattle WTO protests, at a moment when it was clear that a change in the world situation was under way, but when it was too early to evaluate this change.

Now we have more perspective on the situation, and it is possible to refine our analysis and to indicate some problems brought forth by this renewal of the movements.

Over the last three years, the world situation has been marked by the drive to war and the economic crisis that began in 2001. In this introduction, we will restrict ourselves largely to analyzing this evolution through the experience of the movements fighting neo-liberal globalization. First, however, some remarks about the process of capitalist globalization itself.

The contradictions of capitalist globalization

The November 2000 resolution noted that the process of capitalist globalization affected every field (economic, social, political, cultural, military, etc.) and required the emergence of a new mode of domination. It also noted that this process had not yet been completed and probably never could be, because it was so full of contradictions.

Since then the military aspect of capitalist globalization has been revealed in its full scope, to a much greater extent than at the moment when the November 2000 resolution was drafted. The struggle against the dynamics of war has thus taken on a central, and truly international, character, to a degree that it had not yet done only three years ago.

Similarly, the preparation of the Iraq war highlighted the sharp inter-imperialist contradictions that are emerging in the context of the process of globalization, to a degree even higher than at the moment of Seattle.

The brutality of the social offensive (neo-liberal policies) and military offensive ('preventive war' theory) that the bourgeoisie has launched on the international level in the framework of globalization cannot be overestimated. But our sense that the very universality and violence of globalization would evoke growing resistance, and tend to unify different forms of resistance, has been confirmed. At the same time capitalist globalization itself is causing major contradictions among the ruling classes.

The question of the scope of the change under way
Several elements allow us to conclude that we have entered a worldwide period of radicalization comparable, in its size, even though the context is totally different, to the radicalization of the 1960s and '70s.

This radicalization's international character is the first element. Just as the first globalization of capitalism, from 1850 to 1880, had facilitated internationalization of the emerging workers' movement, today's globalization lies behind the radical protest movements which are developing, particularly in the countries most affected by capitalist globalization, and which have been built at the international level from the very beginning. Beyond their national and continental differences, the movements have entered a dynamic of mutual reinforcement, belonging to a 'world movement' developing from Seattle to Buenos Aires and from Florence to Porto Alegre, and experienced as an important strength in establishing the relationship of forces, including on the national level.

The second characteristic of these movements is their ability to integrate new political questions. Focussed initially on overall denunciation of

globalization, and in particular of those institutions applying it, the IMF, the World Bank and the WTO, the movements quickly and easily took up social and environmental issues at the root of opposition to neo-liberal globalization.

The response to the wars that blew up after the September 11 attacks was less straightforward. But there also, and quite quickly, the movements were able to integrate the struggle against war and militarism and link up with the peace movements, products of the 1980s movements, and active in some countries in solidarity with the Balkans and Palestine.

The last and perhaps most important element is the extension of these movements, broadening numerically to hundreds of thousands and millions participating in social forums and in demonstrations organized on those occasions, and broadening on the social and militant level. At the time of Seattle, students from elite universities made up an important part of the demonstrations, which was also an indicator of the strength of a movement which was not only the resistance of the victims of globalization and neo-liberalism but also the sign of a deep internal crisis of the system, leading a significant group of students to radically question the system, as in the 1960s and '70s. But very quickly the movement broadened, and to varying degrees, peasant movements, women's movements, the whole of the union movement and the majority of NGOs became involved in a process, and gather at their broadest at the social forums. While from the 1950s through 1970s, the majority of the union movement, numerically strong but demobilized by gradual victories in the post-war period, opposed the rise of protest movements which challenged 'consumer society', today the labour movement, weakened in the 1980s, is joining these alliances made necessary by the evolution of capitalism itself, and is participating in this process despite differences which remain among the different components.

A new 'founding historical experience' To sum up in a schematic way: in only a few years, movements resisting neo-liberal globalization have experienced an extraordinary numerical growth (in this respect Genoa was a qualitative turning point), a considerable geographical expansion (though it is still very uneven), and a remarkable social and thematic broadening. All this required overcoming numerous obstacles and difficulties: the movement had to 'digest' its own new members and contend with repression (in Göteberg, Genoa and elsewhere) as well as efforts to brand it as criminal (after September 11) and also to co-opt it. The movement for a different globalization has expanded rapidly and at the same time radicalized quickly. A cumulative process has been set in motion (collectivization of experiences, rising levels of consciousness, linking up of different initiatives), marking a real break with the previous period.

We cannot predict this movement's future or its ability to overcome the new difficulties that it will once more face tomorrow and the day after. But we can observe what has already happened. The movement for a different globalization clearly has deep roots. It reflects the existence of a groundswell of international radicalization that is probably only beginning, which is being expressed today in movements resisting and posing alternatives to capitalist globalization.

In this sense we are dealing with what one can call a 'founding movement' or a 'founding historical experience'. This framework of a common political experience is shaping the collective consciousness of a new activist generation. This does not mean that the 'new' (the globalization movement) is replacing the 'old' (the traditional workers' movement). The link between the two remains a key issue. But it means that the unfolding of the movement for a different globalization is the foundation from which we can perceive and think about what is new, theorize, act, and organize our political work on a qualitatively higher level. We are becoming capable of renewing our thinking in a contemporary frame of reference, different from that of the 1970s, and of analyzing what is original in the current wave of radicalization (including the forms of activists' consciousness, the relationship between politics and ethics, the varying situations in Europe, Asia and Latin America, etc).

Movements in a new international context

The election of George Bush, and then the September 11 attacks, have shifted the battlefield, exacerbating repressive measures, military budgets and interventions all at once. Today, even more than yesterday, militarism and war are an essential component of neoliberal globalization: today's American drive to war simultaneously strengthens the economic upturn through arms purchases, the control of strategic oilfields and the will to reassert American dominance of world affairs.

This increased militarization and threat of war are part of the overall fight for imperial dominance at the international level.

The Republican administration is defending American business interests with perhaps more cynicism than previously. Protectionist measures for steel, rejection of the Kyoto accords and the rejection of any WTO agreement allowing the countries of the South to produce or buy generic medicines are the most recent examples. This will to dominate unilaterally further weakens international institutions, expected to submit to American wishes, multiplies the causes of tension with other dominant countries and promotes the expression of opposition among the champions of the system themselves, as Joseph Stiglitz's position statements show.

In this context, the danger of repression will increase, but will also offer some opportunities for activist movements: it will probably become easier to block a decision or institution when militant pressures combine with contradictions and differences among states. Such a situation facilitates unitary movements of opposition, and restricts possibilities for negotiations that might divide the movement. Thus the whole union movement and an

increasing number of NGOs will now join activist gatherings and Social Forums, regionally or globally.

Social Forums and social movement co-ordinating structures

The Social Forums, whether continental or worldwide, are the main rallying points for forces opposed to neo-liberal globalization. Their success lies in their openness and the privileged place given social movements at a time when political parties in many countries are passing through a crisis of legitimacy. The forums are open spaces, with no commitment by participants beyond agreement to the Charter of Principles, which notably include opposition to neo-liberal globalization.

This openness and absence of commitments have made possible the success of such broad militant gatherings, but they also show the limits of the gatherings, since no decision to act can be taken by the Forum as such. For this reason, many social and activist movements have, since the first World Social Forum in 2001, met to develop 'declarations of the social movements', which have allowed them, in 2001 and in 2002, to take positions on the major events of the past year and, especially, to establish a common approach to upcoming international summits, opposing war, mobilizing against meetings of the G-8, for the cancellation of the Third World debt, against meetings of the WTO, IMF, World Bank, etc. At the third World Social Forum, the social movements met to discuss the possibility of formalizing somewhat this network, to allow for more efficient action. There is a clear necessity to have both open structures, which the Social Forums allow, and working structures oriented toward action and international campaigns.

The combination of Social Forums and movement co-ordinating structures has been so successful because it corresponds to the current forms of activists' consciousness, as well as to a stage of struggles that combine some very defensive aspects (bringing together forms of resiance in a 'sheltered' space) with very offensive aspects (the assertion that there are alternatives and the aspiration for a different world). This combination makes it possible to combine the 'event' (the Forum itself, a moment of high visibility and a rare opportunity to meet 'among ourselves') with the cumulative 'process' of struggles and mobilizations.

Movements and political perspectives

This new phase of struggle that we see internationally allows us to bring forward political issues. But this is in a context completely different from that of the 1960s and '70s or that of the revolutionary movements at the time of the two world wars.

The movements are radicalizing at the same time that they are growing. In the first phase, many held that these movements were only attacking neo-liberalism. Today, their growth and rooting in social issues at the very moment that capitalism is entering a new crisis and revealing, in scandals like the Enron debacle, the reality of its functioning and its logic, give the movements a clearly anti-capitalist tone. Criticism of the multinationals has been strengthened and the question of private property has been posed through the defence against the market, of the 'common heritage' of humanity, water, public services, etc. or by debate on intellectual property, which sees two opposed systems of thought in conflict. This radicalization has already produced electoral and political effects: in many countries, parties linked to social movements and revolutionary forces have seen significant progress in recent years.

On a certain number of strategic issues (revolutionary subjects; or convergences of different terrains of struggle that can point to a revolutionary transformation of society), the development of movements for a different globalization is already enabling us to renew our thinking on the basis of a new historical experience. But this radicalization has not reignited discussions on some other strategic issues. As much as we can see the rebirth of 'anti-capitalist consciousness', the question of power and the means to take it are beyond the range of discussion in these movements. The reasons for this are clear: the weight of the last century's revolutionary defeats; the difficulties of imagining, in a globalized world, a break from capitalism which would go beyond a national framework; and, finally, the functional efficiency itself of movements, based on networks which favour a list of issues raised by members of the network over grand strategic parameters.

This weakness will not be resolved quickly. However, it may well pose a problem at a time when, in Latin America, the left is winning elections in several countries. This left, the PT in Brazil or Pachakutik in Ecuador, is much more linked to social movements than the European social democrats. This left will have to choose either market logic and neo-liberal globalization or the satisfaction of social needs. While we must discuss once again, patiently and with the difficulty of the questions always in mind, the strategic difficulties and the reasons that they have been hidden, we are more than ever convinced that the only possible way forward, in these countries as elsewhere, is meeting the demands of peasants, wage workers and the impoverished.

In this new situation, political parties on the side of the movements have significant opportunities. They must join the debates needed to clarify collective perspectives, but must also act, respecting the autonomy of the movements, to help consolidate the radicalization in progress and support the political choices which allow us to win these demands.

For the parties which take up the fight against capitalism, active participation in the 'movement of movements' is as much a necessity as it is a unique opportunity to work toward a redefinition of a socialist project and to the recomposition of social and political forces able to carry forward a revolutionary project.

RESOLUTION "RESISTANCES TO CAPITALIST GLOBALIZATION: OPENING FOR A NEW INTERNATIONALISM"

INTRODUCTION

In the last few years in many countries we have been witnessing widening resistance to capitalist globalization. Major convergences have occurred among resistance movements, which are very varied, on the occasion of a series of international campaigns and initiatives. The mobilizations that took place during the Seattle summit, which was supposed to open the WTO 'Millennium Round', are one of the most recent and spectacular examples; and they have been followed by other mobilizations in 2000.

These struggles generally retain a defensive character - resisting the destructive effects of globalization - and continue to have to develop without a credible, global political alternative opposed to the dominant system. But they also have dynamic, offensive aspects, rejecting the neo-liberal ideological and social order and affirming new forms of solidarity. True, the working class and popular movements have suffered a series of serious retreats and defeats, whose effects are still tangible, and the bourgeoisie is continuing its attacks. Nonetheless there is a clear change relative to the previous period.

The following text is not meant to paint a complete panorama of democratic and popular resistance, campaigns with an internationalist scope and contemporary solidarity movements. It aims essentially at analyzing the way in which the process of capitalist globalization conditions and affects the emergence of a new militant internationalism, the obstacles that it forms and the opportunities that it offers us in this perspective. It seeks to clarify what new elements may exist in the current situation or in the way old issues are framed today, and in so doing to equip us better to contribute actively to the internationalist renewal. A certain number of political implications (concerning our tasks or elements of our programme) are thus drawn out in the course of the analysis and put forward in various sections of the text. The last part of the resolution only goes back over these political or programmatic issues in a very summary way, without attempting to recapitulate systematically everything that was written along the way.

THE BATTLE FOR SOLIDARITY: A DECISIVE ISSUE

1 Periods

Outside limited activist circles, the very notion of internationalism lost much of its appeal during the 1980s, for a whole assortment of reasons: manipulation of internationalist struggles by the bureaucratic interests of powerful states (from Moscow, Beijing, etc.); the incapacity of the workers' movement in the imperialist countries to respond effectively to the need for solidarity with liberation struggles in the Third World, which in their isolation got bogged down and became the first victims of the seriously worsened relationship of forces; the successive retreats and defeats experienced by the Northern working class as well; the crisis of credibility of socialism; the pronounced decline of trade union organization; etc.

This devaluation of the notion of internationalism reached its nadir after the disintegration of the Soviet bloc, when neo-liberalism's ideological offensive reached its peak force. In the last several years an internationalist renewal has been clearly perceptible, which if it deepens can enable the solidarity movement to regain its political dynamism and reconstitute a radical alternative. This renewal is still in the shadow of earlier retreats and defeats. It is also profoundly conditioned by the nature of the process of capitalist globalization and by the social effects of neo-liberal policies.

These two givens - the legacy of the previous period and the characteristics of the present period - must among other things be fully taken into account in order to understand the difficulties that setting an internationalist project in motion runs up against. But analyzing capitalist globalization and the resistance that it is calling forth also allows us to see the considerable possibilities open to an internationalist project today.

2 Legacy

The crisis of an internationalist perspective, which began in the late 1970s, got steadily worse on the whole through the early 1990s. In this context, the weight of the reformist, social-democratic and Stalinist workers' movements, but also of radical anti-capitalist currents, was considerably reduced. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) often occupied the front and centre of the stage, while many of them were losing their original radicalism, becoming institutionalized and becoming more and more dependent on government and para-governmental funding.

Feelings of solidarity with Third World peoples remained a living factor, but became relatively apolitical, leaving the way open to a regressive ideology that could be manipulated by the imperialist powers under cover of urgent humanitarian aid. With few exceptions, international solidarity was no longer clearly, consciously understood as part of a global alternative perspective, within an overall struggle for social transformation.

True, progressive movements and international solidarity initiatives never stopped happening, and this must be emphasized. Some mobilizations were even remarkably broad, like the one against Third World debt in 1989 during the bicentennial of the French revolution. But taken as a whole these movements

became more compartmentalized and often lost political coherence (losing in particular the dimensions of anti-imperialist, anti-capitalist and revolutionary consciousness).

This fragmentation is what we must overcome today, whatever the cost.

The heritage of the previous period is nonetheless not entirely one-sided. The Stalinist mortgage has been pretty much lifted off our backs, and the necessity of democracy has become much clearer today to the workers', popular and revolutionary movement than it used to be. This should make it easier to refound a socialist project and a genuine internationalism if only the relationship of social forces improves. At least to start with, the progressive, militant wing of the NGOs accumulated a rich, original body of experience and contributed to renewing our thinking on important issues like development. Anti-racist and anti-fascist struggles and struggles for a right to asylum and in defence of immigrants marked a whole generation in many countries. Feminist movements were able to actively weave connections on a world scale, giving their struggle for liberation the appropriate, truly international dimension; the same is true today of the lesbian/gay movement. Finally a new perception of the ecological crisis and of the interdependence, in this area as well, of different parts of the globe opened up a wide field for activism and fuelled a civic "planetary" consciousness.

From now on all these contributions must constitute essential elements of a new internationalism.

3 Globalization

From the point of view of international solidarity, the current period is characterized first of all by the central place occupied by resistance to neo-liberal policies and by the diversity and objective convergence of different forms of resistance. This central place, this diversity and this convergence can largely be explained by the nature and scope of the consequences of capitalist globalization, whose consequences are being felt painfully in every sphere of social life.

Neo-liberal globalization, a new stage in the reconstruction of the world market and the internationalization of capital, is manifested first of all in the economic sphere: the growing autonomy of the financial sector, the drastic but uneven liberalization (at the South's expense) of capital movements and trade, the multiplicity of mega-mergers, the expansion of the realm of competition, deregulation, privatization, etc. But globalization is not only at work on the levels of trade, industry and finance.

The capitalist globalization now under way is imposing deep social transformations: first of all on the subaltern classes, who are being subjected to a violent process of increasing insecurity and fragmentation; but also within the dominant classes themselves, with the weakening and marginalization of various traditional components of the bourgeoisie and the elites. Globalization is renovating the modes of Northern domination of the South and provoking a general reorganization of space on this planet, with the (uneven) consolidation of regions that are in the periphery of the three poles of the imperialist Triad and the possibility of abandoning much vaster regions to disintegration. It is modifying the dominant mechanisms of political decision-making and calling forth a new overall balance of the centres of power, whether they are economic, political or military, national, regional or international. It is thus assigning new roles to the world institutions founded in the post-war period. At bottom, to conclude, capitalist globalization requires the emergence and stabilization of a new mode of bourgeois domination, on the international level as well as in a considerable number of countries. In fact, in the name of free trade, the neo-liberal order wants to open up to the dictatorship of the markets and multinationals all sectors of social life that still partially escaped their grasp. Again in the name of the right to competition, it is reducing states' field of action and manoeuvring room in a drastic way, by imposing strict constraints on states while granting an unprecedented freedom of action and decision-making to the big multinationals and financial and industrial oligopolies.

States continue to play a major role-most particularly in the world arena and in matters concerning the most powerful imperialist states. But neo-liberalism considerably limits (including by means of laws) the bourgeoisie's recourse to its usual systems of domination and socio-political regulation based on major redistributive mechanisms, now considered violations of the right to competition. These modes of domination (social compromises in Europe, clientelist states in Africa, populism in Latin America, economic statism in Asia, etc.) had nonetheless proved their usefulness by allowing existing regimes to consolidate their social bases and throttle any sudden rise of popular struggles.

Neo-liberal globalization thus has radical effects in every part of the world and in every field: economic, social, ideological, institutional, political and cultural. This shows the power and omnipotence of the ongoing process of capitalist reorganization, but also reveals its first Achilles heel: its very breadth creates an objective link - a common fate - that is closer than ever before among forms of resistance carried out throughout the world, among struggles under way on the whole range of battlefields.

4 Solidarity

By placing the formal decision-making centres further and further away from elected institutions (including in Western countries) and substantially limiting the use of redistributive policies, the neo-liberal order shows itself a particularly crude form of class dictatorship. This is its second Achilles heel, since in times of crisis it cannot claim either a democratic legitimacy founded on an electoral mandate nor a social legitimacy earned by reducing inequality.

Even more than other modes of bourgeois domination, the neo-liberal order's stability depends on the passivity or division (and thus powerlessness) of the exploited and oppressed. This explains the violence of the ideological offensive declaring that there is no alternative and no

hope of change. It also explains the brutality of the social offensive, whose goal is not only to ensure shareholders' profits through surplus exploitation of labour, but also to block the formation of new forms of solidarity and dissolve old forms of solidarity (embodied in particular by social security and social protection systems in the advanced capitalist countries) in the name of modernity. Capitalist globalization is thus ripping apart the social fabric and making the lives of the lower classes more precarious by generalizing social insecurity and destroying collective rights won in past struggles, replacing them with frayed "safety nets" and targeted, sectoral, individualized forms of charity. Divide and rule: capital's discourse sets the unemployed against wage earners, private-sector against public-sector, working women against working men, jobs for youth or immigrants against jobs for adults or the native-born. It reduces the world to competition with everyone against everyone else.

Capital's offensive is formidable, but neo-liberal globalization is also producing antibodies and effectively creating the conditions for new forms of solidarity. The market order attempts to impose its sway in every sector of society, and thus provides a basis for transversal, multi-sectoral convergence among social and democratic struggles. The same institutions are imposing the same neo-liberal policies around the world, which provides the basis for international convergence of resistance movements.

Fragmentation or unity: which will prevail? Success or failure in achieving solidarity will largely determine whether tomorrow's battles are won or lost.

THE NEW SITUATION

5 Dynamics

During the previous period, the sectoral dispersal of international solidarity and its relative loss of political coherence were fostered by the structural weakening of the trade-union movement and the defeats suffered by the working class. But today, faced with the violence of neo-liberal attacks, social issues are regaining a more central place in the growth of resistance than they had before, including in the imperialist countries. This in no way decreases the specific importance of democratic, cultural, feminist or ecological struggles; but it can contribute effectively to ensuring their rootedness among ordinary people and in drawing out dynamics that are common to all these fields of mobilization.

The current reorganization of capital on a world scale and the impact of its first crises (1997-98) open up new fields of struggle (against financial speculation and the dictatorship of the markets, for ecological and food security); or increase their importance (against the WTO); or change the context in which they operate (national struggles); or renew their content (demands for democracy and civic rights). It is important to understand how.

6 A turning point

The change of period in the dynamic of struggles is particularly visible if one looks at resistance to the policies of the economic and financial institutions of globalization. These struggles have in fact recently (often in the second half of the 1990s) taken on a new dimension.

The fight to cancel the Third World debt to the IMF went through a long period of eclipse after the late 1980s. It bounced back spectacularly in 1999 during the Cologne mobilizations, the Jubilee 2000 campaign (with Jubilee South as its radical wing) and the repayment boycott decided on by several Brazilian states. In the wake of the 1997- 98 financial crises, social resistance to IMF structural adjustment plans extended from South Korea to Latin America.

For years the OECD had been very discretely negotiating the ultra-neo-liberal Multilateral Agreement on Investment; a few months in 1998 sufficed for the MAI's contents to cause a democratic scandal in North America and Western Europe. Also in 1998, the fight against financial speculation and dictatorship of the markets took on an unprecedented vigour and political dynamic with the remarkable growth of the grassroots movement ATTAC, particularly in France.

Criticism of unequal exchange and the demand for fair trade for the countries of the South were no longer limited to militant networks. While the foundation of the WTO as a result of the Uruguay Round did not lead to any significant demonstrations, the Seattle WTO conference five years later provoked very major mobilizations (in the US and a certain number of other countries) which evoked an international response.

These developments bear witness to the weakening of the hold that neo-liberal ideology had for a time and the depth of the feeling of revolt provoked by the growth of inequality, the dictatorship of the markets and the hypercompetitive social model that threatens the East and West, North and South. The rejection of the neo-liberal project was first expressed in a spectacular way in a few specific countries - as with the November-December 1995 public-sector strike in France or the January 1997 private-sector strike in South Korea - but each of these national struggles evoked a very significant international response.

Global initiatives followed one another rapidly in the last few years: in 1996 the Intergalactic Gathering against Neo-liberalism in Chiapas called together by the Mexican Zapatistas; in 1999 the international gatherings in Saint-Denis initiated by ATTAC in France; the Cologne meetings with Jubilee 2000; and then the Seattle demonstrations in the US, organized in particular by Public Citizen and the AFLCIO. The rebellion against neo-liberal policies and the dictatorship of the markets has thus very quickly made clear its commitment to solidarity and its internationalist potential. Of course we have a long way to go in order to shape and give content to this internationalist renewal. But a dynamic has already been set in motion; it is now possible to move forwards on this basis.

7 Domination

Capitalist globalization has not created a uniform international economic space; on the contrary, it is tending to accentuate its hierarchical character. The Third World, already bled white by the system of debt, is the first victim: multinationals based in the South have seen their growth abruptly ended; national markets have been onesidedly forced open; destruction of domestic agriculture has speeded up. The Third World is being subjected to further technological subordination and industrial and financial recolonization. The modalities of imperialist domination are incessantly renewing themselves.

The same is true of the reorganization of political space. Territorial control and administrative stability of zones of influence played a very important role in the past in the world relationship of forces. This was a legacy of the colonial era but also a direct consequence of the confrontation between revolution and counterrevolution or between the "blocs" of East and West. Following revolutionary defeats and the disintegration of the Soviet bloc, this role has become much less important, at least in the parts of the planet that are not directly integrated into the peripheral zones of the three poles of the dominant imperialist Triad (North America, Western Europe and Japan). Societies can thus literally disintegrate, as in Central Africa, without the internationally dominant classes feeling a threat to their interests - at least as long as more or less private armies guarantee their access to the natural wealth that they covet.

Solidarity with the peoples of the South thus remains as timely and urgent as ever, inasmuch as the crisis of Third World societies often reaches extremes unknown in the North. At the same time, capitalist globalization tends to tear apart the social fabric including in the imperialist centres, where marginalization and insecurity are also ravaging society. In the North you have the homeless, in the South the landless, while the unemployed and undocumented are everywhere.

It is possible today to combine the traditional (and still necessary) flow of solidarity from North to South with the formation of a common front of resistance, founded on the sense of a common fate in face of the universal deployment of neo-liberal policies.

8 Wage earners

The trade-union movement faced the 1990s and the assaults of globalization in a very weakened position, on every level: organizational, activist and political. Except to a certain extent for the International Trade Secretariats (ITSes), it has also proved incapable of coordinated action at the international level at a time when capitalism is putting workers in every country in direct competition with each other more than ever before. With a few rare exceptions, common organization by the employees of a single multinational - an elementary task, after all, and one that is urgently needed by now - has remained embryonic or even non-existent.

In these conditions, capital has been able to carry out a continuing offensive in the name of the free market. The share of wages in GNP has declined markedly to the benefit of shareholders. The right to a job and trade union rights have been attacked including in Western European countries, as have the protections guaranteed by collective bargaining agreements and ordinances. The trade unions' social base has been thrown into disarray by industrial and tertiary restructuring as well as by transformations under way in the organization of labour, which are facilitated by new technologies but aimed at a social objective: reinforcing class rule.

Trade unionism generally is thus going through a twofold crisis. On the one hand, it has largely lost its traditional function of representing wage earners to the bosses and management (all the more so since capital has broken with its earlier redistributive policies). On the other hand, its influence has decreased substantially and is often limited today to its bastions of bygone days - usually meaning the public sector or the biggest private companies (notably in the metal industry).

The problem goes so deep today that a simple reorientation of the existing union movement could not solve it. The reorganization under way in capitalism must be followed by a general reorganization of the workers' movement. It will have to simultaneously internationalize itself (finally or once more); renew a dialogue with the wage earners and ensure participatory democracy on a daily basis and in struggles; radically increase women's role and leadership and regain influence among minorities and immigrants; organize or help to organize temporary workers and the unemployed; win back influence in the working class and society as a whole; and truly take on the struggle for liberation as its own and thus regain the political capacity to counterpose global alternatives to neo-liberal orientations.

At least in certain countries (such as France, the US, South Korea and Norway), a renewal has been visible in the past decade or last few years in part of the trade-union movement, as well as in unemployed people's capacity for action and organization. But this promising development is still hesitant, uneven and sectoral. There also remains much work to do, in face of international action by trade-union bureaucracies, to help with the formation (particularly in the South and East) of radical, independent unions and breathe new life into coordinating structures (such as European works councils).

In order to move on to an overall transformation, a true reconstruction, overcome its divisions and restore to the working class the means to struggle effectively, the trade union movement must begin in particular by profoundly democratizing itself, and by linking itself more systematically in a convergent struggle with grassroots and social movements in all their diversity.

9 Peasantries

Agriculture is one of the sectors where the recent development of capitalism has been particularly drastic, with the development first of agribusiness and then of genetically modified food. This development, which began about 30 years ago, has taken on an

unprecedented scale in the context of capitalist globalization. One of GATT's main mandates to the WTO is to impose the neo-liberal market order on the whole of agriculture all over the planet. But this offensive by big capital is calling up profound resistance, in which peasantries whose very existence is threatened are converging with many other sectors of society.

The fight in defence of peasant agriculture is perceived today in very different political terms from yesterday, and this is one of the major characteristics of the current period. Its importance has obviously been recognized for a long time by Third World countries where the majority of the population is rural, but even in this case peasant resistance was often analyzed as purely defensive. Now the general import of this fight is more clearly visible: it turns out to be vital even for industrialized countries where the majority of the population is urban, and it contributes to the elaboration of a vision of a society different from that incarnated by capitalist agribusiness.

The disastrous consequences of the development of capitalist agribusiness are in fact felt far beyond the sphere of agricultural production alone. They concern consumption (food quality), the environment (water and soil quality) and ecological equilibria (preservation of ecosystems and biodiversity; impact on the biosphere), rural development (landscape; maintaining population levels and public services in the countryside), employment (impact of the rural exodus on joblessness), culture (homogenization of diet) and the structures of imperialist domination (Third World dependence on food imports).

As a result agricultural workers' or peasants' organizations (the Brazilian MST, the French Peasant Federation, etc.) have been able to get involved once more in a global struggle for social transformation and link up with wage earners' trade unions and other social movements. Militant cooperation has taken shape between Southern and Northern peasantries (with in particular the formation of Via Campesina). Collaboration between consumer protection movements and peasant defence of agriculture has been strengthened in a common fight for food security.

10 Women

The neo-liberal model of domination, which depends for its stability on the fragmentation of social movements more than on their integration into a collective project, increases all forms of inequality (class, gender, community, regional, etc.), exacerbates oppression and fuels the resurgence or reinforcement of deeply reactionary ideologies. Women are experiencing the full severity of each of these regressive mechanisms.

Women are thus the first victims of increasing job insecurity, to the point where their right to work is being challenged even in countries where it had been won through head on struggles. Given the responsibilities assigned to them in the family as in local communities, they are also hard hit by another side of the neo-liberal model: the systematic creation of a state of generalized social insecurity, a process which is far from being limited to job status alone. The rise of religious fundamentalism in certain countries (Afghanistan!) has consequences for women that are truly tragic; but even in other parts of the world they face reactionary ideological campaigns that are attacking their dignity and fundamental rights, such as the rights as citizens, right to choose and right to health care (including contraception and abortion, but in some Southern countries they also face forced sterilization imposed in the name of population control).

The struggle for women's liberation is therefore becoming more and more timely, and remains a point of intersection in the overall fight for equal rights and social transformation. Faced with capitalist globalization, its international dimension is becoming more prominent, as the organization of the Women's Global March in 2000 bears witness (with its two-dimensional struggle against the patriarchal and capitalist order), as does the progress made in organizing feminist movements internationally.

11 Emigration

Migratory flows are largely determined by the imperialist countries' economic needs and the disorders of the dominant system (such as wars and famines). Emigration has a history, and shows different sides in different periods. In this respect, the symbolism of the fate reserved for emigrants by the new neo-liberal order is particularly revealing: the undocumented immigrant, a woman without rights, condemned to surplus exploitation in a company or domestic labour even when she acquired a real education in her country of origin. What could be more emblematic of a system that aims at generalizing insecurity?

In other historical contexts emigrants were able despite their difficulties to find a place and a future in the countries they ended up in. Today any such hope is denied them. They live in long-term, extreme insecurity so as to be able to continue supporting their families, which are threatened by unemployment and poverty. In many of their countries of origin the money sent home by emigrants is a major economic resource, which has made it possible for crises to unfold without resulting in irremediable social disintegration. What we are seeing with capitalist globalization is emigration as human sacrifice.

Immigrants have launched astruggle against their clandestine situation, for the right to recognition and legal existence. They have been able to call up important solidarity movements and win significant though partial victories in several European countries. They have opened up a new front in the common fight for dignity, equality and solidarity.

12 Youth

Young people's future prospects have turned out to be more precarious today than their parents'. This is a drastic change from the post-war situation, and one of the most revealing characteristics of the regressive character of the current period. The truth of this statement is obvious when it comes to employment and social security; but even the right to education for everyone is tending to

be put in question, even in parts of the world where it had seemed definitely established. In terms of mobilizations, the situation varies considerably in different countries and milieus. In many cases young people are, at least to some extent, the first victims of the demobilizing ideologies of consumption, individual competition, and electronic and stock market "modernity". Cultural and social resistance to the dominant ideology is being expressed all the same, notably through music (like rap). Finally, in quite a few countries already, politically active sectors of youth have invented new forms of struggle, such as Reclaim the Street in Britain or Direct Action in the US.

Today, youth's fight for their rights and future, their very particular generational experience, take on a very specific importance. They require the development of specific, internationally coordinated forms of solidarity.

13 Ecology

The perception of what is at stake in ecological battles has changed drastically during the last 30 years. The social impact of environmental crises has been gradually integrated into ecologists' vision, thus giving rise to a true political ecology. The seriousness of the risks run is now better understood by popular and progressive movements, first of all in the areas of major infrastructural projects (such as giant dams) and above all in the areas of energy (nuclear energy; greenhouse effect) and transport (urban air pollution; energy costs) and later of agribusiness (production of genetically modified organisms; mad cow disease; massive use of antibiotics; water pollution; etc.). The vital importance of what is at stake is only confirmed by the threat of abrupt climatic change.

Analyzing ecological crises and their cumulative, global dynamic leads to a radical critique of productivism, particularly in its capitalist version, and of the blind mechanisms of the market. Taking environmental constraints into account, just like taking social needs into account, requires in fact that economic policies be carried out in a long-term and very long- term perspective on an international scale. This is in complete contradiction with free-market dogmas and the dogmas of capitalist globalization defended tooth and nail by the IMF and WTO. It is the foundation for a new key demand, a key element of a contemporary internationalist programme: ecological security.

14 Democracy

"The world is not for sale"; this slogan of the anti-WTO mobilizations during the Seattle conference sums up well the recent trend of broad sectors of public opinion that are no longer satisfied with challenging specific policies but are declaring their total opposition to a market order that claims to be universal. This consciousness is "anti-system" and "One World-internationalist" but not necessarily anti-capitalist, particularly for lack of a credible global, socialist alternative. It can be taken in by ideological manipulation by "humanitarian imperialism", and it often goes together with a resigned political realism, here again for lack of alternatives. But it is fostering a real potential for revolt and resistance.

The contemporary critique of the market order speaks to essential issues, in fact: rejection of the supremacy of money and of the individualist spirit of competition that degrades human relationships, causes loneliness and increases inequality (between genders, social layers, countries, etc.); an understanding of the deadly ecological dangers caused by the mad race after profits; and an affirmation of the primacy of politics and citizens' rights over traders' rights.

The rejection of the market order has more democratic implications than socialist ones today. But this democratic demand also affirms a civic, egalitarian dimension, which is all the more progressive because neo-liberal globalization tends to empty bourgeois democracy itself of all content. Elected assemblies are letting themselves be deprived of their powers to the benefit of institutions that are neither elected by nor accountable to voters. Laws must increasingly be directly adapted to commercial and financial regulations.

It is not so much national sovereignty that is in question here as democratic and popular sovereignty, whether it is expressed in the framework of a country or group of countries or internationally. Capitalist globalization puts in question the very possibility of making political choices in any field: health care or education, social protection or ecological security, models of development, etc.

In this context democratic civic demands, while basic, take on a new subversive dynamic.

15 Political independence

Since 1997 neo-liberal ideology has lost much of its arrogance. Its hold has considerably loosened. Its model of globalization has already been through several major crises (the so-called financial crises in Asia, then Russia, then Brazil, and the alarm over pension funds in the US), which the current stock-market euphoria cannot wipe out of people's memories. The IMF's political authority has been singularly reduced after the fall of the Suharto regime in Indonesia; the WTO's has also taken a turn for the worse after the Seattle fiasco.

Inter-imperialist contradictions have been intensifying lately and resistance has been encountered even among Third World elites (witness for example what happened during the Seattle conference). Divisions at the top, mobilizations below: it is a promising combination. But in order to take advantage of it social and progressive movements will have to succeed in preserving their political independence.

The European Union would like to line up all progressive and Third World solidarity movements under its banner in the name of resisting the US. But the "European power" it seeks to build is light-years removed from a social Europe of solidarity open to the South and East. The same is true of the politics of protectionist "national withdrawals" that some sectors of the bourgeoisie advocate in the North, particularly including far-right currents or extreme currents of the conservative right. The workers'

movement must counterpose an internationalist, non-nationalist alternative to capitalist globalization.

In the Third World, authoritarian and dictatorial regimes or parties that take measures to control capital movements, as in Malaysia, hope to neutralize progressive movements in the name of resisting IMF dictates. But for us anti-imperialist resistance must remain inextricably linked to democratic and social struggles.

16 Commodification

Neo-liberal globalization is spurring on the expansion of the realm of the market, to the point that new qualitative leaps are being made in this respect.

The current expansion of the market is aimed particularly at eradicating what remains of subsistence agriculture in the Third World, and thus threatens entire communities with impoverishment and disintegration. It is also based on a vision of cultural creativity as a mere commercial activity, which should be subject like any other to the rules of free trade - where cultural diversity is not simply crushed under the steamroller of unequal competition - and to ordinary capitalist property law. Cultural products, once sold, can be transformed according to the buyer's whim, in contempt of any rights of the creator. Human subjugation to the market order is expressed both in the international growth of the sex industry and in the appearance of new forms of semi-slavery at work.

The most vital natural resources, such as water, are progressively being privatized, de jure or de facto. In the name of developing biotechnologies and gene technologies, the market system even demands the right to patent living organisms. This would mean an unprecedented process of privatization, carried out to the benefit of multinationals, whose consequences threaten to be particularly dangerous for humanity at the level of civilization as well as at the social and environmental levels.

In this context a broad rejectionist front is emerging, bringing together very diverse forms of social resistance. The demand for a moratorium - on the production of genetically modified organisms (GMOs), on the opening of a new round of WTO negotiations, etc. - is being made more frequently and more urgently. It expresses a new twofold consciousness: of the seriousness of what is at stake and of the speed at which events are moving. A moratorium, which would put the brakes on the advances the market is making on every front, is aimed at giving time for democratic demands to be put forward more forcefully in face of the dictatorship of economic interests before irreparable damage is done. Although it is first and foremost defensive, this demand also allows a progressive counteroffensive to take shape.

17 Wars

In the wake of the disintegration of the Soviet bloc, Washington proclaimed the emergence of a new world order. This has not put an end to either wars or nuclear threats. In fact the neo-liberal disorder fuels international and regional conflicts.

In the epoch of market globalisation, relationships of imperialist domination have not disappeared; they rest even more than before on the effects of inequality within a global system. In the countries of the South, therefore, the anti-imperialist struggle is as relevant as ever. The constant renewal of inequality among countries and regions is at work in every part of the world. This can contribute to reviving tensions among states, and can also be the basis of many national and regional demands. The importance of the democratic principle of peoples' rights to determine their own fate, their rights to self-determination, is thus confirmed.

But in the present context, national and regional demands, however legitimate they may be, can lead to conflicts between communities that can even fuel a dynamic of "ethnic cleansing". For one thing, these demands do not fit as naturally as they used to into an anti-imperialist and socialist perspective, which would guarantee that they had a dimension of solidarity and universalism. For another, capitalist globalization reduces the role and effectiveness of the political spaces in which people organized and expressed themselves as citizens; without such spaces, understanding mutual rights and defining a future of solidarity become particularly difficult.

Similarly, while annexing territory has become less important to the great powers, at least in some parts of the world, controlling communications routes and systems and access to natural resources, markets and supplies of labour remain essential. States' military capacities are proving to be just as decisive as in the past, as the US's use of its supremacy in this domain bears witness. The European Union is thus seeking to unite its forces and make up for its lag on this terrain. As for the refusal of the great powers (such as the US and France) to begin a process of nuclear disarmament and stop the modernization of their arsenals, this has also relaunched the world arms race - with Pakistan and India in particular moving forwards with atomic tests.

Imperialist interventions are often hidden today behind humanitarian emergencies, as with the Kosova war. Nevertheless, in the wake of this war NATO during its 50th anniversary affirmed its strategic ambitions in Eastern Europe (and beyond Eastern Europe in Asia) and conferred on itself a right of action throughout the whole world, if necessary independently of the UN. As a result tensions among the great powers, between Washington, Moscow and Beijing, have been given a new, long lease on life. NATO appears today as the military arm of the neo-liberal world order, a military counterpart to the IMF, World Bank and WTO in the economic realm.

In recent years the weakening of the antiwar movement has constituted a major obstacle to the development of internationalist mobilizations. This weakness must be urgently overcome: by reinforcing the fight for nuclear disarmament, carried on jointly today by Pakistani and Indian movements as well as on a world scale by the network Abolition 2000; by reinvigorating the anti-imperialist struggle against NATO as well; and by once more situating the solution of

national and regional issues in a socialist perspective, a perspective of solidarity and social transformation, so as to put an end to the dynamics of communitarian conflicts and banish the spectre of ethnic cleansing for good.

REBUILDING A GLOBAL ALTERNATIVE

18 Balance sheet of this stage

Initiated in the 1970s in the US and Britain under Reagan and Thatcher, the neoliberal project was truly able to declare its planetary ambitions only with the disintegration of the Soviet bloc after the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989. "From here on out we are universal", the advocates of neo-liberalism then exclaimed. During the last decade of the 20th century the new world order was forcefully deployed at the expense of the working class and lower social layers. But nonetheless social resistance has slowed the implementation of neo-liberal policies; and since 1997-98 capitalist globalization has experienced its first large-scale crisis, expressing the specific contradictions of the emerging new mode of domination and accentuating the divergences among the big economic powers.

Capitalist globalization imposes a new framework on all social and democratic struggles. Since the mid-1990s a rise in consciousness, albeit uneven, has been perceptible. The initial opposition to neoliberal policies is ushering in a more general critique of the dictatorship of the market, a perception of the social stakes involved, and an aspiration towards a global alternative - even a "spontaneous anti-capitalism" - though very often the capitalist mode of production itself is still not being consciously called into question. Resistance struggles are acquiring a marked international dimension.

19 Legitimacy

The current period can be characterized as the beginning of an ideological and political watershed. The capitalist order still has the advantage of the ideological crisis that the workers' movement has been going through, particularly in the wake of the experience of Stalinism. Capitalism is even decking itself out with the ideology of modernity and progress, propped up by references to "new technologies", which a layer of young people in developed countries is susceptible to. But these progressive pretensions are undermined by the fact that capitalism demands at the same time a virtual right to social regression in the name of its conception of economic efficiency.

Similarly, with the active complicity of social democracy, particularly in Western Europe, the bourgeoisie has managed to sap the traditional bases of trade union action in many countries (job and wage security, unemployment benefits, and housing, health coverage and pensions that could be counted on). This means that from now on the defence of past rights and satisfaction of elementary demands take on a more directly anti-capitalist dimension.

The legitimacy of the new world order is turning out to be socially and geographically limited and problematic, inasmuch as it is incapable of providing a foundation for a coherent development model (particularly in the South, where social fragmentation reigns), of keeping its promises in the Eastern European countries (where the transition to capitalism is creating a wretched situation for the majority of the population that has been stripped of its social protections), of resolving the ecological contradictions of growth (manifest in the areas of energy, pollution, food security, etc.), of responding to workers' aspirations, including in the most developed countries (right to a job and to social security, etc.).

20 Convergences

At the moment the international convergence of popular and civic struggles is often taking place thanks to the coordination of existing networks of resistance to neo-liberal policies and financial or economic institutions (against Third World debt, against the dictatorship of the markets, against structural adjustment, against unequal exchange, etc.). These convergences occur on the occasion of successive major gatherings (like the one in Seattle); but they have not yet given rise to an ongoing mechanism for coordination. They do make possible - and this is necessary - a lasting interaction between currents which, like us, are fighting to dissolve the institutions of the neo-liberal order (IMF, World Bank, WTO, NATO, etc.) and to create alternatives of a different nature, and activist currents whose current goal is to radically reform these same institutions.

More generally, our task is both to contribute to the emergence of a short-term programmatic synthesis for the radical left and to work on redefining a socialist alternative. The essential objective is to develop the central theme of popular control by citizens and to deduce from this the necessity of challenging private property in the means of production. But we must respect the hierarchy of means and ends: our project is to build a society where everyone has access to the prerequisites for a decent life, and our political programme is to show that expropriation is the means to achieve this. This position is not however a precondition for committing ourselves to many forms of social struggle.

In the near future the task is to consolidate this movement of convergence among international resistance networks, since it provides a framework within which a capacity for centralized action can be reconstituted and a new internationalism of social and civic movements can take shape.

21 Programmatic axes

This process of convergence of different forms of resistance to the neo-liberal order can be consolidated around several crosscutting programmatic axes, including:

- The goal of social equality must be reaffirmed in face of the rise of inequality and poverty that contemporary capitalism particularly favours. Equality between men and

women is a major test in this area. Guaranteeing universal rights, beginning with a minimum wage, is the concrete foundation on which all social progress must rest. In a democratic society taxes must be a means of redistributing wealth and filling social funds. Traditional agriculture must be given means to stabilize itself and gradually move forwards (such as infrastructure, credits and guaranteed prices). The point in each case is putting the objective of equality ahead of the quest for profits.

– The world economy must be reorganized on rational foundations. The fanaticism of free trade must be abandoned, and replaced by a reaffirmation of countries' right to control their own insertion into the world market and to organize regional co-operation. The debt, which has been paid back several times over, must be cancelled; the imperialist countries must on the contrary pay their ecological debt by transferring the technologies necessary for a sustainable mode of development. This requires putting in place energy and agricultural policies that are co-ordinated and planned on a world scale.

– The extension of social rights is held in check by capitalism, which harnesses the potential of technological progress to its own ends and confines the major social and ecological choices to the narrow-minded bookkeeping of profitability. By contrast, new increases in productivity should be used in a socialized way. Shortening the workweek is the simplest way to return to a new full employment, extend the sphere of leisure time, and carry out a turn towards non-productivist development. Extending social protections and managing public services through mechanisms linked as closely as possible to their users are tools with which social needs can be satisfied by non-market means.

– The capitalist organization of production and an out of control financial sector transform technological progress into social or ecological catastrophes. In order to make other criteria and other orientations prevail, they must be imposed on the spontaneous functioning of the market. But this tends to raise the issue of property, which can now be addressed once more in a concrete way on the basis of lived experience. The financial sector privatizes profits while socializing its losses, at the cost of fundamental economic instability. Nationalization of banks is all the more on the agenda inasmuch as it is a measure taken in practice in emergencies (as in Mexico and Japan). Insisting on satisfying basic needs, demanding quality and safety, and fighting against corruption make it possible to highlight demands for nationalization or renationalization of transport (British railways, for example, and oil tankers), food, water and electricity.

The point is to counterpose to the model of capitalist growth an alternative conception of development, whose primary goals are meet the social needs of the greatest number of people while effectively taking account of ecological factors and constraints that have major implications for humanity's future.

22 Finding a new balance

The maturation of resistance to globalization is accompanied by movement towards an indispensable new social and organizational balance. The social movements (trade unions and other grassroots movements) are gradually becoming central again to mobilizations and the most dynamic international initiatives - after having lost that centrality for a long period. This rebalancing is proving to be an opportunity for progressive NGOs (whether their field of work is development, the environment or humanitarian action), since it is giving them a new chance to put down social roots, develop an overall political perspective and actively resist institutionalization (a process that had already destroyed too many NGOs' independence).

23 Politics

To give coherence and lasting dynamism to international struggles, it is necessary today to recreate a global alternative to the inegalitarian, hypercompetitive, capitalist social model. Developing this global alternative can only be done on the basis of the current experience of popular and democratic movements and on the basis of the social, environmental and political needs that they express.

This demands a considerable effort from progressive and revolutionary parties. They have to be able to make a contribution to strengthening movements' capacity for unity in struggle and collective thinking; manage to renew the links between past and present struggles in order to make the history of the 20th century intelligible; manage to breathe life into a new, radical, democratic internationalism; manage to begin a thorough updating of their analyses in order to restore credibility to anti-capitalist alternatives and contribute to a process of programmatic refoundation that the social movement must be fully involved in; in short, manage to rely on spontaneous anti-capitalism in order to refound a socialist project.

Progressive and revolutionary parties' ability to co-ordinate internationally remains very weak today. A renewal is perceptible in some parts of the world (as the Asia- Pacific Solidarity Conference in Sydney in 1998 and its aftermath show). But the exhaustion of the initial dynamic of the Sao Paulo Forum in Latin America and the long-term lack of a party-type initiative in Western Europe show that nothing has been lastingly achieved yet in this domain. It is nonetheless high time for the emergence of an international of parties that is broader than those internationals that exist today.

The member organizations of the Fourth International must contribute actively to this internationalist renewal. Their responsibility here is exceptionally great.

24 Internationalism

Putting people in competition with each other on the world market is the root of the process of capitalist globalization. It provides a basis (perhaps the first time that there has been such an objective basis) for international forms of workers' organization. This is in fact the only

way to struggle effectively against the effects of globalization. It is also the main guarantee against reactionary returns to nationalism, against fundamentalist temptations, and against the desperate rush into more and more barbarous wars.

Although still very unevenly in different social sectors or parts of the world, new frameworks for international solidarity are genuinely being born, on a terrain that unifies different forms of resistance to capitalist globalization, the neo-liberal market order and the rule of trans-nationals and big banks. The emergence of new forms of organization is being facilitated by regular collaboration among the various networks involved (in the fight against the IMF and World Bank, debt and structural adjustment, the WTO and the commodification of the world, etc.). In recent years a succession of gatherings has made possible the beginning of a cumulative dynamic, in which experiences are being exchanged, commonly pursued objectives are being clarified, and common programmes and action campaigns are being developed. By continuing this process we can test the new, embryonic forms of internationalism in all their inevitable diversity, and distinguish those which are best suited to bring about the broadest convergence of resistance groups, to express the radicalism of the social movements, and to hone alternatives to the dominant order.

VOTE: 93 - 2 - 0 - 1 CARRIED

Role and tasks of the Fourth International

10 August 2003

2 This opportunity exists because, since the start of this new cycle:

– The neo-liberal discourse has gone into crisis. Neo-liberal policies are revealing their socially regressive nature. Above all, the 'Third Way' of 'neo-liberal' social democracy (in its different organizational and regional variants) is revealing its vacuity. In terms of concrete politics, the choice will be more and more between neo-liberal policies in the service of capitalist globalization and an anti-capitalist orientation devoted to meeting the needs of the exploited and oppressed masses.

– The threat of war, which is spawning a new rise of racist and fascist currents, has wakened a new generation of young people ready to mobilize and organize.

– The historical crisis of the dominant currents (social democrats, Stalinists, populist nationalists) and the decline of the traditional workers' movement are opening up a broad space for a political and organizational alternative.

– The movement against capitalist globalization is a strong lever in the renewal of the workers' and social movements, and the development of a new emancipatory perspective. From the start of the new cycle, militant, radical forces (political, social, trade-union, civic and intellectual) outside the control of the traditional workers' movement bureaucracies have been playing an integral role and even taken the initiative.

– A fusion has become possible between a new, young generation, bearing a re-politicization and a new radicalism, and activists who are still active from the experienced generations of the 1968 and 1985-95 cycles.

– The socio-political and economic conjuncture, with the continued neo-liberal offensive facing strengthened resistance, is fostering class polarization and encouraging political discussion within society and social movements.

– A new internationalism has taken the stage in a spectacular way in mobilizations unprecedented since the 1960s, carried by a new spirit of internationalism and a spontaneous anti-capitalism.

– The women's movement has revitalised and relaunched activity on a national, regional and international level specifically against neo-liberal policies and violence against women.

3 The historical mutation of the workers and social movements has only reached an initial phase. We face a long period of rebuilding.

The turn in the world situation has broken a prevailing sense of political powerlessness and fatalism in activist circles. Failing a historical, emblematic event resulting in a spectacular upheaval in the international situation, the reorganization of the anti-capitalist/anti-imperialist social movement will take the form of a series of social and political experiences. Such experiences can reunify the exploited and oppressed layers, today fragmented and divided, around social choices and choices of demands; reconstitute the militant teams and cadre in the social movements; and develop a 'transitional' anti-capitalist programme with global implications on the basis of capitalism's current contradictions and the activity of the exploited and oppressed classes.

We find ourselves in a new, very particular situation. The working class is still in a position of weakness, on the defensive, but the radical left is recovering and regaining the political initiative on a grand scale. Its goal is to affirm a bold, anti-capitalist, social and political left that aims at influencing and orienting struggles and mobilizations.

The road that lies before us will be long and difficult between the present

moment, when the reorganization of the social movement is beginning, and the later stage when a turnaround in the class relationship of forces will relaunch offensive battles on an international scale, creating a favourable ideological and political climate for a socialist perspective.

SUPPORT STRUGGLES, BUILD THE MASS MOVEMENT

1 One of our primary tasks is and remains being on the front lines of the struggles, mobilizations, campaigns and organizations of the wage-earning class, youth, women and immigrants on the national and international levels. We take part in building the existing mass movements; we take on tasks and responsibilities within it; we identify with its goals; we are in the forefront of the fight for unity and joint work with other activists and currents. This long-term work aims to strengthen trade union, women's, youth, anti-war, ecological, anti-fascist and anti-racist movements. At the same time it is aimed at developing consciousness of the strategic stakes, including notably the formulation of transitional demands. We support all reforms which are likely to so improve the living conditions and the rights of the workers, all advances which stimulate the self-organisation and the confidence in collective struggles, all demands which make it possible to become conscious through experience of the limits of capitalism to make effective and stabilise gains. We do this work in the conviction that activists will emerge from a flourishing mass movement to build a new revolutionary socialist mass party rooted in the proletariat.

2 We continue to support and build the 'movement against neo-liberal globalization' around imperialist summits, so as to denounce neo-liberal international policies, delegitimize the 'new institutions' of global capitalism and build an anti-capitalist/ anti-imperialist, internationalist pole. The international meetings in Porto Alegre (World Social Forum), the decentralization towards different continents and its fusion with the 'real movement' in different societies have changed and will again change the conditions for moving towards a radical renewal of the workers and social movements.

3 We continue to support and strengthen campaigns now under way or to be (re-)launched and to build the movements behind these, in particular:

- for cancellation of the Third World debt;

- for levying a Tobin tax as a means of questioning capitalism;

- more generally, the battle to delegitimize the most visible para-state institutions: the WTO, IMF/ World Bank;

- against the new slavery, in particular child labour and super-exploitation of women;

- for women's right to control reproduction, education for young women, access to drinkable water and health care;

- against genetically modified organisms (see the 15th World Congress resolution on ecology).

4 We will contribute to the relaunch the feminist movement in our countries and on a world scale, on the basis, among other things, of the success of the World March of Women. It aims at guaranteeing the pluralist and anti-neo-liberal character of the movement, mobilizing against violence against women, and playing an essential role in the renewal of feminist struggles. It constitutes a powerful means to allow interaction of the women's movement and the movement against capitalist globalization.

Our participation will also aim to preserve the autonomy of the movement, with a perspective of self-emancipation, which implies rejecting any subordination of the movement to any party or state institution.

5 Using the struggle against the illegal trade in foreigners or 'against terrorism' as pretexts, governments, of both the imperialist and dominated countries, are preparing new attacks on the freedom of movement and residence. The casualised labour, flexibility, and re-regulation of social conquests that are first imposed on immigrant workers will be eventually imposed on everyone.

The regionalization of migration policies within the European Union and elsewhere is expressed in a repressive 'law-and-order'-oriented harmonization, leading to a series of restrictive measures in different countries: militarized surveillance of borders, the spread of digital fingerprint files, etc.

In Europe, there have been signs of resistance on the part of a layer of immigrant workers since 1996 in France, with the organization of the sans papiers (undocumented people). Broad solidarity has grown up through a movement in support of their struggles, in the Spanish state, Portugal, Italy, etc.

In various dominated countries repressive measures have been taken against immigrants (for example, controls on South Asian immigrants in the Gulf countries and brutal attacks against Bangladeshi immigrants in India, for religious reasons).

The task of the workers' movement is to increase the level of resistance to these policies, in the name of equal rights. For example the Berlusconi government's law on immigration in June 2002 was met by strikes by Italian and foreign workers in northern Italian workplaces.

In this context, the FI proposes to take up systematically the democratic dimension of struggles for equal rights for immigrants and for the freedom of movement and residence as an inalienable human right. The two struggles are linked: there can be no equality without open borders.

The FI proposes that its sections carry out a broad, unitary, international campaign for equal rights, open borders, and freedom of movement and residence for all individuals.

6 The world offensive of US imperialism 'against global terrorism'

announces a series of wars and military interventions for a long period. This will inevitably lead to a massive growth of military spending of both small and large countries, an increase of centres of tension and a sharpening of conflicts. Democratic freedoms will be increasingly under threat. This will also imply systematic attacks on the social conditions of the proletariat. An ongoing anti-war ('peace') movement must be (re)built which analyses, denounces and fights against all aspects of this new militarism (space conquest, weapons of mass destruction, massive state subsidies to military research, state guarantees for arms sales etc).

At the same time there must be an immediate reaction, at an international level and with the broadest possible unity, as soon a military intervention is launched. We will fight for the dissolution of NATO. In the current conditions our first priority in practice is to strongly oppose US imperialism. But we will denounce from the outset the remilitarisation of European imperialism, which is both an ally and a rival of US imperialism. The European Union is only more peaceful because it lags far behind the US in military strength. We are also opposed to the role of our governments which encourage or support 'local wars' for the sake of 'our' multi-national enterprises which exploit the raw materials of the 'periphery' (sub-Saharan Africa).

7 The FI will pay greater attention in the coming period to its activity in the world of labour. Concretely, this will take the form of more systematic intervention, co-ordination and publicity in social struggles. Globally, on the world level, the trade-union movement is lagging dramatically behind the centralization of Capital and its pre-state auxiliaries. Our goal is to build an active, internationalist and feminist trade-union movement.

a) This means first of all strengthening solidarity, unity and organization between workers in the imperialist countries and those in the periphery. The fragmentation of the world proletariat is increasing at the same time as its numbers are growing. This will include a particular focus on the most exploited workers: the marginalized, precariously employed, the new slavery, including that of immigrant workers within the imperialist world, young workers without rights in the 'New Economy', and the impoverished masses living in subhuman conditions. This implies a particular concern for working women and starting from this for the integration of women's demands into trade-union negotiations, particularly on the questions of equal pay, job security and advantages in the case of part-time or temporary work.

The hierarchical structure of world capitalism is imposing a parallel, structural inequality within the world proletariat, between the working class in the central core and the countries of the periphery, but also within each of the working classes. This leads to an increase and intensification of competition among working classes and their various fractions. The trade union movement increasingly encounters a familiar but growing problem in this respect (US-Canada + Latin America; Japan + Northeast Asia). Within the European Union the world of labour is directly facing a supranational proto-state, a powerful tool for fostering competition among national working classes, which will be exacerbated by the EU's imminent expansion into Eastern Europe.

b) We will also struggle against and within the multinational corporations that make up the central core of globalized capitalism: through 'corporate campaigns' against certain, specifically targeted multinationals; through international solidarity with the workers of a multinational where a struggle is ongoing; through active participation in campaigns carried out by the International Professional Secretariats linked to the ICFTU and through multinationals' works councils.

8 Within the European Union, brutal neo-liberal policies derive from a supranational, proto-state apparatus that directly affects every aspect of everyday life and therefore the lives of wage earners. Up against this, the official European trade-union movement has a disastrous record. Existing structures must be activated; direct initiatives must be taken. This includes: solidarity with specific struggles waged in one country but meaningful for all of Europe; co-ordination of sectoral strikes; development of campaigns and mobilizations around partial demands; and establishment of a comprehensive social programme. But above all, these trade-union problems immediately raise the necessity of a political strategy for the workers' and social movement, and an alternative to the existing society and state institutions (see the resolutions of the last World Congress).

We will continue our strategic task of contributing to an active trade-union movement in Europe, through activity in the major trade-union federations in the European Trade Union Confederation, in the radical unions and all movements and networks linked to the proletariat (for example the Euromarches movement). Practical links must also be made between union activists (shop stewards, etc.) to build genuine international solidarity within giant corporations and their subsidiaries.

DEFEAT NEOLIBERALISM, TAKE THE ANTICAPITALIST PATH

1 The fight to defeat 'neo-liberalism' is at the heart of our political struggle. The ongoing employer and imperialist offensive constitutes a genuine threat to the lives of millions of people, to the planet, to democracy and to the workers' and social movement itself. The growing strength, organization and politicization of resistance movements have not halted the attacks, which can take very brutal and harsh forms.

2 The more victories the resistance movements win, the more social democracy discredits itself, the more a broad 'anti-neo-liberal' and 'anti-globalization' milieu will develop and become more differentiated. Within the traditional workers' movement, the 'new' social movements and the

international anti-globalization movement, different political, strategic and organizational options will emerge.

3 This calls for a political battle for clarification and over orientation, on two different levels where the issues are different.

First, in opposition to anti-neo-liberal, but reformist, currents. These either support or join in the international institutions in the name of generous internationalism against narrow, hateful nationalism, or back their national bourgeois state in the name of its democratic superiority.

Second, within the radical current, up against an enormous diversity of analyses, opinions, methods of struggle, ideologies and hybrid forms of organization, we must take part in debates about the transition from spontaneous anti-capitalism/ anti-imperialism to an anti-capitalist/socialist programme; from political radicalism to a strategy aiming at a break by a majority of the population with capitalism and its state. Such a strategy is based on the self-activity and self-organization of the proletariat and oppressed layers; and from an activist involvement in the movement towards building a revolutionary socialist party and International which understand the basic strategic requirements that can lead to the working class taking power. This is the whole meaning at this stage of our programmatic, ideological and practical intervention. from the beginning.

FOR WORKING CLASS UNITY AND CLASS-STRUGGLE TRADE UNIONISM

1 In the past twenty years the trade-union movement has grown considerably weaker in terms of its membership, capacity for mobilization and militancy, and political and programmatic autonomy. This has been reflected in the worsening relationship of forces. It is also the outcome of labour's own loss of cohesion in the wake of this large-scale retreat. There is also a political responsibility: social democracy's active support for neo-liberal policies in general and its deepened subordination to national and international state institutions. The rebuilding of the trade-union movement is a crucial task.

2 This is not just a question of constituting and federating left trade unions and trade union currents. A true, mass 'reunionization' is on the agenda, involving three dimensions:

– sustained creativity in developing social demands responding to the restructuring of exploited labour in general, but also demands coming out of major changes in social life and consciousness, which particularly affect women and young people. Such changes are a powerful source of politicization.

– the new configuration of the proletariat in which, to different degrees on different continents, women, immigrants and above all young people will be on the front lines in class fights, though they have little say in the overwhelming majority of unions. The growing mass of women and men workers in the margins of the relatively stable core of the proletariat, are excluded, precariously employed or live in dire poverty. That demands particular attention to unionization in new industrial developments in dependant capitalist countries established within free-trade zones where there is neither social legislation nor the least protection.

– the new forms of action, mobilization and organization that the new social upsurge will create, as has been the case throughout the history of the workers" movement. Their internationalist dimension will be a factor in reconstituting the unions

3 This reunionization will necessarily be very uneven on different continents and in different countries. Its starting points will be very varied.

In major federations with long histories in countries with high unionization rates and a major trade-union tradition, remobilization will certainly go through these organizations. Reunionization will certainly find points of support inside them. Nevertheless, the dialectic between the working-class base, shop stewards in firms and different layers of the union bureaucracy is bound to take a more complex course.

In countries where mass trade unionism was born a century later (COSATU in South Africa, the CUT in Brazil, etc), it will remain more permeable to rank-and-file sentiment. In any event, left trade-union currents will certainly be one of the points of support to relaunch unionism. Furthermore, in a whole series of countries, the failings of the major confederations have opened up room for the emergence of new unions.

In general, these new unions make up a small minority of the working class as a whole. However, they have strong, even hegemonic positions in particular unions, companies,

The future will settle which path mass reunionization will take. This 'reunionization' is all the more complex inasmuch as the world of labour has undergone a tremendous change in its structures, routines, consciousness, etc. This is true particularly of young workers who have just entered the labour market recently in precarious conditions, do not identify with the 'historical workers' movement' and are not ready to join it. This is also the case for women in the public sector, who are the first to suffer the effects of budget cuts in social programmes and of privatization of public services.

4 To the extent that revolutionary Marxists play a practical, visible role, they bear a great responsibility in their organizations for the achievement of the social movement's goals. Unity remains a compelling issue, all the more so because the upturn in social movements is still defensive and fragile, the traditional workers' movement (trade union and political) continues to grow weaker, and radical, alternative forces are still scattered and very much in a minority.

In the current stage, this unity takes two different forms, corresponding to different objectives: regions or cities.

– the fight for a classical united front, that is, unity of the greatest possible organized forces of the proletariat to take practical action to win definite goals. Though well aware of the negligence of organizations under social-democratic leadership in terms of defending elementary demands, we still do not give up on the possibility of involving them in mass action. But our political and tactical position has to take full account from now of the popular masses', and especially young people's, deep disaffection.

– unity of action and convergence within and among social movements, trade-union currents, long-term campaigns, intellectual milieus and so on who are struggling against neo-liberalism. This kind of unity often combines 'united front'- type activity with intense political activity of a proto-party type. This makes it fertile ground for social recomposition and political dynamics. Our approach is to join in organizing while launching a political discussion. In doing so we must keep in mind the specific characteristics of each milieu, its sensibilities, methods of work, 'common sense', etc.

THE NEW YOUTH RADICALISATION

A new militant generation has arisen in the fight against the globalization of neo-liberal capitalism. A new radicality has been born which will follow its own paths. This is a generation which is from the outset international, internationalist in the broadest sense of the term, more radical and more involved in organizing. It has its own symbols and its own methods of action (civil disobedience) and organisation, breaking with the dominant political culture in the movements.

Youth, mainly high school and university students, is the biggest component of this movement. They share the social conditions (notably job casualisation) of the young workers who are entering life at work. Winning this new generation to socialism, to the revolution, is a fundamental task.

For this we must address ourselves specifically to this young generation, with the goal of strengthening the process of radicalisation in an anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist sense. This autonomous intervention of young comrades, closely linked to the political project of the section, is indispensable for the renewal of our revolutionary forces, the only guarantee of our ability to respond to the evolution of the workers' and social movement and to the aspirations of the exploited and oppressed.

Young activists of the Fourth International participating in mass movements must ensure that these movements adopt an inclusive attitude toward different areas of struggle (anti-racism, feminism, ecology, trade union, lesbian/gay liberation…). The usefulness of the Fourth International is proved in particular through our capacity to link struggles in all these areas internationally.

The Youth Camp must continue to be a central element of our work. It is a tool to develop internationalist, feminist and ecologist connections and consciousness, preparing new generations of revolutionaries.

BUILDING BROAD ANTI-CAPITALIST PROLETARIAN PARTIES

1 Our goal is to form proletarian parties that:

– are anti-capitalist, internationalist, ecologist and feminist;

– are broad, pluralistic and representative;

– are deeply attached to the social question and steadfastly put forth the immediate demands and social aspirations of the world of labour;

– express workers' militancy, women's desire for emancipation, the youth revolt and international solidarity, and take up the fight against all forms of injustice;

– base their strategy on the extra-parliamentary struggle and the self-activity and self-organization of the proletariat and the oppressed; and

– take a clear stand for expropriation of capital and (democratic, self-managed) socialism.

In the case of Latin America, our objective is to build broad, pluralistic anti-capitalist parties and/or regroupments with a real presence in the proletariat and the social movements, that express a resistance to neo-liberalism in the framework of the struggle against capitalist globalisation. As a revolutionary Marxist current, we are in favour of building a "hard core" of the left. This perspective cannot be successful if it takes the place of strategic thinking, radical action, and bold initiatives, through a sectarian attitude of "self-affirmation" striving to maintain "our own identity".

2 The struggle for such parties will go through a series of stages, tactics and organizational forms, specific to each country. Such an anti-capitalist recomposition must pursue a key objective from the outset: creating an effective, visible polarization between it and all the forces loyal to social neo-liberalism (social democracy, post-Stalinism, ecologists, populists) in order to accelerate their crisis and give it a positive outcome.

This requires:

– the presence of significant political forces, in which revolutionary marxist currents collaborate with important or emblematic currents or representatives who are breaking with reformist parties without necessarily arriving at revolutionary marxist positions;

– a respectful but close relationship with the social movement, where the recomposed organisation puts forward the movement's demands and actions;

– a formation recognized as representing something real in society, breaking the monopoly of parties loyal to social-neo-liberalism, thanks to the presence of elected representatives in assemblies on the local, regional national and (possibly)

international (European) level elected by universal suffrage;

– a pluralist functioning that goes beyond simple internal democracy in a way that fosters both convergence and discussion, allowing for the functioning of a revolutionary Marxist current as an accepted part of a broader whole.

3 The experience of the last ten years shows that the non-sectarian, revolutionary left can play a key role in holding the line and keeping to a simultaneously radical and unitary orientation of this kind, combining extra-parliamentary action and electoral representation. In order to attain this goal, it has to follow a complex course made up of various stages and detours that enable it to accumulate forces, clarify the stakes step by step, re-activate militant milieus and patiently build links with the social movement.

Three major lessons of the past decade must be incorporated into our tactics from the beginning of this new political cycle:

– no broad left current in the established parties has organized itself and put itself forward as a vehicle for anti-capitalist recomposition:

– left-wing tendencies in social democracy are timid, not very reliable, and not very coherent;

– the large 'surviving' Communist parties are approaching their end, their stands against neo-liberalism have not led to an anti-capitalist political project and a democratic, pluralist mode of functioning (with the exception of Rifondazione), and no left-wing, non-Stalinist, nationally structured tendency has emerged;

– the major Green parties have not succeeded in playing the part of a real political and social alternative. Some of them (such as the German Greens) have definitively gone over to the side of the bourgeois state, and internal oppositions in these parties are not leading to the organization of a true, left-wing, social-ecologist opposition.

4 This does not mean that there is no interest or potential for anti-capitalist recomposition inthese parties and thesocial movement. The recomposition takes diverse forms. Our conclusion should not be to turn away from these parties and their activists. On the contrary, a broader recomposition in their directionthrough a systematic policy of common work and convergence is indispensable to creating a very broad pole of attraction to defeat social-neo-liberalism. But the crucial conclusion that flows from our experience is that, more than ever before, recomposition will depend on the growth of a strong, independent pole of attraction and an external relationship of forces that can attract and organize such sympathies.

Only the revolutionary left is currently in a position to take the initiative for anti-capitalist recomposition and keep it on course with a radical, pluralist, socially rooted project with a mass character. But this implies a deep, well-thought-out rejection of sectarianism in practice. It also means that rapprochements inside the revolutionary left can only be envisaged in the framework and through the common experience of this anti-capitalist recomposition.

5 Nevertheless, the issue of the regroupment of the revolutionary forces is put firmly on the agenda by these processes, since the revolutionary left cannot be a catalyst for broad regroupments unless it addresses its own divisions.

6 As the FI contributes to a vast reorganization of the workers, social and popular movements on a world scale, with the perspective of forming a new internationalist, pluralist, revolutionary, activist force with a mass impact, we must simultaneously strengthen our organization. This is not in order to compete with and defeat other international revolutionary currents, but in order to contribute as much as possible to building a new force while clarifying the essential theoretical lessons to be drawn from the experience of 20th century revolutions.

REFOUNDING THE TRANSITIONAL PROGRAMME

1 The new historical period of capitalism and revolutionary socialist struggle will call for a genuine programmatic refoundation, which will take the full measure of the structural, social and cultural upheavals both within capitalism and among the exploited classes and oppressed layers. This refounded programme will include a critical balance sheet of the first 150 years of the workers' movement and of the experience of the first victorious socialist revolutions and their degeneration. It will take account of the current state of consciousness among the popular masses and link up with their demands and modes of action and organization. We will contribute as much as possible to this programme, while keeping in mind that a transitional programme like this for the 21st century will not be the prerogative of one group or specific current. It will not be the result of a hurried, academic exercise. As was the case with the successive transitional programmes since Marx's day, a vast, free discussion, collective elaboration, 'globalized' common work, critical and self-critical debate, and openness to ongoing and future social experiences will all be necessary. This is a real challenge, inasmuch as political struggles among currents and organizations are not about to come to a halt, and every activist organization needs to respond immediately to the demands of its militant work.

2 In the programmatic and strategic discussion, taking in all the problems raised by the struggle for socialism, we will foster debate on:

i) The need to formulate a universal programme of social needs and human rights, starting from the world ecological crisis, the generalized social regression, the dire poverty of the majority of human beings, and the social inequalities within the world of labour.

ii) The necessity of an eco-socialist

programme, fully integrated into the anti-capitalist struggle, as the only radical alternative to the ecological catastrophes resulting from the destructive logic of the capitalist system (against the greenhouse effect and the 'market in pollution rights', for an end to nuclear power and a moratorium on GMOs).

iii) The existence of private ownership of wealth and the means of production and exchange, which forms the base of a dominant, owning class, as an obstacle to the achievement of this social programme. This class's expropriation for the benefit of humanity is thus an unavoidable necessity.

iv) In the face of a superficial, moralistic analysis based on a vision of 'the poor against the rich" and 'the excluded' we put at the heart of our analysis the exploitation of women and men as blue and white-collar workers, salaried managers, unemployed, marginalized and excluded, that is to say the wage-earning class which is obliged to sell its labour power to an employer.

v) The decisive role for anti-capitalist and socialist strategy of the globalized waged class, which we need to deploy a renewed, broad concrete analysis of in order to highlight its unity against capitalist exploitation and oppression. The analysis must include the multiplicity of the working class's concrete situations, its methods of struggle, its immediate demands and forms of organization.

vi) The decisive role of the right to self-organization of women and lesbians and gay men.

vii) The necessity of democracy, transparency and popular control as principles and practices, understood as active intervention by society - and particularly by its exploited and oppressed parts, as a critical element of the Stalinist experience, and as a radical questioning of bourgeois democracy; and

viii) A conception of the Party that takes account of historical experience and of the new social and cultural conditions in societies and among the exploited classes.

ix) The necessity of the struggle for power, who will engage in that struggle and what are its most fundamental features.

3 In Latin America in particular, this 'transitional programme' involves questions such as:

– the nature of economic recolonisation and the question of national sovereignty (concrete anti-imperialism);

– reformulating regional integration processes as alternatives to the FTAA (proposals for a real development);

– the non-payment of the debt;

– peasant movements' fight for land and radical agrarian reform, indigenous communities' struggle for their rights or for autonomy, and finally, the role of peasants' and indigenous people's movements in creating new anti-capitalist political forces in Mexico, Bolivia, in Ecuador and elsewhere;

– the struggle against privatisations;

– the question of political democracy, getting back rights that had been taken away, and of the nature, scope and limits of a participatory democracy outlook on the local or municipal level (the Latin- American left governs capitals and huge cities as well as small villages in Brazil, Uruguay, Mexico, El Salvador, Ecuador, Peru and Colombia);

– the relation between urban and rural struggles;

– the relation between social resistance and political organisation;

– the new forms taken on by the 'subjects' that are emerging from the fragmentation of the working class (piqueteros, neighbourhood assemblies, land occupations and housing co-operatives;

– self-defence experiences, neighbourhoods struggling for public services, youth spaces, women organising self-subsistence, different barter economics experiences);

– the experience of social and political alliance policies.

TOWARDS A NEW MASS REVOLUTIONARY INTERNATIONAL

1 The construction of the Internationals that have existed in history has been linked each time to new tasks linked to large-scale social and political developments. This new political cycle of reorganization poses from the beginning the problem of a new mass revolutionary anti-capitalist/anti-imperialist International. This 'new internationalism' has been appearing in force since Seattle. A series of events had prepared this since the turning point of 1989-91: the emergence of neo-Zapatismo, the Bastille Appeal that launched the long campaign for cancellation of Third World debt, the Euromarches, the 'chain' of counter-summits opposed to the institutions of capitalist globalization (IMF and World Bank), the long series of meetings in which 'civil society' (often meaning NGOs) confronted the official summits (Rio, Beijing, the Copenhagen Social Summit and so on. After the two meetings of the WSF in Porto Alegre and the perspective of a third meeting in Brazil, coming after the regional Social Forums, a process of organizational and programmatic consolidation is underway. At the same time a process of clarification and differentiation has appeared under the impact of major world political events.

2 Unlike the 'internationalist' period in the 1960s and 1970s, this is not primarily a solidarity movement or political support to a social or democratic revolutionary process. Its motive force comes from a resistance movement, necessarily international by its very nature, against a new stage of internationalization of capitalism, its policies and its institutions. At this stage it appears as a 'new', very legitimate social movement, borne by social and political forces outside the control of the traditional bureaucracies in the workers' and popular movements. It also sets itself apart from international revolutionary

organizations and generally refuses to include political parties. At the same time this movement is deeply political. It has imposed a spectacular polarization against the ruling classes; relaunched an anti-capitalist perspective and a hope of emancipation; and created a public space that is both centralized and decentralized, in which analytical thinking is combined with political confrontation and activist commitment, a terrain where political currents exist de facto.

We cannot imagine the qualitative step towards the creation of a new International without an important contribution from these new forces. These important but diverse forces cannot be formed into a new international political organisation at this stage but they can be strengthened politically through a process of experience and clarification and by the intervention in these debates of the revolutionary forces, in particular the FI.

3 Pluralistic left-wing, anti-capitalist/ anti-imperialist regroupments are still weak and informal. Due to the absence of a major social upsurge it is difficult for them to escape historical inertia and their totally ineffective 'political culture' in order to tackle the new stage of class struggle. (The left wing of social democracy is weak; the various currents that have emerged from CPs are in a programmatic impasse and still tend towards Stalinist practices; and most revolutionary organizations are congenitally sectarian.) What initial progress has been made is mainly at the level of particular regions or continents: the Sao Paulo Forum in Latin America, whose initial dynamic has died down; the continued importance of the Brazilian PT; the modest Conferences of the Anti-Capitalist Left in Europe; and some gatherings in Asia. Faced with the European Union, the perspective of an 'anti-capitalist' European party is on the agenda.

Only direct clashes between the ruling class and the proletariat, only the masses' struggle to defend their living and working conditions, will be capable of shaking up the relationship of forces, putting down social roots and producing the activists who can build, at the national level, a new political force - anti-capitalist, internationalist, feminist - in the perspective of building a new International.

The current movement against globalization has created hope, a reference point and a major focal point, but as it is now it will not constitute the initiating force of a new International. The political and strategic discussions reflecting existing political differentiations will become more and more present in this movement and make the new phase a lot more complex.

4 Third, there has been a major development within and among some of the currents that originated or identify with 'Trotskyism'. All these organizations, including the FI, have had to make a big effort to respond adequately to the new world situation, at the level of analysis, orientation and activity. The capacity to respond to this, in time and in good conditions, has had an impact on the continuity of all these currents. Today there is a very great diversity of groups originating or identifying with 'Trotskyism'. Some have maintained relatively coherent international organizations, while others have broken up into national or federated groups. This is even truer of ex-'Maoist' organizations. Unification of 'Trotskyists' or ex-Maoists, in the name of a programme or politics turned towards a past epoch of the revolutionary workers' movement and based on defending an organization's record, cannot be useful in any way to a regroupment or even a fusion. Rapprochement between organizations identifying with Marxism and the socialist revolution can make sense only in relation to the battles, the real movement and the tasks of today and the future.

We note that there are these three internationalist politico-organizational developments exist alongside each other: the 'real movement' against globalization and its socio-political currents; the convergence of anti-capitalist and pluralist political currents; currents of the revolutionary left. This situation can continue for a whole period. However, where agreements and rapprochements are possible, we will take unitary initiatives to advance towards serious regroupments.

THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL YESTERDAY, TODAY AND TOMORROW

1 The FI was born resisting the greatest defeats of the proletariat and workers' movement: fascism, Stalinism and world war. Our sections were tiny minorities in the international workers' movement and repressed by all the counter-revolutionary forces (social democrats, Stalinists and fascist or democratic bourgeois states). They did not succeed in transforming themselves into real (revolutionary) parties. Despite fighting in the front lines of many revolutionary and daily struggles, they were reduced to commenting on events and defending the gains of revolutionary Marxism from bureaucratic falsification. In the 1970s, revolutionary upsurges around the world made it possible to think that the time had come to advance towards a mass international. The FI was fighting at the time with other international Trotskyist groupings (Lambertists, Morenistas, the Militant current, the British SWP/"state capitalist" current) over which was the legitimate "Trotskyist" current (and the same fight took place inside the FI between the US SWP and the international majority). Even if the FI never succumbed to the kind of sectarian delirium that other groupings did, it nonetheless considered itself the legitimate political vanguard, the kernel around which the recomposition of a revolutionary international would take place.

2 The change of period that became evident in the 1980s, the FI's crisis and the fall of the Wall led to a swing

of the pendulum in the other direction, which even risked threatening the FI's existence. Our militant response to the enormous reactionary offensive of the 1980s and 1990s didn"t lead us into the kind of sectarian hardening that takes refuge in incantations of socialist propaganda, parasites on mass movements and self-centred self-proclamation. Organizations that fell into this did not avoid serious internal crises. The FI too has paid the organizational price for the general retreat of the international workers' movement, but it managed to get through the reactionary period while maintaining its organizational unity and political unity, by:

– developing a critical, up-to-date Marxism;

– a no-holds-barred discussion on the 'balance sheet of the century';

– internal practices encouraging continuity in discussion and a confrontation among different analyses in response to the major formative events of the new world situation;

– keeping itself rooted and on the front lines of the workers' and social movement (nationally and internationally);

– systematic unitary work in the movements; and

– a unitary and radical approach, in particular in the struggle for pluralist, anti-capitalist recomposition.

3 Today the situation of the FI, as an organisation, can be defined as:

– an international organisation of revolutionaries based on the method of the Transitional Programme and the strategy and tactics flowing from it;

– an unrivalled body of programmatic references, collective and individual political experiences with a capacity for elaboration and reflection particularly on issues such women's oppression, gay and lesbian oppression, issues which have been little developed by other revolutionary currents, with sections in several countries based on the needs of the working class of the region;

– an organisation which respects the autonomy of the mass movements and their democracy and which genuinely allows tendencies to function within it;

– and thus a living tool, but a very unstable one given the weakness of its parts and the difficulty of rebuilding a coordination and leadership structure corresponding to its activist reality. The fact that we have preserved this structure and that it is undoubtedly the only international grouping of its kind is a precious asset in the new political period as new activist generations emerge.

4 Our main task as the FI is to contribute to a vast reorganization of the workers', social and popular movement on a world scale, with the perspective of forming a new internationalist, pluralist, revolutionary, activist force with a mass impact. This perspective will inevitably mean going through a long process of political experiences and clarifications.

This does not imply in any way a weakening or dissolution of our organization. On the contrary, we want to strengthen it, not in order to defeat other international revolutionary currents, but in order to contribute as much as possible to this goal: building a new force while clarifying the fundamental theoretical lessons to draw from the experience of the revolutions of the 20th century.

5 Throughout this whole transitional period, we will contribute a response on 3 levels:

– First, in the movement against globalization as well as in the trade-union movement and other social movements, we are fighting for a 'united front' in struggles and mobilizations and to create and solidify movements, while at the same time we participate in programmatic and political debates. We favour the creation of internationalist, anti-capitalist mass movements around their respective objectives.

– Second, on the party level, depending on the concrete situation in each region or continent, we will push actively for joint work by anti-capitalist political forces, which could take various forms.

– Third, on the revolutionary left we will engage in a more systematic and more general dialogue through bilateral meetings and by taking part in internal and public meetings of other currents with whom we share an understanding of the current world situation and of our major orientations and tasks.

6 We observe two things. First, there is a significant gap between our underlying influence within movements and the political and organizational strengthening of our organizations. The diffuse or personal ideological influence we have is reflected very little or not at all in a strengthening of the party. The quality of our analyses, our activists' commitment and promotion of a socialist outlook are clearly not enough. Second, the process of repoliticization now under way does not lead people spontaneously to join parties (revolutionary or not). This obstacle is particularly major among young people.

The conclusion is that a revolutionary Marxist organization must be capable of demonstrating that it has a specific political function to fulfil in day-to-day activity, mass work and the movements. This requires in particular more regular, sustained propaganda for our ideas, more consistent agitation, a commitment to political and strategic debate, and a reinforced organizational system to back all this up. In short, this requires a political autonomy that distinguishes us and identifies us clearly in society, in the movements and by contrast to other ideological or political currents in the social movements.

7 This autonomy is not meant to inaugurate a sectarian round of denunciations, polemics or 'entryist' operations aimed at short-term gains. It starts out from the traditional understanding, specific to our revolutionary Marxist current, of the relationship between mass movement and Party: (i) respect for the movements' autonomy and internal democracy, which includes an understanding of their specific sensibilities and mechanisms of functioning, and (ii) a rejection of the

conception of an enlightened, arrogant vanguard that parasites on or subjugates the movement.

Between simply going along with the movement or becoming a self-proclaiming, ideologically sectarian parasite on it there is another path which differentiates us from sectarian radical currents that latch onto young people seeking strong revolutionary answers and a militant involvement. Our response cannot be the same as theirs.

8 But our main problem is not in general sectarianism, but a kind of political and organizational behaviour that undervalues or dilutes revolutionary Marxist organization. We need to rectify this on three, combined levels:

– an orientation, profile and political behaviour independent from the movements;

– a more visible and coherent intervention;

– this will require better internal coordination.

9 We need a strengthened international leadership structure that aims to fulfil the tasks described below.

The reform of the Statutes, based on our experience of recent years, provides a coherent basis, which will encourage both ongoing, open and critical debate in the central leadership body, the International Committee, and reinforce the role of the Executive Bureau, as an active centre for the co-ordination of work.

The IC (former IEC) must continue to play its role as the centre of gravity in an ongoing debate with counterposed positions. This debate is all the freer inasmuch as the statutes codify an autonomy of national sections that no longer imposes any obligation to carry out the positions adopted by the IC majority. It is even more open given the presence, at the IC, of outside organizations that take part in our discussions without any organizational commitment towards us.

The EB will have the key task (alongside leadership in terms of day-to-day administration, finances, the press, inside and outside contacts) of building stronger links with and among national organizations, and the cadre of organizations. This will take form in terms of elaboration, initiatives, coordination and public positions on issues. The development of the press of the International (magazines, electronic bulletins, website) is a priority.

For the EB, this means first of all taking advantage of the improved health of several national sections in order to strengthen the Bureau with comrades integrated in leaderships of national organizations, (especially European, due to the geographical proximity). Then, the EB will have to build or strengthen the role of working structures, some at the European level, others more clearly international (workplace, anti-globalization, women, youth, grassroots movements). Following the development of the regional/continental dimension of globalized capitalism, we must contemplate working structures that correspond to concrete conditions (Europe, Latin America, Asia). Given the development of the EU as a state-type structure, a specifically European task is to establish a true European leadership able to respond to the multiple necessities imposed by the EU framework, by increasing the weight and rhythm of existing bodies (the European PBs and Secretariat).

All these structures should play simultaneously a coordinating role, an initiating role, and the role of collective political elaboration on the many global issues of the day. They must also allow for the development and construction of national organizations and strengthening of links among section leaderships.

The Women's Commission will in particular ensure:

– feminist coverage and the publication of articles by women in our international press;

– feminist education at the international school;

– support to sections trying to introduce positive action policies, and
– work to integrate a feminist perspective in our anti-globalization and antiracism/ immigration work through close collaboration with the corresponding structures.

VOTE: 93 - 1 - 2 - 0 CARRIED

On Lesbian/Gay Liberation

10 August 2003

The key lessons that we have learned during our participation in these movements and that are expressed in this text are:

1 The oppression faced by lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered (LGBT) people is a reality in all countries of the world. The association of HIV with homosexuality has led to global stigmatization of sex between men and of sexual acts outside the monogamous heterosexual family. Sexuality in general is a political issue.

2 The link between the oppression of LGBT people and women's oppression is key to our understanding and the struggles for liberation are consequently closely linked.

3 We defend the necessity of autonomous movements of LGBT people, understanding that oppression cannot be overcome without self-organization.

4 We fight for an understanding of the link between the lesbian/gay struggle and the workers' movement, while avoiding subordinating the lesbian/gay

struggle to some other movement.

5 We fight for an internationalist approach to this question. LGBT people are oppressed everywhere, albeit in different ways. The movement needs to organize internationally and in solidarity with the most oppressed.

6 In order to carry out these tasks we have to put our own house - the revolutionary left - in order. This requires changing our organizations in many ways.

Lesbian/gay leftists' fight for understanding and support in the workers' movement has been a long, hard one. They have had to contend with opposition and prejudice from every current of the left, into the 1970s and beyond. Social-democratic parties and labour movements for example have not in general responded well to issues of sexual freedom. But attempts to build links with the workers' movement have also led to successes, almost from the time of the lesbian/gay movement's birth at the end of the nineteenth century.

In the first decades of the twentieth century the demands of the German Scientific- Humanitarian Committee (founded in 1897) and other European 'sex reform' organizations were often supported by social democratic and communist parties, rarely by bourgeois parties, and by the Bolshevik government of Soviet Russia alone of the then existing governments. Even under the Bolsheviks support for sexual freedom could not be taken for granted, as can be seen from the works of Kollontai. The triumph of Stalinism in the Soviet Union led to the overturning of many gains for women's and sexual emancipation, and spread antigay prejudice among almost all Stalinist and Mao-Stalinist currents from the 1930s to the 1980s. But the emergence of the lesbian/gay liberation movement in the late 1960s and early 1970s in Western Europe and North and Latin America coincided with a new rise of the radical and revolutionary left. Feminism and particularly socialist feminism were crucial to the rise of lesbian/gay liberation, in the context of a global challenge to society.

This text (i) defines the basis for revolutionary Marxists' support for lesbian/gay liberation; (ii) lays out the Fourth International's stands on some major issues; (iii) defines our tactics in building lesbian/gay movements; and (iv) suggests how lesbian/gay liberation can and should be reflected in our organizations' public profile and internal life.

PART I - FUNDAMENTALS OF OPPRESSION

1 Although degrees of persecution and toleration vary widely, nowhere in capitalist societies today is there complete equality or freedom for lesbians, gay males, bisexuals, or transgendered people [see the definition in point 18]. Heterosexism, the oppression that they are subjected to, is like sexism 'expressed in all spheres - from politics, employment, and education to the most intimate aspects of daily life', in the words of the resolution on women's liberation adopted by the Fourth International in 1979.

2 Heterosexism is rooted in the heterosexual, patriarchal family institution characteristic of capitalism. The family is the 'primary socioeconomic institution for perpetuating the class divisions of society from one generation to the next', in the words of the 1979 resolution on women's liberation. In the form it has developed under capitalism, it 'provides the most inexpensive and ideologically acceptable mechanism for reproducing human labour' - by using unpaid, largely female labour to care for the young and old as well as working-age adults - and 'reproduces within itself the hierarchical, authoritarian relationships necessary to the maintenance of class society as a whole'. This family form is particularly oppressive to women and children. Central to the relationships that the family reproduces more or less adequately in capitalist society from generation to generation are monogamous, heterosexual love, which is ultimately supposed to be the basis of marriage and the creation of new families, and parental love, which is supposed to bind adults to their biological children in a connection combining affection, responsibility and authority. The state and medical and psychiatric establishments are structured so as to promote stable, procreative heterosexuality, and to stigmatize, discourage or even suppress other forms of sexuality, often defined as abnormal, pathological or irresponsible.

As long as society is organized in a way which assumes that many basic needs will be met within the family, all those who are marginalized from it or choose not to live in it will have difficulty in meeting their needs. This family form under capitalism presupposes and reproduces a heterosexual norm, which pervades the state and society and is oppressive to anyone who deviates from it. As long as heterosexual love is the basis for forming a family, people whose emotional and sexual lives revolve largely around same-sex love are marginalized from family life. As long as the family is a central place where children are raised, lesbian/gay/bisexual/transgendered (LGBT) children will grow up alienated - even more than children and young people in general are alienated in the family; and children's access to adults, especially unmarried adults, and other children to whom they are not biologically related will often be limited. As long as only heterosexual desire and romance permeate capitalist consumer culture, LGBT people will feel invisible. As long as heterosexuality is defined as the norm by the state and medical and psychiatric establishments, LGBT people will be explicitly or implicitly discriminated against and marginalized. Repressive laws and widespread social discrimination intensify this oppression in most parts of the world, but repealing repressive laws and combating social discrimination will not by themselves eliminate it.

3 For millions of people around the world today, particularly but far from

exclusively in dependent countries, same-sex eroticism can only be lived out episodically, in the margins of their family lives, often concealed from parents they still live with or spouses of the other sex. Millions of women marry in order to survive, given the extremely limited social and economic options available to them; these pressures also operate to a lesser extent on men. For many thousands of men and women, failure to conform to the heterosexual norm goes together with blatant failure to conform to norms of masculinity and femininity, which makes playing heterosexual roles difficult or impossible. Thousands of transgendered people unable or unwilling to fit into socially recognized families, unable or unwilling to live as 'proper men' or 'proper women', are banished to the furthest reaches of the labour market and of society, often supporting themselves in the sex trade or other stigmatized occupations, faced with general contempt and even violent attacks. Many LGBT people around the world contend with repression as a daily reality: prison, rape, torture and murder.

4 Heterosexism takes on specific and sometimes particularly virulent forms in dependent countries. European conquerors from the sixteenth through the twentieth centuries often used rooting out 'sodomy' as an ideological justification for conquering and ruling other peoples. Many countries that are now formally or politically independent still have laws against homosexuality that were imposed by former colonial rulers.

Maintenance of oppressive laws, policies and customs is often defended on the basis of religion - in dependent as in imperialist countries - including Christianity, Islam, and Hinduism, and perpetuated through legally established religious or communal jurisdiction over family and personal life in countries where separation of religion and state has not been won. Often the religious right and fundamentalists argue that the 'moral' code they defend is a deep part of the traditional fabric of the society in which they organize.

Often in fact many of the most reactionary practices they follow, particularly those directed against women and against sexual 'deviance', do not have such roots but are thoroughly modern as well as thoroughly reactionary. A second crucial ideological myth is the idea that homosexuality in these societies is another negative legacy of imperialism. While arguing for a materialist understanding of the rise of mass lesbian and gay identities in the context they are held today as a product of industrialization and urbanization, we also promote an understanding of the history of same-sex relationships of different types within traditional cultures.

The absence or underdevelopment of welfare states and low wage levels in the dependent countries reinforce dependence on traditional families. Particularly in rural areas, the lack of non-traditional social or political organizations or cultural alternatives make nonconformity difficult. People in dependent countries are also particularly vulnerable to the most exploitative forms of the domestic sex trade and international sex tourism. The Fourth International sees LGBT organizing in such conditions as an important part of an overall project of national liberation, which necessarily involves challenging national and religious power structures as well as imperialism. Open LGBT participation in mass democratic upsurges in several Latin American, Southern African and Southeast Asian countries have shown how lesbian/gay liberation and national liberation can go together.

5 Only substantially higher wages and the development of welfare states in the course of the twentieth century have made it possible for working class people on a mass scale to live independently of the families they were born in without marrying and founding new ones; to sustain long-term, primary emotional and sexual partnerships with people of the same sex; and to join and identify with open, enduring lesbian and gay male communities. At the same time, heterosexual marriage has increasingly come to be based on sexual attraction and romantic love, although there are still strong material pressures to marry, and arranged marriages are still the norm in many countries.

Particularly in the imperialist countries and particularly among men, gay lives are lived to some extent in the commercial scene that is capitalism's way of responding to LGBT people's needs for places to meet and socialize. Where the commercial scene has expanded and room for LGBT people to live freely in the surrounding society has remained limited, the result is contradictory. It is a step forward that LGBT people have the possibility of being open about their sexuality in this context - but not acceptable that this is not the case in the broader society. The existence of the scene has in many cases given the impetus for the lesbian/gay movement to develop.

There is a further issue in that the scene itself is very limited in the way in permits people to relate, even though it has become more diverse as it has expanded. In general it remains male-dominated, and perpetuates images of sexual attractiveness that are ageist and racist - in short it projects sex as a commodity and does not provide an environment in which people can relate very easily as full human beings. Informal networks, clubs, community centres and activist groups that are the result of LGBT self-organization provide some alternatives to the alienation of the commercial scene, but often lack the visibility, glitz and resources that the commercial scene has.

Lesbian/gay communities, which include all women and men of all classes who identify as lesbian or gay, along with the identities and subcultures that have grown up within them, have been the basis on which lesbian/gay movements have arisen. Much of the lesbian/gay subculture has been attacked on the basis that it is very alienated, but when this criticism comes from the media or the right it ignores the fact that all sexuality is increasingly presented as a commodity under capitalism.

Lesbian/gay movements have mostly been directed against specific laws or policies repressing same-sex sexuality or LGBT people; towards laws that would ban various forms of social discrimination; and towards laws

granting same-sex relationships equal recognition and treatment under existing laws and policies.

6 Since the 1970s young people's relationship to their sexuality has changed in many countries, in contradictory ways. Youth sexuality has become less of an absolute taboo; young people's bodies and sexuality have become more visible in the media, and commercial publicity increasingly uses and abuses them to sell products. The setbacks caused by AIDS and the rise of a new moralism have not stopped this trend.

But young people's sexuality is still repressed, particularly young women's and young LGBTs' sexuality. Children and teenagers are still pressured at home and in school to conform to approved gender roles; prejudice, being ashamed of their bodies, and fear of transgression are essential parts of the lesson that is taught.

And as much or more than ever, young people lack the material conditions to live their sexuality freely. Young people's economic dependence on their families has increased with attacks on social programmes. Lesbian/ gay gathering places are often strictly commercial, thus excluding many young people who have little money. There are also still limits on young people's access to information about sexuality and to their access to contraceptives and information about them.

Lack of access to condoms and to information about sexuality is a particular issue in terms of the transmission of AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases. While images of homosexuality are more common in the media in many countries, the images are often distorted or stereotyped. While young people are often more open-minded and less homophobic than in earlier generations, coming out is still a painful process for many young people even in ostensibly tolerant cultures, as is shown in the very high suicide rates among young lesbians and gay men.

7 "Today", the resolution on women's liberation noted over twenty years ago, "faced with deepening economic problems, the ruling class is slashing social expenditures and trying to shift the burden back onto the individual family". The intervening decades have only made the situation worse. Together with stagnant or declining wages and growing unemployment, these cutbacks threaten basic prerequisites, in terms of housing, health care, child care and other forms of social support, for LGBT people to live decently apart from heterosexual families and to sustain their communities. The effects have been particularly devastating for newly emergent communities in dependent countries, as seen particularly since 1982 in Latin America and since 1997 in Southeast and East Asia, and tend to reinforce pro-family ideology. Where lesbian/gay movements exist, they should participate openly in fight-backs against capitalist austerity; in any case, such fight-backs should take up the specific demands of LGBT people for specific services or their inclusion in the existing ones.

The movement for a different globalization that has grown up from Seattle to Porto Alegre is joining together many fight-backs against capitalist austerity, making them broader, more participatory and more democratic, and providing a new opportunity to recompose the left and internationalize struggles.

It confronts all progressive social movements, including LGBT movements, with the need to go in new directions and redefine themselves socially and politically. The inclusive, participatory spaces opened up by the evolution of the World Social Forum into continental and national social forums give LGBT movements a chance to look for new allies, point out the importance of LGBT issues to movements like the workers' movement that have often neglected them, and integrate other radical social demands into LGBT movements' own programmes.

In a time when 'LGBT markets' are putting new normalizing and divisive pressures on LGBT communities, and when most LGBT political currents internationally have focussed increasingly on institutional and lobbying work, it is essential that LGBT movements be part of the wider social debate and contribute to mobilizations against neo-liberal globalization.

They must introduce LGBT perspectives into different struggles for political, social and economical change, rejecting pressures to postpone specific LGBT struggles in the name of any 'structural issue'. No structural change will be complete if the structures of sexual oppression, which affect all human beings, are left untouched.

PART II - OUR STANDPOINTS

8 Beginning with the radicalization of the late 1960s, activists have called for going beyond struggles for lesbian/ gay rights in order to demand full lesbian/gay liberation, which implies a withering away of the capitalist family as an institution and challenging the heterosexual norm imposed by the capitalist state. Although this call has become less prominent in the movements since the 1980s, the Fourth International sees complete equality and freedom for both women and LGBT people as requiring socializing the functions of the family, which can be fully achieved only with the overthrow of capitalism. In supporting struggles for lesbian/gay rights we seek to build bridges between current demands and the ultimate goal of lesbian/ gay liberation, which we see as linked to the ultimate goal of socialist revolution.

As we deepen our vision of the socialist society we are fighting for, we will strive to integrate the vision of lesbian/gay liberation with it. In opposing oppressive, limited conceptions of masculinity, femininity and sexuality, we work towards a society in which gender will no longer be a central category for the organization of social life, and in which the concepts of 'heterosexuality' and 'homosexuality', to the extent they exist, will not have any legal or economic consequences. We work towards a socialization of the different functions currently served by the family: diverse forms of collective, community responsibility for care of

children and the infirm; an economy which does not force people to migrate from their local communities; diverse forms of households and of cooperation within local communities; and diverse forms of friendship, solidarity and sexual relations.

9 In most cultures sexuality and sexual activity are still aspects of our being as humans which are treated as dangerous or as the 'property' of the society, not the individual. But revolutionary advances in reproductive technology in the 1950s and 1960s contributed greatly to the emergence of aspirations for sexual liberation and further separated sexuality from reproduction. A cultural radicalization emerged in the 1950s and 1960s among young people and students in the imperialist countries which began to challenge, among other things, the traditional classification of gender. These new challenges to the traditional culture included new approaches to sex.

The struggles for abortion rights and accessible birth control, like the struggle for lesbian/gay rights, directly challenged the traditional notion that equated acceptable sex with reproduction, marriage and the family. New perspectives on sex and sexuality promoted a new valorisation of sexual pleasure in general, but especially for women. When the women's movement advanced demands for women's sexual health and information, it did so with the fundamental idea that women are sexual beings, and have the right to the sexual pleasure and control of their sexual relationships men have historically enjoyed. One of the main messages promoted in this struggle for women's sexual autonomy was that there was no one right way to sexual enjoyment, but in fact there were a plurality of possibilities.

Lesbian/gay liberation is part of a broader, human sexual liberation we are fighting for. We seek to free human sexuality from what the 1979 resolution on women's liberation called 'the framework of economic compulsion, personal dependence, and sexual repression' in which it is now too often confined. Sexual activity that is freely consented and pleasurable to all those taking part in it is its own sufficient justification. We work towards a society in which our bodies, desires and emotions are no longer things to be bought and sold, in which the range of choices for all people - as women, men, sexual beings, young people, old people - is greatly expanded, and people can develop new ways to relate sexually, live, work and raise children together. It is impossible for us, who have been formed by the alienated society in which we live, to envisage how sexuality will develop in this context, and therefore it is important to avoid making predictions based on our own individual aspirations.

10 The first battles that gays and lesbians fought and are fighting, which have often provided the impetus for the formation of politically active lesbian/ gay movements, are actions against the criminalization of homosexuality. The 1969 Stonewall rebellion in New York, a reference point for the whole Western lesbian/ gay movement, consisted of physical resistance to police raids on bars where lesbians, gays, bisexuals and transgendered people went to meet each other. Today there are still many countries where homosexuality is forbidden by law. In the Middle East, Africa and Asia, countries that do not forbid homosexuality are more the exception than the rule. Several states in the US forbid heterosexual as well as same-sex anal and oral sex; other US states forbid only same-sex anal and oral sex. Many other countries, including many Latin American and European countries, do not explicitly ban homosexuality but use terms like 'public scandal' as a basis for imprisoning people, or have laws against 'promoting homosexuality' or 'soliciting homosexual contacts'. The vaguest concept in laws that are used to criminalize LGBTs is 'indecency': experience shows that judges see 'indecency' more often between people of the same sex than between people of different sexes. We support the demand for repeal of all such anti-gay laws and the discriminatory policing policies and practices that accompany them.

Even when the initial battle for legalization of homosexuality has been won, other discriminatory criminal laws often still need to be challenged. Many countries have enacted special laws to 'protect' minors from homosexuality, for example. Starting from the dogma that young people can be 'influenced' and 'seduced' by homosexuals, they established a higher legal age of consent for same-sex contacts than for heterosexual contacts. In the European Union today, Austria, Britain and Ireland still have higher legal ages of consent for same-sex contacts. We support the lesbian/gay movement's demand that the age of consent for same-sex sex be lowered to the age of consent for heterosexual sex wherever this legal discrimination exists.

11 Alongside the fight against criminalizing laws, many lesbian/gay movements in different countries are struggling for laws explicitly forbidding discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. South Africa occupies a striking place in an overview of countries: since the adoption of its new constitution, it is one of the few countries in the world (along with Ecuador and Fiji) to include protection from discrimination against sexual orientation in their constitutions. We support the battle for legal and constitutional bans on anti-gay discrimination.

The political importance of this struggle must not be underestimated. The battle to win legal protection against discrimination opens up major opportunities to challenge the second-class and marginal status of LGBT people. It makes the argument for equality in the most forceful way, because resistance to it has to be rooted in an attempt to justify discrimination. It also focuses campaigning on the political process.

While supporting and advocating such campaigns, socialists also understand that achieving legal protection will not itself remove discrimination and prejudice. These campaigns provide an opportunity to explain the social foundation of oppression and the need to change society, not just laws, to bring about such change. But there is a connection between changing law and challenging social attitudes. It is important to understand the impact of achieving legal protection and the consequent increase in LGBT people's confidence, with increasing openness

about sexual issues, for example at work. This will have a significant impact over time in changing public prejudices and changing the perception of other issues of discrimination against LGBTs. There also appears to be a clear connection between the existence of strong women's movements, rights won by women, and equal rights for LGBTs.

When legal change is secured, it is then necessary to campaign for effective implementation. This can be done by monitoring the effectiveness of the law, and focussing campaigns on areas of resistance which are identified.

12 One of the key areas where progress in achieving lesbian/gay rights has been made, and a vital arena for revolutionaries, has been the struggle to secure recognition that lesbian/gay equality is an issue for the labour movement, in particular the trade unions. The campaigns of the lesbian/gay movements have found their reflection in the trade unions. At different times and in various ways, lesbian/gay workers have organized to challenge their trade unions to recognize their specific demands, and have now secured a place on the agenda of the most progressive unions. Two related sets of demands have been most significant: winning union recognition for lesbian/gay rights at work; and securing union recognition of the right for lesbian/gay workers to have their own structures (self-organization) within the union. Success in the second has often been necessary before real progress can be made with the first. Alliances have often been made with other workers whose needs have been traditionally ignored by reformist leaderships: women, the disabled, and minority communities.

The struggle has particular importance for revolutionaries, in that it challenges the divide between 'economic and political issues', and can 'help the working class to think in broad social terms' (1979 resolution). The demand for the right to self-organization has often been resisted by both the right and the reformist left on the grounds that it divides the movement. We should be arguing that on the contrary, it is the exclusion and marginalization of lesbian/gay workers which causes the division, and that recognition of self organization is an essential step towards the integration of all sections of the members.

The particular demands for rights at work will vary according to the country, the legal status of homosexuality, and conditions in each particular industry. Some of the main demands are likely to be:

- protection against unfair dismissal, discriminatory recruitment, failure to promote etc;

- protection against harassment by management or fellow workers on grounds of sexuality;

- access to benefits provided for heterosexual workers, for example, partnership leave and concessions granted to workers' partners such as travel in the transport industries;

- equal access to benefits such as pension and insurance schemes;

- recognition that lesbians and gay men may also have childcare responsibilities.

It will also be necessary to link such demands with the demand that the union give its active support to the struggle for lesbian/gay equal rights in society more broadly. This means, for example, having the union mobilize in support of lesbian/gay rights campaigns, and support activities of the lesbian/gay community such as Pride Marches.

An essential part of the struggle is to move beyond the acceptance of a self-organized structure, to the integration of these demands into the concerns of the union as a whole. This will require long-term and consistent work to transform the dominant cultures of many unions, and usually will only succeed by securing firm allies for this process among other groups of workers.

We must also remain alert to the permanent possibility that the winning of such demands, which of themselves are not revolutionary, can be accomplished within a reformist framework. The most conscious union leaders have often managed to accept integration but in reality to co-opt or disarm, or manage to establish a bureaucratic stranglehold. The remedy for this is to press uncompromisingly for the union to take an active campaigning role on lesbian/gay rights issues, which will keep it engaged in mass activity, and to continue to encourage lesbian/gay workers to mobilize to advance their own demands, not allowing 'friendly' bureaucracies to take over, and using success in one as a stepping stone to the next.

13 In opposition to the growing chorus of voices calling for young people's protection from the dangers of sex and from sexual images and information, we believe that more information and autonomy, not less, are the best tools to 'protect' young people. They are indispensable to young people's sexual liberation, consciousness and free choice. They can also help young LGBTs to find the sexual identity and way of life that suits them best, and to resist pressure to conform to existing lesbian/gay lifestyles. Sexual education at school that fully includes same-sex options, with an emphasis on pleasure and diversity; reinforcement rather than destruction of welfare programmes; free access to contraception; and conditions for the economic emancipation of youth - these are all immediate demands that must be made on the state, in both imperialist and dependent countries. At the same time that we demand an equal age of consent for same-sex and different-sex sex, we oppose any repression of consenting sexual exploration among young people of approximately the same age.

14 Immigrants and black people need to be welcomed and included in lesbian/gay organizations in imperialist countries. This will require a conscious fight against racism in these organizations. In addition we support black and immigrant LGBTs' own, autonomous self-organization within minority communities characterized by particular, multiple forms of oppression and discrimination. We will permanently seek alliances with them without seeking to impose a model of emancipation on them. We will oppose the use of the issue of lesbian/gay

rights to stigmatize Muslim immigrants in the context of the 'war on terrorism', emphasizing the rise of self-organization among LGBTs of Muslim origin and the indigenous homoerotic traditions of the Islamic world.

The existence of links between LGBT immigrant groups and their members' countries of origin (through Internet, visits, etc.) has also made possible concrete, international solidarity actions, and can sometimes facilitate the creation of LGBT groups in dependent countries.

15 The mid-1970s saw the rise in much of the developed world, particularly in the US, of a right-wing backlash directed against the gains of the women's movement, as well as the lesbian/gay movement. Extremely conservative, well-financed and strongly militant religious organizations have developed political agendas against sexual issues affecting women, the gay and lesbian community, and youth. Many of these rightwing organizations and their sympathizers have also made LGBT people targets of physical intimidation and, in some cases, extreme violence, often instigated by a vicious, homophobic rhetoric of hate. The strength of this rightwing backlash, which has since extended its influence to much of the underdeveloped world as well, against the gains of the social movements of the 1960s must not be underestimated. More recently in some countries of imperialist Europe, parties of the populist or neo-liberal right have attacked immigrant communities on the grounds of their oppression of women and gays, which is supposedly contrary to 'Western values'.

Along with their strong condemnation of racism and xenophobia, anti-fascist movements must also vehemently denounce and militantly organize against the anti-gay violence that is present in society. We support LGBT self-defence against the violence of the organized right or unorganized bigots.

Similarly, lesbian/gay movements must seek allies in other sectors of society attacked by the far right, such as immigrants, youth, people of colour, Jews and the political left, in order to more effectively fight the common enemy, the religious right and fascism. At the same time lesbian/gay movements must expose the hypocrisy and contradictions of the neo-liberal and populist right. In challenging the political power and anti-gay campaigns of the Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Churches and Protestant evangelical groups, as well as Islamic, Hindu and Jewish fundamentalists, lesbian/gay movements should ally with others to fight for complete separation of religion and state.

Particularly in countries where LGBTs are harshly repressed, making links with general human rights organizations and raising LGBT issues inside them can be a useful way to begin lesbian/gay organizing. Given the level of repression LGBTs face in many countries, we support the right of asylum for LGBTs from countries of origin where LGBTs are persecuted, threatened or simply cannot live because of their sexual orientation.

16 Since AIDS was first identified among gay men in the USA in 1981, the association of HIV has led to global stigmatization of sex between men, and a repathologizing of homosexuality. Lesbian/gay activists have sometimes dropped other lesbian/gay political work in face of the urgency of the epidemic or succumbed to pressures towards institutionalization or professionalization. But also the necessary responses to HIV in many countries have allowed a new social and political space, which has been expressed in particular by a challenge to the power of the medical establishment, a questioning of the way the authorities fulfil their responsibilities with regard to public health and the demand that people with AIDS themselves exercise control over public health measures. This also makes possible increased resources for the development of gay organizations and more open public discussion of sexuality and sexual practices. In many countries a new generation of lesbian/gay activists, both in terms of their age and their process of radicalization, have taken leadership in AIDS advocacy, education and service organizations while gay communities have borne heavy loads of care-giving and grieving. The experience of gay activism has often been channelled into the leadership of the peer organizations of people with HIV, and lesbian and gay organizations have found themselves in activist alliances with drug injectors and people who make their living in the sex trade.

AIDS is now the fourth leading cause of death in the world; in Africa it is the leading cause of death. In the African and Asian countries where the AIDS epidemic is the most intense, unprotected heterosexual sex, not unprotected sex between men, is responsible for the greatest majority of infections. Yet in Southern and Western Africa, in Latin America and in Southern Asia, gay communities are experiencing very high levels of infection, illness and mortality.

The global fight against HIV requires the linkage of several dynamics of struggle:

– against stigma, discrimination and isolation

– against heterosexism and sexism

– against racism and imperialism

– for democratic rights and the right of oppressed groups to organize autonomously

– against censorship and religious control of education, welfare and health services

– for the defeat of the 'war on drugs'

– for free and effective health care

– against the super-profits of the international pharmaceutical companies.

In particular we stand in solidarity with those who are battling against drug companies who are barring access to drugs in the Third World at more affordable prices. The success of the campaign against the pharmaceutical companies in South Africa has many important implications. The battle brought together AIDS activists, trade unionists and anti-globalization activists in a broad and successful

alliance. Most of those involved , notably COSATU and the Treatment Action Campaign, have subsequently recognized that the battle now needs to be joined on two new fronts: (1) to demand that the South African government - and also the employers - provide drugs; and (2) to build opposition to the US government's actions in taking Brazil to the WTO over the question of generics.

All this has meant that the fight against HIV has become integrated in the minds of millions with the fight against globalization.

In addition to the intrinsic, human importance and urgency of the struggle against AIDS, doing AIDS work among men who have sex with men can be a useful way to begin work for lesbian/gay liberation in countries that do not yet have lesbian/gay organizations.

17 In countries around the world there are growing demands for the legal recognition of same-sex relationships. The Fourth International's starting point on this issue is equal rights - for women and men, for married and unmarried people, for LGBT people with heterosexuals. Currently people acquire a number of rights by marrying - and some of these rights devolve only or primarily to men. So we are for example in favour of the right of all people whatever their sexuality or partnership status to be able to adopt children or gain custody of children. All decisions about custody, access and adoption should be made in the real interests of the children involved rather than on the basis that a nuclear family, however violent or unpleasant, is always in their interests. Neither do we support the idea that children should be treated as the property of adults; children should be given a real voice in such decisions. We are also against tax laws that benefit people who are married or in long term sexual partnerships.

While fighting against those laws and regulations that privilege married people, we recognize that the demand for partnership rights and in some contexts for the right to marry is one that is mobilizing large numbers of LGBT people. This does not surprise us, both because discriminatory practices against unmarried people still exist and because we know that ideology has its own dynamic. In the alienated world of capitalist society marriage not only brings material benefits but promises emotional security (whether this is delivered or not in practice). We support the demand for fully equal same-sex marriage.

We also demand better legal rights for couples - same-sex or different-sex - who do not want to marry. Couples should be able to establish and secure recognition for mutual rights and responsibilities in a variety of ways, not just through the single model of marriage. Every option must be equally accessible for same-sex and different-sex couples.

For example, where existing law automatically recognizes a birth mother's husband as a parent or allows a birth mother's male partner to 'recognize' her child as his, a birth mother's same-sex partner must have those same rights. We also fight against differential waiting times for legal registration for same-sex partnerships and the denial of (or greater hurdles to obtain) residence permits to immigrant partners in same-sex couples.

It is also important to increase individuals' rights regardless of whether people are coupled or single. Women's individual rights in particular should not be dependent on their relationships with men. Real individual rights require social support. Neo-liberal austerity policies have cut social support to ribbons, privatizing what should be social responsibilities and imposing them once more on the family. Governments prefer to make wives and husbands, parents and children care for the sick, old, young, disabled or unemployed rather than shouldering their rightful burden. Lesbian/gay movements should try to avoid trapping even more people in these humiliating forms of dependency. Instead they should try to ally with women's groups and trade unions to change this situation.

Current debates on same-sex partnership and marriage are an opportunity for revolutionary LGBTs to work together with currents in lesbian/gay movements that seek to resurrect the movement's original call for genuine liberation. Together we can work to undermine the perceived 'naturalness' of heterosexuality, challenge gender roles, and question whether authority over children and rights of inheritance should be based so much on biological parenthood. We will work to open a door through which new possibilities can be glimpsed: new kinds of social and emotional relations beyond alienation and dependency, new patterns of ones, twos and mores that could flourish in diversity and freedom.

18 Transgender people - those who do not fit into the hegemonic two-gender system, including cross-dressers, drag kings and queens, transsexuals, people who do not identify with a gender, and many others whose identities are rooted in indigenous cultures - are often among the most oppressed people with same-sex sexualities. In fact many people, whatever their sexuality, are oppressed because they do not fully conform to gender norms; in particular, men who are seen as 'effeminate' sometimes experience forms of discrimination common to women. Transgender people also have a long history of fighting back against their oppression. 'Hijras' in Pakistan and 'waria' in Indonesia organized for their rights in the 1960s before European and North American lesbian/ gay liberation movements were founded. Puerto Rican 'drag queens' ('locas') were among the first to fight back against the police in the 1969 Stonewall Rebellion in New York. As movements for lesbian/gay rights have gained respectability and consolidated reformist perspectives, however, transgendered people have been excluded, ignored, marginalized and treated as an embarrassment. We support the efforts of transgendered people to resist their marginalization, organize themselves independently, and win full inclusion in lesbian/ gay movements.

Transgendered people have needs and demands of specific importance to them, which lesbian/gay movements should take up. They are often particularly likely to earn their living

in the sex trade, be discriminated against when they look for other kinds of work, and be harassed and attacked by police and thugs. We defend their rights to respect, safety, and equal rights to housing and employment. They also suffer from the refusal of the authorities to recognize their gender identity in a very wide range of circumstances. While we recognize the need to classify people at times according to sex so that women can organize against their own oppression, we question the impulse to register people's sex routinely on every form and for every irrelevant purpose. We reject the forced subjection of transgendered people as well as of men and women in general to socially and biologically stereotyped categories of masculinity and femininity (manifest for example in school/job dress codes, mutilation of hermaphroditic babies, hormone treatments for teenagers with so-called 'gender-inappropriate behaviour', and formal lessons in sex-stereotyped behaviour for transsexuals). We defend the right of every person to fully develop her/his individual personality.

Transgender people should have the right to such medical care as they deem appropriate, including so-called 'sex reassignment surgeries', hormone treatments and psychotherapy. They should have the right to health insurance coverage for such treatment, and to obtain appropriate changes in their documentation with or without surgery.

19 We conceive of lesbian/ gay movements as broadly inclusive movements bringing together all those who wish to live freely their same-sex sexualities and love. In different countries and cultures they may include people involved in a great variety of relationships and ways of life who may identify in any number of ways. We are opposed to any conception of lesbian/gay movements that limits or conditions participation in them according to some standard of exclusive homosexuality.

In many countries and cultures men in particular often have sexual contacts with other men while outwardly conforming to cultural expectations of masculinity, fulfilling the family roles expected of men, and not identifying publicly or even privately as gay or as bisexual. In AIDS organizing in some countries such men are identified simply as 'Men who have Sex with Men'. One issue in this situation that has led to much tension is when people who do not identify as LGBT but have same-sex relationships treat their same-sex partners with disrespect as a result of their internalization of heterosexism. An important first step towards sexual liberation in this situation is for such men - or women - to treat their sexual partners who do identify as lesbian, gay or transgendered with respect and solidarity. A further positive step is for such people to support or even join lesbian/gay movements, however they may define their sexual identities in the process.

In some countries and circumstances bisexuals or other sexual minorities may choose to organize themselves autonomously, either inside or outside lesbian/gay movements, either around issues of specific interest to them or around broader issues such as AIDS, violence or diversity. We support their right and respect their choice to do so, while continuing to work towards the broadest possible alliance of all the sexually oppressed.

Bisexuals can find themselves isolated inside heterosexual society as well as lesbian/gay communities. Their sexual orientation often permits them to go unnoticed or appear 'normal' to society in general, and for their same-sex sexuality not to be apparent or to be considered merely 'experimental'. It is a step forward when bisexuals try to break with this invisibility - to 'come out' as bisexual - and to have their sexual orientation recognized and accepted as a legitimate expression of the diversity that exists in lesbian/gay communities and in human sexuality. This view that coming out is a positive stance is the same that we take for lesbians and gay men. Tensions that exist in the movement between people with different sexual identities can best be overcome by the building of an inclusive movement and the fight against heterosexism.

20 We support campaigns against psychiatric definitions of homosexuality and transgenderism as pathologies and against barbaric attempts to medicalize and 'cure' LGBT people (through psychotherapy, aversion therapy and psychosurgery).

21 The ideological legacy of Stalinism, which recriminalized homosexuality in 1934 in the Soviet Union after the Bolshevik revolution had decriminalized it, is still reflected today in discrimination against LGBT people in China, Vietnam, Cuba and other transitional societies. While the worst persecution is in the past and tolerance has increased in recent years, full equality has still not been achieved. The Chinese regime has so far not permitted any open lesbian/ gay organizing.

The Fourth International supports organizing for lesbian/gay rights in China, Vietnam, Cuba and other transitional societies as we do everywhere. We hope to see lesbian/gay movements there ally with workers', women's and others' opposition to the bureaucratic regimes and grow into movements for socialist democracy. Alliances with feminists will be particularly important in challenging sexist and heterosexist ideologies and policies that rely on the family. This will be a utopia, however, unless democratic and feminist movements support lesbian/gay struggles and do internal work against anti-gay prejudice and unless gay movements do work against male chauvinism.

22 As socialists our struggle against sexism must include the struggle to change the role that sex and sexuality play in our sexist culture, to struggle for a freer, more conscious sexuality. This requires us to adopt a more critical and transforming attitude toward our existing definitions of sexuality. The basic premise for doing this should be that our definitions of sex and sexuality, our gender identifications, our sexual identifies as lesbian, gay, bisexual and heterosexual, are fundamentally social, historical-cultural and sometimes even political constructions, which are therefore changeable. Thus, people can and do misunderstand their own sexuality. False consciousness, alienation, internalization of relationships of

oppression, normalization of sexist cultural forms and repressive guilt feelings are real obstacles in seeking to understand and redefine our sexuality. This is what makes wider debate and criticism, not censorship, of the sexism in culture so vital in the struggle to understand and change that culture to benefit human sexuality. We support efforts to give LGBT people more means of cultural expression, including through the mass media.

A new sexuality, freed of sexism, can only emerge through a long process of open debate and exploration, above all within feminism. We have few guidelines or indicators of what the results will be. There is no enlightened vanguard or minority that can claim to know what the 'correct', 'feminist' sexuality is and we should reject any attempts either from the religious right-wing forces or the various tendencies within feminism, such as the difference feminists, to impose a 'correct' sexual line. In many parts of the world, these forces of religious fundamentalism and conservative feminism have sought to legislate sexual codes of conduct which include criminalization of homosexuality and censorship of sexually explicit materials. Revolutionary Marxists should propose instead a path towards sexual self-emancipation which is critical, but democratic, participatory and tolerant of the diversity of our sexual desires.

The first demand for opening the path to such a process of sexual self-emancipation is the defence of consensuality and self-autonomy. Thus, an intrinsic part of our struggle for sexual autonomy must also articulate a struggle against all legal restrictions on consensual sex and the struggle against all forms of sexual discrimination. It must also include the struggle to enhance material conditions that would make it possible for all members of society (women, as well as children and men) to resist the impositions of those who would violate their rights and their sexual autonomy through unwanted sexual and/or emotional relationships or encounters. Thus, the fundamental demands for full employment, affirmative action programs for women and minorities, guaranteed income, reliable and quality child care, housing, health services and reproductive rights including abortion are essential underpinnings for sexual self-autonomy. The need to combine the struggle for a freer sexuality with the struggle to defend the social safety net and full employment is the key to confronting the right-wing backlash against women and the gay and lesbian community.

PART III - OUR TACTICS IN BUILDING THE MOVEMENT

23 All LGBT people are oppressed as such, and can potentially be won to a movement for their rights and liberation. The logic of the lesbian/gay liberation struggle itself, particularly in times when feminism and other radical movements are on the rise, can lead activists in it to embrace radical or revolutionary politics. It can and should lead them to ally with the workers' movement - but for this to happen, LGBTs must organize themselves inside and outside the workers' movement to fight against heterosexist prejudices, which exist in the working class as elsewhere. Our sections as a whole must fight to win labour movement organizations to champion the demands of LGBT people and support self-organization for these groups - as well as others - within labour movement organizations.

At the same time LGBTs cannot and will not postpone their struggle until the workers' movement or any other movement takes up their issues. This means that LGBT people need their own autonomous movements, which we respect, support and build. To paraphrase the 1979 resolution on women's liberation, by autonomous we mean that the movement is organized and led by LGBT people; that it takes the fight for their rights and needs as its first priority, refusing to subordinate that fight to any other interests; and that it is not subordinate to the decisions or policy needs of any political tendency or any other social group.

24 As the 1979 resolution on women's liberation noted, 'Lesbians have organized as a component of the gay rights movement, generally finding it necessary to fight within the gay movement for their specific demands as gay women to be recognized. But lesbians are also oppressed as women. Many radicalized as women first and felt the discrimination they suffered because of their sexual orientation was only one element of the social and economic limitations women face in trying to determine the course of their lives.

Thus many lesbians were in the forefront of the feminist movement from the very beginning. They have been part of every political current within the women's liberation movement, from lesbian-separatists to revolutionary Marxists, and they have helped to make the entire movement more conscious of the specific ways in which gay women are oppressed.' This has not always been an easy battle as the women's movement has often responded in a problematic way to lesbian-baiting from the right and has failed to campaign systematically around lesbians' specific demands.

Lesbians have also organized in many countries independently of either gay men or the broader feminist movement. Independent lesbian organizing has been essential to making mobilizations possible on the basis of lesbian demands, and have been an important factor in bringing about change. As a result of the persistence of lesbians, today the lesbian/gay movement has become less male-dominated and feminists have a better understanding that lesbian oppression undercuts the gains of the women's movement.

25 Within lesbian/gay movements as in other movements, we advocate methods that actively mobilize as many LGBT people as possible, and supporters in the workers' and women's movements. Here as in every other field of work we are engaged we are consistently fighting against ideologies, leaders and organizations

which would take us down dead ends. We must respond again and again to arguments that we fundamentally disagree with, including:

– the argument that we should avoid being too 'blatant' or radical in order not to alienate the straight majority or 'sympathetic' liberals, social democrats or populists;

– a reluctance to join in broad campaigns around demands for limited reforms;

– the argument that 'lifestyle' issues - meaning issues of sexual liberation strictly speaking - are distractions from the crucial economic and political issues;

– in the imperialist countries, the argument that we are already 'almost equal' so that major mobilizations are no longer needed;

– a reluctance to look for alliances either with the workers' movement or with other self-organized groups;

– a vision of the existing social categories of gay and lesbian as something eternal, and on that basis of gays and lesbians as a permanent minority of the population. This fails to recognize that lesbian/gay liberation has a universal and common human implication;

– an insistence on organizing only as citizens, as sexual rebels or as abstract human beings - this fails to recognize the importance of LGBT communities for day-to- day survival and as bases for organizing; and

– a reluctance to confront the divisions within our own movements, for example on questionsof gender, race or class.

We push for the greatest possible unity and democracy within the movements, while acknowledging the right and need of women, black people, people with disabilities, bisexuals, transgendered people, oppressed nationalities and others to organize independently as well. In general we try in the movements to advance the participation and interests of working-class LGBT people.

While building lesbian/gay movements and respecting their autonomy, we also work with others in the movement to advance the demands of the workers' movement and internationalist perspectives. We raise revolutionary Marxist and feminist ideas, since we think they provide the best basis for taking the movements towards full lesbian/ gay liberation, and in this context we aim to play a role in their leadership.

PART IV - PUBLIC PROFILE AND INTERNAL LIFE

26 The sections of the Fourth International must support the struggle for LGBT liberation whether or not an autonomous social movement organized around these issues exists in the country in which they operate. In countries where such a movement exists, the section should encourage and support its militants to participate in it, as well as fight in progressive movements generally for support for the demands of the lesbian/gay movement. In some countries, the sections of the Fourth International have contributed decisively to the appearance of lesbian/gay movements. The international should draw on the lessons of these successes to help sections where there is no tradition of such work. In countries where no autonomous movement currently exists, the work of the section will consist predominantly in generalized propaganda and in taking up specific LGBT demands broadly within progressive movements.

27 In our revolutionary Marxist current, we have a conception of social and sexual liberation for LGBTs that goes beyond the limited demand of formal equality within capitalist society. We seek a profound revolution in gender relations and a society where, as heterosexual privilege begins to disappear, sexual identities are unlikely to be constructed in the same way as today.

The 'private' sphere - where women as well as LGBTs are more oppressed and where their oppression is more complex - is where we have to question our habits. That struggle is fundamentally an ideological one against patriarchal and heterosexist society, as well as their value systems and practices, which demands organized discussion in the sections, not only at the leadership level, but also in our base structures and cadre formation. Heterosexist prejudice must be fought in the sections by all their members.

In the words of the 1979 resolution on women's liberation, 'We have no illusions that sections can be islands of the future socialist society floating in a capitalist morass, or that individual comrades can fully escape the education and conditioning absorbed from the everyday effort to survive in class society… But it is a condition of membership in the Fourth International that the conduct of comrades and sections be in harmony with the principles on which we stand… We strive to create an organization in which language, jokes, personal violence and other acts expressing chauvinist bigotry are not tolerated'.

Prejudice, inside a revolutionary party, concerns all of its members. Often LGBT members - especially younger people - are not enough at ease to express their points of view or bring up their subjects as the other comrades are. The same happens between female and male comrades. It must be taken into account that self-esteem and self-confidence are factors at stake when mainstream education has taught people to be ashamed of who they are. Frequently a comrade might be a dedicated supporter of the organization's position on 'homosexuality' and yet, in his/her personal life or in the personal relations established in the party, might be extremely oppressive.

When this happens, it is not just a personal issue, but a concern for the party, and it must be openly and fully discussed. Some comrades - and even sections? - have very conservative positions on homosexuality. Beliefs which have become ingrained for many years can be very difficult to change. Many of the radical changes that LGBT movements propose are not generally accepted in society or even among revolutionaries, because they belong to that dimension we usually call 'private'.

But that is where changes begin: it is a necessary effort if we want to be recognized and take part in the LGBT movement, with all its subversive potential. And, as is said in the text on 'Sanction policies in a feminist party' approved by the 1989 congress of the Mexican PRT, 'this is not a matter of giving recipes or models for life. The search for new men and women is just that: a search. We know that our total liberation is not possible in the capitalist system, but precisely that is one of the contributions of our internationalist current, to recognize the necessity of struggling for change, starting today.' These changes cannot wait for socialism.

28 Conditions must be created for the existence of LGBT work in our organizations, which allows LGBT members to prepare an organized intervention in the LGBT movements - where they exist - and to have their own discussion structures, whenever they feel they need them. We should look critically at the conditions we have to offer, in our own organizations, to LGBT militants. Sections must be welcoming for LGBTs, as well as able to support the affirmation of this area of political struggle.

Gay males, lesbians, bisexuals and transgendered people are all oppressed by the heterosexism of patriarchal capitalist society. However, that oppression manifests itself and is experienced in different ways by each of these groups. While this means that within the autonomous movements themselves there will often be the need for separate groups for all or some of these groups, this is practically difficult to replicate on a permanently structured basis in most of our sections as long as we have not become at least small mass parties. We should therefore adopt structures and norms which allow for the ad hoc caucusing of these groups if and when the need arises, but give priority to the construction of LGBT caucuses as such.

29 The European youth organizations are the sector of the FI in which lesbian/ gay issues have most regularly been a political concern although of course this remains uneven. One of the important elements encouraging this has been the visibility of the issue in the youth camps since the beginning in the early 1980s and the introduction of a lesbian/gay space from 1989 on. Not only has this put the question on the agenda for all the participants but it has provided an opportunity for young comrades from different organizations - where they can feel isolated given the small size of our youth organizations - to meet together and draw political and social encouragement from each other.

Campaigns against the sexual repression of youth should be a central feature of the activity of our youth organizations and present sexual orientation as a choice. Such propaganda or action campaigns should also challenge reigning sexual and gender roles.

While continuing to demand that the state fulfil its responsibility for sexual education and health care, they should help educate their members, to the extent possible, about contraception, sexual choice, gender, machismo and homophobia. Particularly at youth camps, schools and other activities of our organizations where participants may be sexually active, we have a responsibility to make sure condoms and information about sexual health are available in order to prevent unwanted pregnancies and the spread of AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases.

Demands around sexual education and health care can also be effective tools for mobilizing students and youth outside our ranks. Youth organizations' commitment to raising lesbian/gay issues as one of their focuses for political organizing is in fact essential, because it is among youth that we can find greater understanding of these difficult issues that mix the personal and political - this has been demonstrated in practice in countries where the Fourth International has organized lesbian/gay work.

30 The heterosexuality of our members should not be assumed in our organizations' internal discussions. Doing so excludes other possibilities - just as heterosexist education does - and is equivalent to the 'invisibility' to which heterosexist, patriarchal society condemns the LGBT reality in many countries.

Most of the time LGBT members choose to do LGBT work because they personally feel the need of it. But joining an LGBT group is not the same as joining, for example, an anti-racist group. The intimate and political questions around sexuality involve particular difficulties of approach and must also be treated on a personal level. Often, taking on LGBT issues implies revealing something about our own intimate lives, a process which is sometimes not easy to face. So every member of the party must feel absolutely welcome to take part in LGBT work, without feeling that his/her sexual orientation is being judged and without being told that other areas 'are more important'.

31 The sections of the FI must consciously fight to limit the extent to which the oppression of LGBT people in society is reproduced within our organizations. This does not only mean that jokes or sexist/heterosexist behaviours must be avoided. It also means creating conditions for LGBT members' full participation in the organization's life, both as revolutionaries and LGBT militants. For this to be possible, integrating LGBT issues in the political agenda is fundamental.

As said in the previously quoted text of the Mexican PRT, 'we, as women require a certain balance of forces so that the gender question can be present at all times…. For this to happen, we need … to create discussion space for women where there is none, and where there is, we must strengthen it.' We think this also applies to LGBT comrades.

32 In countries where the sections have organized LGBT groups, it is necessary that the whole organization have access to what they produce and discuss it. Systematic internal discussion around LGBT issues is a condition for collectivization of the theme, for changing discriminatory habits that may exist in our organizations, and even for helping LGBT comrades - especially those who are very active in the LGBT movement - to have a revolutionary perspective

on LGBT issues.

It is necessary that the sections stimulate and are open to the organization of commissions and caucuses, as well as the formation of fractions around this issue. But more than just being prepared to discuss LGBT issues, every member of the sections must be willing to actively support LGBT actions and campaigns.

"As in every other question", in the words of the 1979 resolution on women's liberation, "the entire leadership and membership of the party must be knowledgeable about our work, collectively participate in determining our political line, and take responsibility for carrying out our campaigns and propaganda into all areas of the class struggle where we are active."

Lesbian/gay issues should be part of our discussions at the branch, regional, national and international levels. All our members should be educated about lesbian/gay liberation at our local, national and international schools. This also means that our organizations' press should cover and comment on the LGBT movement.

33 LGBT issues must be integrated into the public statements of the sections and the daily intervention of their members. Members who are active in movements such as trade unions, antiracist movements, etc., must raise lesbian/gay demands in their political work. LGBT members of our sections should be encouraged to have an active and organized presence in the LGBT movement outside, in a revolutionary perspective.

Where it is possible depending on the political opportunities in each country, we try, as in other fields of work, to agree joint positions and carry out joint work with other left forces that are active on these issues. Since revolutionary militants are a minority inside the LGBT movement, contact with LGBT organizations - outside - is important even when the sections have no LGBT members involved in the movements.

One of the effects of oppression on LGBTs is that their personal capabilities are questioned because of their sexual orientation and not on the basis of an objective evaluation. Our organizations should take advantage of opportunities to have openly LGBT members speak in the organization's name on LGBT issues, and make participation in LGBT work, like participation in all forms of mass political work, one of the criteria for the election of LGBT comrades to their leaderships.

The same criterion should be taken into account when our organizations choose candidates for electoral campaigns; and they should try to run openly LGBT candidates as well. In addition, all our elected officials at every level must take up lesbian/gay demands within representative institutions and include them in their public statements. They must also relay the demands of lesbian/ gay movements and attempt to give the movements access to the political processes the bodies conduct.

34 Often LGBT members of revolutionary organizations have difficulties in feeling integrated in our organizations as well as in the LGBT movement. On the one hand, being a LGBT militant necessarily means more than just concrete political activity: since LGBTs are a socially excluded group, LGBT communities, linked by the fact of oppression, have particular forms of socialization and resistance to heteroculture.

Thus, LGBT members, especially those active in LGBT movements, often tend to separate their political and social lives. It is not always understood in our organizations that LGBT members' activism may take this particular form. But in a community based upon common exclusion, that social and cultural life is an indispensable aspect of political work, as well as a personal need of LGBT militants.

On the other hand, being a revolutionary militant often means that people do not feel at home even in the LGBT 'scene'. LGBT comrades tend to live in two separate worlds, with different, often incompatible rules. Building links among LGBT comrades in different branches and in different sections, and encouraging the growth of LGBT activities, discussions and social gatherings inside our movement, are some of the best ways to fight against this 'risk of split personality' and to keep lesbian/gay activists in the International.

Efforts in these directions should be welcomed and supported in our organizations.

VOTE: 95 - 0 - 1 - 0 CARRIED

Ecology and socialism

10 August 2003

Contrary to the prevailing currents in the workers' movement, which have tended to ignore or downplay environmental issues, ecological movements and Green parties can be credited with putting these decisive questions on the agenda. However, the solutions they put forth are often ultimately false ones, as they overlook the inherent link between environmental destruction and the profit logic of capitalism. To seriously deal with ecological dangers, we must break out of the framework created by the profit motive, within the perspective of a democratically planned socialist society.

ELEMENTS OF THE ECOLOGICAL CRISIS

The ecological crisis, as an outcome of human impact on nature, has reached

a point that could threaten the very survival of humanity. In keeping with the economic interests of a small minority, new production forms are implemented faster and faster, with no prior evaluation of their ecological consequences. These minority interests also require maintaining production techniques recognised as harmful. This is going on while technological progress is increasing the possibility of acting upon nature, and hence upsetting or destroying it.

The industrial revolution linked to the rise of 19th century capitalism greatly increased the rate at which waste was released into the atmosphere, severely damaging the health of workers and city dwellers. Overall, ecological shock waves of human origin have come fast and furious.

And yet, the ecological crisis as we know it is not the linear outcome of industrial development since the 19th century. It is the outcome of a qualitative leap, the massive generalisation of petroleum use and the phenomenal development of the car, the chemical industry and its use in all economic sectors, in particular in agriculture via fertilisers and pesticides. Since the 1970s, this qualitative leap has become more spectacular following the crisis of bureaucratically planned economies and above all, in a particularly dramatic way, following the combination of economic crisis and free-for-all industrialisation in the 'Third World'.

CLIMATE CHANGES

Human activities - reliance on fossil fuels (energy production, transport); use of firewood for household purposes in the Third World with the ensuing dramatic deforestation; as well as farming activities - make up an essential cause of the current global warming. These activities are releasing around 7 billion tonnes per annum of greenhouse gasses into the atmosphere (CO2, CH4, N20, and CFCs). Half of this amount is not recycled by oceans or forests. As a result, the greenhouse effect responsible for the maintenance of temperatures suitable for life on the Earth's surface has spun out of control, leading to a grave disturbance of the planet's complex climatic system. Global warming is just one aspect of this. Calculations in 1989 showed that the 1980s had been the warmest decade ever recorded. In 2000 the 1990s turned out to be the warmest decade ever recorded! Despite these facts, there are still bourgeois forces that deny the decisive importance of climate change and the necessity of acting without delay in order to counteract the increase in greenhouse gasses and limit the already irreversible effects. In many regions, the consequences will be catastrophic for the economy of huge human communities. Disturbances in the atmospheric water cycle are the greatest cause for concern, as they alter the system of rains and evaporation, increasing the number and brutality of tropical cyclones. Rising sea levels are probable. Depending on their scale, these imperil specific island and coastline areas.

Based on forecast trends, these climatic disturbances will combine with the continuing drop in stratospheric ozone and the correlating increase in carcinogenic solar ultraviolet rays reaching the ground. The destruction of the ozone layer is caused by the effects of Organo-Halogen Compounds; chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) primarily used in refrigeration and aerosol sprays. Although these have been virtually outlawed, the destructive impact of CFCs already emitted is far from over; it is predicted to last until 2060.

Global changes in regulating mechanisms within and among the primary components of the Earth's environment (atmosphere, oceans, and biosphere) will have repercussions throughout the 21st century. The time frame will vary, but in general it will far exceed the timetables used by the human activities causing them. This fact underlines the urgency of integrating ecological imperatives into the overall organisation of societies.

AIR POLLUTION

Industry, transports and the breakdown of more or less durable consumer goods release a great variety of toxic substances into the air. The unbridled and apparently uncontrollable growth of motor vehicle traffi c makes this the primary source of sulphur dioxide and nitrogen oxides, far ahead of household and industrial heating. Formic aldehyde, mercury and asbestos, for example, are industrial pollutants. These are also found to a very significant extent in everyday consumer products, such as building materials in the case of formaldehyde and asbestos, and mercury in batteries.

City air can contain 1,000 times the level of these toxins found in country air. Air pollution has become a serious blight in major urban centres, both in wealthy countries and in the particularly sprawling, anarchic cities found in poor countries. In the urban setting, this pollution has led to an alarming increase in respiratory ailments: asthma, bronchitis, and lung cancer. European studies have revealed that pollution in Western Europe's major metropolitan areas can be blamed for several thousand deaths per year.

Asbestos gives rise to many fatal forms of cancer among shipyard and building workers. Because these cancers have a latency period, the annual death toll is increasing by leaps and bounds, revealing the extent of the problem. More than 100,000 asbestos-related deaths are predicted in France alone in the fi rst quarter of the 21st century. Protests against asbestos hazards have brought about a sharp reduction in its use in rich industrialised countries, and a search for replacement materials. However, its use in the Third World is still on the upswing.

Sulphur dioxide and nitrogen oxides are the cause of acid rains, a major cause of damage to the Northern Hemisphere's temperate forests.

WATER POLLUTION AND SOIL DETERIORATION

Waste, of household, agricultural or industrial origin alike, is carried off in the world's waters, turning them into gigantic sewers. Continental waters, rivers and lakes are the hardest hit, but pollution is reaching the sea more and more, via rivers and coastal cities. The direct consequences are the accumulation of heavy metals; mercury, cadmium, etc, and highly toxic organic compounds, in sediment on the ocean fl oor, riverbeds and lakebeds. Above all, fertiliser build up, involving nitrates and phosphates, has led to an unbridled proliferation of algae and water plants. Their breakdown then exhausts the oxygen dissolved in the water: resulting in a massive death of aquatic life.

The state of the oceans is rapidly deteriorating. The increase in world-wide maritime traffic is to blame, all the more so since the ruinous condition of many vessels is causing significant leakage. The systematic search for the lowest possible cost by multinationals in the petroleum industry is directly responsible for catastrophes such as the Exxon Valdez, Erika and Prestige disasters. To the visible pollution of black tides - 70 tankers sank in 1996 - we must add the astronomical quantity of petroleum seeping from underwater drilling operations and out-gassing of ships. The sea is also used to dispose of toxic, chemical and radioactive waste.

Water pollution is linked to soil pollution, which is both a cause and effect of certain forms of water and air pollution. This is a consequence of agricultural practices imposed by market pressure: intensive farming (misuse of fertiliser and pesticides) monoculture, crops unsuited to local ecosystems and climates, etc. The arms industry, with its radioactive munitions, its sunken nuclear submarines, and its landmines which make the land unuseable contributes to this degradation. This means massive soil destruction on a global scale; a toxic soup of pollution, exhaustion, desertification, massive erosion, all bound together with the economic and social causes of hunger affecting 800 million people in the Third World.

FOREST DESTRUCTION

Among the most dramatic manifestations of the ecological crisis, the destruction of the world's forests is among the most disturbing, because of the extent of its consequences. In 50 years, one third of the world's tree cover has disappeared. This has hit tropical countries the hardest. In the industrialised countries, the wooded area has remained relatively stable, but forests are slowly dying from air, oil and soil pollution. However, in the "Third World", deforestation is at the heart of the ecological crisis. Deforestation is the outcome of a vicious cycle of poverty and depletion of arable land. Another cause is the over-harvesting of tropical woods, with no concern for sustainable management. This destroys biodiversity - the tropical forests are home to over 50% of the plant and animal species of our planet - and the forest population's resources, in order to provide a cheaper product for Western building and furniture markets.

Moreover, since 1997, Amazonia, Central America, Russia and Southeast Asia have been hit by increased outbreaks in forest fires. In Indonesia, giant forest fires, which destroyed 10 million hectares in 3 years, have had an impact on 70 million people and cost over 4.5 billion dollars. On the planetary level, deforestation is aggravating the greenhouse effect.

THREATS TO BIODIVERSITY

The existence of tens of thousands of species is menaced by the countless attacks on ecosystems. One quarter of the Earth's biodiversity could disappear within the next 25 years. In certain cases, these attacks could eventually destabilise the environmental balance, with incalculable consequences on human living conditions.

Biodiversity must be defended, not for sentimental or aesthetic reasons, but on behalf of our own species. Failing to master the consequences of the irreversible changes that it can cause to the environment, humankind must be careful to go about its activities while respecting the ecological balance of nature.

Capitalism cares nothing about pollution, exploiting resources with the single objective of short-term gain even if this threatens the very existence of tropical forests, a treasure house of animal and plant species, or marine life. Likewise, it seeks to take hold of technological innovations such as GMOs, whose spread into the environment is an irreversible and potentially dangerous process. Anyone wishing to protect the ecological balance must attack the very basis of capitalism.

Instead of remaining a laboratory technique, the production of genetically modified organisms has become of the key biotechnologies capitalism is using to find new markets. Capitalism is seeking control over the most intimate level, heretofore outside its scope: reproduction and the genetic control of plant and animal species.

INDUSTRIAL DISASTERS AND NUCLEAR RISK

The disastrous ecological consequences of capitalist production also take the form of wide-scale accidents, or the potential risk of such accidents, in industrial complexes such as chemical plants and nuclear power plants. The Bhopal disaster, its 15 000 deaths and the sufferings of the many methyl isocyanate victims who are still dying by the hundreds every year, was one of the most tragic examples, along with Chernobyl.

Nuclear power's very nature, the

incalculable extent of its possible adverse effects, and especially its very long term lasting impact, and along with the existence of alternative solutions, quite rightly represent a particularly alarming example of the (aberrant) choices made in terms of development of the productive forces.

Radioactive risk does not only mean the threat of major accidents. After 40 years in existence, the atomic industry has still not found a solution to the nuclear waste storage problem. Threatened with decline, it is now trying to sell its ecological virtues in order to promote new electro-nuclear programmes, now at a standstill. The atom is claimed to be a way of reducing CO2 emissions. This claim downplays radioactive pollution hazards (authorised or accidental dumping) and the fact that vehicles are by far the main cause of CO2. Moreover, such a relatively inflexible energy system, based on huge production units and building hundreds of new power plants, would monopolise investments at the expense of other systems (energy saving, renewable energies). Moreover, production over-capacity and loss over distribution systems would encourage power wastage. It would also perpetuate a development model that is harmful in the long run.

To this permanent risk we must add imperialist aggression, which has extremely grave ecological consequences due to the destructive power of the weapons used, and their potential for long-lasting pollution: the Vietnam, Gulf and Serbia-Kosovo wars bear witness to this. Far from creating new emergencies pushing traditional economic, social and political problems to the margins, on the contrary, all the elements of this ecological crisis are closely tied to these concerns.

The ecological crisis has become a dramatic and spreading phenomenon, leading not only to local and partial disasters - but also to global dangers like the threat of global warming or reduced biodiversity. In certain cases these are irreversible, in others they can be reversed in the short or medium term or only over 2 or 3 centuries the age of many trees. This depends on the conscious choices made by human communities.

STRUCTURAL CAUSES OF THE ECOLOGICAL CRISIS

Although it cannot escape the laws of nature, in various ways the mode of capitalist production comes into fundamental contradiction with nature and the natural evolution process. For capital, only the quantitative aspect is decisive, determining the relation between labour time and money in the framework of the law of value; qualitative and global relations cannot be taken into consideration.

Capitalist production is based on carrying out cyclical processes in the shortest possible time to get a return on capital invested. Thus, it must impose a rhythm and framework on natural processes that is foreign to them. The exploitation of natural resources cannot take the time needed for their formation or their renewal into account. The spread of commodity production cannot respect pre-existing modes of social organisation. Occupying the space needed for a smooth production process, energy supply and distribution must go ahead without taking the natural environment, fauna and flora into account. It is not capitalism's lack of wisdom that brings about environmental destruction, but the very logic underlying the system. This is why the social democrats calls for 'qualitative growth' are stymied by capital's logic: qualitative growth and the law of value are mutually exclusive.

Capitalist rationality determines the movement of individual capital. However, competition among capital makes the system as a whole irrational. The intelligence brought into play to improve production or save on raw materials stops at the company door. The environment foots the bill wherever 'nobody' feels responsible- for example, in the case of water, air and soil pollution. Moreover, competition leads to periodical overproduction crises, revealing that a considerable quantity of energy and materials has been invested in commodities that don't sell. Furthermore, the market promotes the production of superfluous products in use-value terms (advertising, various drugs, arms, etc.) but with an exchange value that makes for big profits. Competition and the race for profits and super-profits are the ultimate reason behind criminal behaviour, recognised as such by capitalist legislation itself: non-respect for environmental regulations, use of toxic substances, inadequate quality testing, falsifying content listings, unauthorised dumping of waste, etc.

The term 'productivism', popularised by the ecology movement, sometimes, in a confused manner, expresses an aspect of the irrationality of the capitalist system. Instead of being a source of social progress, the development of productivity has led to an intensification of exploitation of labour power, production choices disconnected from social and ecological imperatives, and chronic overproduction crises. In a blind market, production functions as if it were its own goal.

THE ECOLOGICAL CRISIS IN THE IMPERIALIST METROPOLISES

The most advanced economic exploitation, i.e. the process of economic quantification of pre-existing natural, social and historic substrata, is found in the developed capitalist countries. Nowadays, commodity production governs all sectors of social life, while the social process of production has become more and more fragmented. Property relations have become more and more centralised - competition among owners of the means of production keeps them from becoming entirely frozen.

This has led to the same major ecological problems in all imperialist countries. Here is yet more proof that these problems cannot be viewed as

'breakdowns' or 'system failures'; they correspond to this system's logic throughout the world.

The privatization of public services, uncontrolled urban sprawl and 'concretization' are leading to a terrible degradation of the urban environment, with the disappearance of green spaces and destruction of woods and forests to build roads and highways. The virtually complete exploitation of the last square centimetre of land for use as industrial zones, shopping centres, bedroom suburbs, theme parks or administrative zones has greatly increased commuting time and traffic, while the structure of needs has remained essentially unchanged. Transport policy, based on private cars using petroleum fuel, has resulted in chronic traffic congestion, threatening all major metropolitan areas with paralysis and asphyxia.

Particularly in the energy field, centralised property relations have dictated the building of huge fossil fuel or nuclear power stations. This choice is detrimental to air quality and completely irrational from the standpoint of an economical use of energy.

Market irrationality and the profit motive play a decisive role in the problem of waste. It is more and more 'advantageous' for each firm to throw away, flush out or burn what is useless for production. Hence, mountains of waste, in particular toxic waste, have practically become a symbol of the society of capitalist overabundance - not to mention the monumental problem of disposing of military nuclear waste and the environmental destruction caused by wars, in particular by imperialist military expeditions. Capitalism is incapable of correcting these 'excesses'.

The consequences of these basic ecological problems are: destruction of natural sites and urban sprawl, over-congestion of the road system, air pollution caused by the private car, poisoning by the chemical industry, radioactive pollution due to nuclear energy, ever growing mountains of waste. Capitalism is not capable of correcting these 'failings'. If natural resources, such as water, wood, soil, are 'freely' available, under capitalism they are used up, wasted and polluted, most often without control. They are - and not only in the economic sense - 'exogenous factors'. They remain conditioned, that is they are objects of the search for private profit. In other words, the limited nature of resources is only seen by those who must purchase them. Their sellers have a basic interest in expansion and oppose any attempt to safeguard them.

All attempts at control run counter to capitalists' current push for greater deregulation. If not, they can only be contemplated on the basis of the false premise that the law of value can distinguish between 'good' (environmentally friendly) profits and 'bad' profits. Hence, imperialist countries are resigned to trying to patch up problems after the harm is done. At most, this can only result in very limited or partial remedies such as mandatory filters to purify water and air, etc.

Capitalist production also reshapes its own consumers. Thus, individuals' behaviour is a factor aggravating the ecological crisis and hampering a solution to it. A flagrant example of this is what could be called the 'dictatorship of the car', i.e. the ecologically catastrophic system of private cars, promoted by automotive industry marketing, by bourgeois individualist ideology, by the deliberate dilapidation of public transport, but also by the urban structure of major cities, which forces workers to commute long distances. However, individual changes in behaviour can only exert a minimal influence on the fundamental environmentally destructive nature of capitalist production.

ECOLOGICAL CRISIS IN THE DEPENDENT COUNTRIES

A study by the United Nations agency for the environment has drawn the lucid conclusion that the ecological problems of the 'Third World' are problems of poverty. This would be perfectly just keeping in mind that this poverty is not the outcome of fate, but of the imperialist countries' economic policies and actions. By twisting the facts, it might be possible to present the environmental crisis in the imperialist countries as the consequence of an affluent society and not the outcome of a market economy. However, in the dependent countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America, the relation between economic crisis and ecological crisis comes into sharp focus. For millions of human beings, the growing destruction of the environment and biosphere and the everyday struggle for survival are facets of the same direct experience. Over 800 million people are malnourished, 40 million die every year from hunger or diseases caused by malnutrition. Almost 2 billion do not have regular access to clean drinking water; 25 million die as a result every year. One and a half billion human beings suffer from an acute lack of firewood, their only source of energy. In this part of the world, there is a grave shortage of food, water and fuel, the three essential elements for people's very lives. The UN estimates that approximately 500 million people are 'environmental refugees', forced to leave their regions of origin in the wake of drought, floods, soil erosion, the extension of export oriented agriculture, etc. The fact is that the ecological crisis in these parts of the world is not a 'time bomb', or a problem for the future, but an existential crisis here and now.

The primary cause of dire poverty and ecological crisis is the capitalist mode of production. The well-known structures of imperialist dependency and the world market it dominates have subjected the natural environment of dominated countries to far more direct and brutal economic exploitation than is the case in imperialist countries. For example, export to the South of the advanced capitalist countries' industrial and nuclear waste is transforming the South into gigantic dumping groups for toxic or irradiated materials. Yet another example is the biopiracy of capitalist companies - particularly pharmaceutical companies - that appropriate and patent the traditional knowledge of indigenous peoples.

Environmental destruction according to the world market's needs and multinationals' interests comes into even more flagrant contradiction with the social structures and ways of life handed down through history. In all these countries, imperialism has shaped their territory by imposing an infrastructure almost entirely built up around centres of economic activity dependent on the world market. It is on this basis that 'natural resource centres', business centres, and holiday zones, plantations and grazing lands are chosen, for export-oriented production. This puts enormous pressure on people who fall victim to these processes, pushing different ways of life and 'outmoded' social functions are pushed towards a country's peripheral regions. The impact has been and continues to be far graver than in the capitalist metropolises, subject as these countries are to processes set in motion by others.

We can also observe the fatal effects of the law of 'combined and uneven development' in the dependent countries from an ecological standpoint. The world market carries its environmentally destructive dynamics and its most agonising contradictions into the most 'backward' corners of the world. Its action here is incomparably more devastating, the forces opposing it incomparably weaker. We can set forth a series of structural characteristics of this mechanism:

i) Direct exploitation of raw materials for the world market (minerals, wood, cotton, rubber, etc.) and the parallel development of infrastructures, roads, railways, power plants, etc.

ii) The transformation of land into farmlands or pasture reserved for export production, via a land-clearing policy involving heavy use of chemical fertilisers and pesticides with the resulting pollution.

These two processes make the land question the great burning issue in most of the dependent countries. The rapacity of agribusiness and neo-liberal structural adjustment policies lead to deforestation or destruction of rich farmland, increasing the risk of climate change and of intensified 'natural disasters'. It is often indigenous communities that mobilize to protect the environment - in Amazonia, in Ecuador, in India - and act as custodians of the natural patrimony of humanity as a whole by struggling against the multinationals' destructiveness.

iii) Urbanisation brought about by a specific economic structure and the land question. According to UN estimates, cities in the dependent countries are growing three times faster than in the industrialised capitalist countries. In these cities, the usual urban problems are even more catastrophic for the environment and living conditions. Air pollution caused by motor-vehicle traffic and household heating is an acute threat. The quality of clean and purified water is the second problem facing cities in the dependent countries. Waste disposal is the third. In most major cities in Asia, Africa and Latin America, rubbish is simply piled up or burnt in the open air.

The problem of dependent countries which gets the most attention nowadays is the debt towards banks and imperialist governments. In the 1990-1995 period, deforestation in the 33 African countries on the list of the most indebted poor countries was 50% higher than the level of forest destruction in other African countries, and 140% higher than the average rate of deforestation in the world. Moreover, there are no funds for nature conservation measures. International financial institutions, such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, make man and nature bear a heavier and heavier cost for debt. In the agricultural sector, austerity imposed by structural readjustment plans has brought about the elimination of subsidies guaranteeing prices and to the liberalisation of agricultural markets. The lack of public investment has exacerbated infrastructure problems for transport and irrigation. Since 1994, the WTO agreements have further accelerated the dismantlement of agriculture in the dependent countries. The unrestrained search for export income, at the expense of subsistence crops, has led to malnourishment crises in several African and Asian countries. Dire poverty and the rural exodus are increasing while the environment continues to deteriorate.

All of this is cynically rounded out by a series of direct acts of destruction of nature and ecological crimes committed by imperialist multinationals. Hazardous production units (especially in the chemical industry) are transferred to the dependent countries. There they not only benefit from cheap labour but also can pollute the environment with impunity.

The governments in most dependent countries are powerless in the face of ecological crisis. Their connection to imperialist interests and their own privileges or class interests extend economic dependency and ecological crisis. Even certain international aid programmes (to fight hunger, to fight ecological disasters or recent plans for a partial cancellation of the debt in exchange for environmental protection measures) often merely contribute to enriching elites in power.

Solving the ecological crisis in the dependent countries is unthinkable without breaking dependency on imperialism. Seeking "modernisation" through credits and debt to solve urgent social problems has been an error that only compounds the situation. This is truer still for the ecological crisis. Poverty and economic dependency force millions of people take part in behaviour causing dire harm to the environment, but without which they could not even survive. This means the process of anti-imperialist revolution, permanent revolution, in the dependent countries must consciously take up ecological issues and make them part of their programme of struggle against capitalist plunder. This is the condition for successfully building alternative, socialist production relations.

ECOLGICAL CRISIS IN THE FORMER

BUREAUCRATISED SOCIETIES

Despite the disappearance of the USSR and most societies patterned on the Soviet model, it is necessary to briefly examine their environmental policies. The ecological track record of the USSR and countries with a bureaucratic central planning system is as bad, if not worse, as the imperialist metropolises, especially in terms of air, water and ground pollution, and characteristics of the plan could only be quantitative standards and rates of growth. Thus, transitional societies put the accent on quantitative increase in growth, sometimes even more than capitalist societies. These rates were set forth by decree and enforced with repression. Protecting resources and the nuclear power - Chernobyl! - and problems facing major metropolitan areas.

One of the reasons for this situation is the fact that these societies only partially succeeded in overcoming the capitalist law of value and the objective restrictions on production it entails. In many key production sectors, dependency on capitalism and the world market was still present. Exploitation of natural resources for an export economy and dependence on products and technologies derived from capitalist industries also led to an inevitable destruction of the environment in these societies too. This happened in a way comparable what we see in dependent countries.

The planned economy was an attempt to develop a directly social economy. Contrary to capitalism where the usefulness of labour is based on the market alone, that is, the ability to sell products, non-capitalist societies attempted to determine and plan social needs before production. It is obvious that this attempt can only succeed if all human needs and specific interests are brought into an overall process of democratic deliberation and decision-making. When an actual shortage must be shared out, democracy becomes even more essential. However, the bureaucratisation of transitional societies completely eliminated democracy. The multitude of social and national, cultural and economic needs of different people became standardised, and forcibly inserted into a plan dictated from above. As all qualitative aspects were buried along with democracy, the determining environment were at best included in such plans in quantitative terms (number of purification stations, filters, certain budget outlays, etc.). This planning was from the outset beset with errors and huge oversights in planning (with a corresponding misuse of resources). Without social controls, these were only rectified when they were finally recognised "higher up".

Furthermore, the different parts of the plan corresponded to the interests of different fractions of the bureaucracy that set them. This is how the gigantism that was so typical of the USSR and other bureaucratic states came into being. The bigger, larger-scale and more centralised the projects were (example: changing the course of Siberian rivers), the more power it meant for the bureaucrats. During the 1970s, bureaucrats concerned with environmental issues came on the scene, but they lacked clout and remained stuck in small, low-level departments.

Optimism and faith in "progress" were a tenet of the bureaucracy's ideology. Bureaucracies put forth the prospect of "competition between the two systems" and "overtaking" capitalist societies. From this standpoint, the capitalist consumer and modernisation models that caused such environmental harm were valued and taken up as ideological values playing a part in framing the plan. The bureaucracy only used models based on quantifying natural resources (namely, models comparable to those used by conservative bourgeois economists).

It goes without saying that the ecological crisis can only be exacerbated in the context of economic pillage and free-for-all capitalism now reigning in Russia since the fall of the USSR, with the blessing of Western powers and the IMF.

The case of Cuba is different to the extent that, for reasons of necessity, but also through ecological conviction, the planned economy moved away during the 1990s from the productivist and ecodestructive soviet model. The same goes for the partial replacement of cars by bicycles in urban traffic.

WORKERS' MOVEMENT AND ECOLOGY

Ecologists accuse Marx and Engels of productivism. Is this accusation justified?

No, to the extent that no one had spoken out with such force as Marx against the capitalist logic of production for production's sake, capital accumulation, wealth and commodity production as an end in itself. The very idea of socialism - contrary to the pathetic bureaucratic caricatures of it -is producing use value, goods necessary for the satisfaction of human needs. The supreme aim of technical progress in Marx's eyes is not an infinite increase in goods ("having") but a shorter working day, and more leisure time ("being").

However, it is true that sometimes we find in Marx and Engels - and even more in later Marxism - a tendency to make "development of productive forces" the main vector of progress, and a relatively uncritical stance towards industrial civilisation, especially in terms of its destructive relationship to the environment. The following passage of the Gründrisse is a telling example of Marx's too uncritical admiration for the "civilising" mission of capitalist production, and its brutal instrumentalisation of nature:

"Thus capital creates the bourgeois society and the universal appropriation of nature as well as of the social bond itself by the members of society. Hence the great civilising influence of capital; its production of a stage of society in comparison to which all earlier ones appear as mere local developments of humanity and as nature-idolatry. For the first time, nature becomes purely an object for

humankind, purely a matter of utility; ceases to be recognised as a power for itself; and the theoretical discovery of its autonomous laws appears merely as a ruse so as to subjugate it under human needs, whether as an object of consumption or as a means of production". Grundrisse, Chapter on Capital, Section Two, subsection entitled "Devaluation of capital itself owing to increase of productive forces.

On the other hand, we also find texts by Marx explicitly mentioning the ravages Capital has wrought on the natural environment - bearing witness to a dialectical vision of the contradictions of "progress" brought about by productive forces - for example, in the famous passage on capitalist agriculture in Capital:

"...the increased productiveness and quantity of the labour set in motion are bought at the cost of laying waste and consuming by disease labour-power itself. Moreover, all progress in capitalistic agriculture is a progress in the art, not only of robbing the labourer, but of robbing the soil; all progress in increasing the fertility of the soil for a given time, is a progress towards ruining the lasting sources of that fertility. The more a country starts its development on the foundation of modern industry, like the United States, for example, the more rapid is this process of destruction. Capitalist production, therefore, develops technology, and the combining together of various processes into a social whole, only by sapping the original sources of all wealth - the soil and the labourer." (Capital, vol. 1, ch. 15, section 10)

Even in Engels, who so often celebrated man's "mastery" and "domination" over nature, we can find texts that call our attention more explicitly to the dangers of such an outlook. For example, we can mention the following passage in the article, "The part played by labour in the transition from ape to man" (1876).

"Let us not, however, flatter ourselves overmuch on account of our human victories over nature. For each such victory nature takes its revenge on us. Each victory, it is true, in the first place brings about the results we expected, but in the second and third places it has quite different, unforeseen effects which only too often cancel the first. the people who, in Mesopotamia, Greece, Asia Minor and elsewhere, destroyed the forests to obtain cultivable land, never dreamed that by removing along with the forests the collecting centres and reservoirs of moisture, they were laying the basis for the present forlorn state of those countries. (...) Thus at every step we are reminded that we by no means rule over nature like a conqueror over a foreign people; like someone standing outside nature - but that we, with flesh, blood and brain, belong to nature and exist in its midst, and that all our mastery of it consists in the fact that we have the advantage over all other creatures of being able to learn its laws and apply them correctly."

It would not be difficult to find other examples. The fact remains, however, that Marx and Engels lack an overall ecological outlook. The ecology question is one of the greatest challenges for a renewal of Marxist thought at the dawn of the 21st century. It demands of Marxists a thorough critical reappraisal of their traditional concept of 'productive forces' and a radical break with the ideology of linear progress and the technological and economic paradigm of modern industrial civilisation. But despite these weaknesses, the Marxist critique of capitalist political economy remains basic to any emancipatory project, and the environmental movement cannot afford not to engage with it.

Parallel to the development of reformism in the ranks of the workers' movement, Marx and Engels' critical reflection on the threat capitalist society poses to nature was downplayed. Reformism took up the productivist concepts/ outlook of bourgeois society just as it was becoming an integral part of it by accepting its major institutions (State, army, legislation, etc). For example, early in the 20th century, the Deutcher Metallarbeiterverband (DMV), the metal workers' organisation, dominated by social democracy, explained in a telling statement: "The faster technical development is, the faster the capitalist mode of production will have reached the point where it will block by itself and will have to be replaced by a higher mode of production."

Social democracy and Stalinism, despite their disagreements on many questions, shared a productivist concept of the economy and a profound lack of sensitivity to environmental questions. We must recognise that revolutionary currents in general - and the Fourth International in particular - were very late in integrating the ecological question...

The persistence of ecological disasters, the growth of environmental protection movements, these movements' partial victories, and their attempts to structure themselves politically ('Green' parties, etc.) have led to differentiations within the workers' movement. In a series of countries, entire unions or at least strong minorities within their ranks oppose the 'peaceful' use of nuclear energy - CGIL in Italy, British miners - and are displaying a heightened sensitivity to ecological questions: CUT in Brazil, SUD in France, the Workers' Commissions in Spain, IGMetall in Germany, etc.

At present, we can distinguish among four currents in parties and unions that claim to speak for the workers:

a) The "hard-core" fraction that wants to keep on as if nothing has changed. Even this fraction has had to make some adjustments, in light of the catastrophic developments for the environment. This current is now calling for emission standards and new regulations, but advocates continued use of nuclear power. Without revising its short-sighted positions, it has declared its agreement with "patching up" the ecology, especially if it opens up new markets.

b) A technocratic current that thinks it can solve ecological problems via high-tech solutions. Indeed, most often these would only shift the problems round: for example, what to do with the enormous quantities of filtration residues, purification sludge and other waste? Peter Glotz of the German SPD is calling for co-operation with the "end of the pipe technology" fraction

of major capital. Through an alliance among "the traditional left, technical elites and critical minorities of capitalists with a sound outlook in terms of growth", socially directed innovation could be achieved. He expressly rejects any challenge to private property over the means of production.

c) The third current that could be called "reformist-ecologist", also refuses to speak about production relations. Once again, they claim it is possible to rid capitalism, or as they put it delicately, "industrial society", of its sins against the ecology. Erhard Eppler, as chair(man) of the German SPD's "Fundamental Values Commission" explained: "More than ever, the task of social democracy is to proceed, through a new policy of reforms, with democratic, human and ecological corrections to industrial society."

d) The fourth current, in the minority, but far from negligible in numbers, is eco-socialism, integrating the fundamental achievements of Marxism - while ridding it of its productivist dross. Eco-socialists understand that market and profit logic (as well as the authoritarianism of the defunct "people's democracies" are incompatible with ecological demands. While criticising the ideology put forth by the leading currents of the workers' movement, they understand that workers and their organisations are an essential force for transforming the system.

Eco-socialism is the current in the workers' and ecology movements most sensitive to the interests of workers and peoples of the South. It breaks with the productivist ideology of progress - in its capitalist and/or bureaucratic form (so-called "actually existing socialism") - and opposes the infinite expansion of an environmentally destructive mode of production and consumption. It understands that "sustainable development" is impossible within the framework of the capitalist market economy.

As revolutionaries, our objective is to join forces with this current and convince workers that partial reforms are totally inadequate. Micro-rationality must be replaced with socialist, ecologist macro-rationality, calling for a genuine change in civilisation. This is impossible without an in-depth technological reorientation, seeking the replacement of current energy sources with other, non-polluting and renewable ones, such as solar energy. This means the first issue at hand is the question of control over the means of production, and above all over decisions relating to investments and technological change.

An overall reorganisation of the mode of production and consumption is needed, based on criteria foreign to the capitalist market: people's real needs and environmental safeguards. This means an economy in transition to socialism, based on the peoples' own democratic choices of priorities and investments - and not the 'laws of the market' or an all-seeing politburo. This would be a planned economy, able to find lasting ways of overcoming the tensions between satisfying social needs and ecological imperatives. It would be a transition leading to an alternative way of life, a new civilisation, beyond the reign of money, consumer habits artificially fuelled by advertising, and the endless production of environmentally harmful goods (the private car!).

ACHIEVEMENTS AND LIMITS OF THE ECOLOGY MOVEMENT

The ecology movement's fundamental achievement, which has brought about an in-depth change in public awareness of environmental questions, has been and remains the understanding of the extent to which late capitalism has destroyed the environment. Destruction of nature has reached a point that imperils all humanity. Here, as in the case of a world nuclear war, it is a question of survival. However, contrary to the danger of nuclear destruction, it is a question that is always 'new' and becoming increasingly serious and obviously so. Nonetheless, the fact that the movement views the environmental question as vital to all humanity does not justify doing what most ecologists do: seeking out interclass solutions, eliding the importance of class struggle against capital. The distinction between those who have an interest at maintaining the system, whatever the cost, and those who have an interest in abolishing it has not been erased; quite the contrary.

Another achievement of the ecology movement is the way it questions the concept of 'progress'. It has demonstrated the shortcomings of the Marxist analysis of late capitalism. We can no longer speak as during the beginning of capitalist development of a positive development of the productive forces, only trammelled by private ownership of the means of production or developed at the expense of the proletariat. More and more, capitalism, having survived much longer than historically necessary for the development of the productive forces, is transforming productive forces into destructive ones. But this also means that these forces cannot be liberated as such, that is, used in a socialist system on behalf of all. They will have to be vetted and critically analysed. This is not merely a theoretical question, but also a very practical one, involving a criticism of the idea of 'overtaking capitalism', so typical of Stalinist bureaucratic thought. Moreover, a more elaborate analysis of the material side of production (use value) is being made for the first time, by asking which products are desirable from an ecological and social viewpoint etc.

After the setbacks following the 1968 movement, the ecology movement once again brought a utopian dimension into politics. Discussions about a fundamental change in the social system, another way of living and producing, were re-introduced on the basis of ecological demands. The aforementioned debate about use value of products also encompassed a discussion of socially useful production. New utopian ideas about a different society were being voiced, and concrete 'reconversion plans' sketched out.

The ecology movement first developed

in Europe. It involved mass mobilisations, even in countries where the workers' movement was on the defensive, such as Austria, Switzerland and Germany. Militant and concrete forms of struggle, such as demonstrations, blockades, and occupations of sites gave rise to a 'culture of resistance'. At first these struggles focused on the nuclear question above all, but the movement takes up and mobilises around other questions, such as air and water pollution and GMOs. Scandals such as the 'mad cow' crisis have raised public awareness about 'junk food' and the dangers arising from the logic of the capitalist market. In France, the Confédération paysanne (Small Farmers' Union) was the catalyst of a radical dynamic. Starting out from a symbolic action (dismantling a McDonald's) in retaliation against US sanctions based on France's ban on importing hormone-treated beef, the struggle widened to take on the WTO - with support from trade unions, ecological organisations and left-wing parties, and strong sympathy in public opinion. Strong support was shown in June 2000, at the rally in solidarity with the small farmers facing trial in Millau (France).

Major ecological mobilisations have also taken place in the USA, and given rise to a complex, heterogeneous movement, ranging from 'deep ecology' - which claims to give priority to plant and other animal species over humans, to eco-socialism. The recent Spring 2000 mobilisations in Seattle displayed this movement's strength and the willingness of several of its components - for example the major environmental association Friends of the Earth - to join forces with unions and the left in the fight against the WTO and an increasingly commodified world. Seattle also allowed for an initial convergence in the struggle among movements from North America, Europe - the Confédération Paysanne was represented by its spokesperson, José Bové - and the Third World.

We must also mention the presence of direct action networks, with an eco-libertarian outlook, made up of very militant youth, which play an important role in all the major anti neo-liberal mobilisations.

It would be very mistaken to think ecological issues only concern the countries of the North - a luxury for wealthy societies. More and more, social movements with an ecological dimension are emerging on the periphery of capitalism, the 'South'.

These movements are reacting to deepening ecological problems in Asia, Africa and Latin America, a consequence of imperialist countries' deliberate policy of 'exporting pollution', and the unbridled productivity demanded by 'competitiveness'. We are witnessing the appearance of popular mobilisations in the South in defence of peasant agriculture, communal access to natural resources, threatened with destruction by the aggressive expansion of the market (or the State). Other struggles are arising to fight the damage to the immediate environment brought about by unequal exchange, dependent industrialisation and the development of capitalism (agribusiness) in the countryside. Often, these movements do not define themselves as ecological, but their struggle still has an essential ecological dimension.

It goes without saying that these movements are not opposed to improvements made by technological progress. On the contrary, the demand for electricity, running water, proper sewage and more medical dispensaries ranks high in their list of demands. What they are refusing is the pollution and destruction of their natural surroundings in the name of 'market laws' and the imperatives of capitalist 'expansion'.

A 1991 text by Peruvian peasant leader Hugo Blanco (of the Fourth International) is a remarkable expression of the meaning of this 'ecology of the poor'. "At first glance, defenders of the environment or conservationists seem like nice, rather eccentric fellows, whose main goal in life is preventing the extinction of blue whales or pandas. The common people have more pressing concerns, for example where their next meal will come from. (…) However, in Peru there are a great number of people defending the environment. Of course, if you told them 'you are ecologists', they would probably answer, 'ecologists, my eye' (…) And yet: who can deny the inhabitants of the town of Ilo and surrounding villages, struggling against pollution caused by the Southern Peru Copper corporation, are defending the environment? And isn't the Amazonian population totally ecologist, ready to die to defend their forests from pillage? Or the poor population of Lima, protesting tainted water?"

Brazil is among the countries where the link between social and environmental issues has been made on a mass scale. We can see the Landless Peasants Movement (MST) mobilising against GMOs, in a direct confrontation with the major multinational Monsanto. Municipalities and provinces governed by the Workers Party (PT) are attempting to make ecological aims a part of their participatory democracy programme. The Rio Grande do Sul provincial government, close to the MST (and the PT), wants to ban GMOs from the region. Wealthy landowners in the region are indignant, going on record against what call an 'archaic outlook'. They view the struggle against transgenic seed as a 'conspiracy to impose agricultural reform'.

Indigenous peoples, living in direct contact with the forest, are among the primary victims of the 'modernisation' imposed by agrarian capitalism. As a result, they are mobilising in many Latin American countries to defend their traditional way of life, in harmony with the environment, against the bulldozers of capitalist 'civilisation'. Among the countless manifestations of the Brazilian' ecology of the poor', one movement has stood out as particularly exemplary, by its social and ecological, local and planetary, 'red' and 'green' scope. Namely, the fight of Chico Mendes and the Coalition of Forest Peoples in defence of the Brazilian Amazon region, against the destructive appetites of major landowners and multinational agribusiness.

Let us briefly recall the major events in this confrontation. Chico Mendes was a trade-union activist, with ties to the (CUT) and the Brazilian Workers' Party (PT). Explicitly referring to

socialism and ecology, in the early 80s, Mendes organised land occupations by the seringueiros, peasants who lived by tapping rubber trees, against latifundistas who were sending in bulldozers to cut down the forest and replace it with grazing lands. Afterwards, he succeeded in bringing together peasants, farm workers, seringueiros, trade unionists and indigenous tribes - with the support of rank-and-file Church communities - in the Alliance of Forest Peoples, that was able to thwart many clear-cutting attempts. International awareness of these actions warranted him the Global Ecological Prize in 1987. However, a short time afterwards, in December 1988, latifundistas exacted a heavy price for this ecological struggle by having hired killers murder him.

Given the links forged between social and ecological struggles, peasant and indigenous resistance, survival of local populations and safeguard of a global imperative (protection of the last major tropical forest), this movement can become a paradigm for future popular mobilisations in the 'South'.

In certain countries - especially in Europe - the ecology movement has succeeded in winning many reforms, partly slowing down the breakneck pace of environmental destruction. For example, practically no new nuclear power plants are being built, the production of certain chemical products (CFCs, fertilisers, etc.) has been limited, and stringent standards have been enacted for certain factories, motor vehicles, etc. A capitalist environmental industry has emerged, and ecological reforms have even found their way into bourgeois party policy platforms.

And yet, despite all attempts at reform, despite the environmental industry, destruction on the global level has become more serious than ever before. Pollution of the seas, clearing of tropical forests and climate changes all show that the global dynamics of ecological crisis remain unchanged. From this standpoint, this crisis shows the need, above and beyond any reforms, for a fundamental change in our society.

As the ecology movement has no coherent revolutionary programme and fails to see the workers as a revolutionary subject, it is a long way from fulfilling its aspiration to become a new social force that can occupy or inherit the place of the workers movement. Nevertheless, if we leave out explicitly bourgeois or reactionary groups, small in numbers, the ecology movement remains an important ally of revolutionaries in the overall struggle against the capitalist system.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS AND BOURGEOIS DOMINATION

Due to of the impact of capitalist production on the environment, destruction of the natural basis for human societies has reached a new level. This has become a problem in and of itself for bourgeois order and ideology:

The ecological crisis is worldwide and, in the competitive context inherent to capitalism, can only be viewed only as a common evil; certain causes of the ecological crisis go back many years, others are the products of the combined development of various separate factors.

For this reason, it is difficult to establish and date their temporal and physiological causes. In the same vein, mastering the ecological crisis calls for time and investments that would be the undoing of all bourgeois concepts of input/output cycles;

Finally, contrary to what is observed in classical economic crises, in capitalism's harmful social consequences and even in the aftermath of military conflicts, dominated and exploited classes can only be made to foot part of the bill for ecological crisis. However, it is undeniable that oppressed classes bear the brunt of the burden, especially in dependent countries. This is truer still, given the interaction between social and economic crisis and ecological crisis.

The growing awareness of ecological crisis and the ecology movement developing since the early 1960s, have represented a vigorous attack on one of the key concepts in bourgeois ideology - the idea that the bourgeois social and economic order is capable of guaranteeing continuous "progress for all", and that harnessing nature is inherently positive and that all problems pertaining to it could be solved.

Up against this ideological challenge, there have been attempts at updating bourgeois ideology. The first, known throughout the world, was the Club of Rome report (The Limits to Growth, 1972). This report documented the rapid progress of environmental destruction and put forth a supra-national policy against demographic growth, wastage of natural resources, environmental destruction, etc. This study, and others following, were double-edged sword. On the one hand, bourgeois ideology and scientists under its influence retook the initiative on environmental questions and undertook a discussion on the prognosis and the solutions to be put forth. On the other, these studies shored up pessimistic views on the world's future and were a further impetus to the ecology movement. The capitalist world economy's existing order lost its aura of superiority; its finality and its mechanisms were questioned from within. At the same time, these analyses led to catalogues of demands that tended to promote world planning and a political regulation of the economy. Thus, they came into direct conflict with the capitalist market economy, economic liberalism and government deregulation offensives on the agenda throughout the world at the time.

No later than the mid 1980s, a second bourgeois offensive on the environmental terrain proved necessary. Thereafter, it became necessary to provide solutions, especially in terms of concrete policy, to these contradictions. The Bruntland report (Our Common Future) adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1988, was an expression of this. It is already entirely marked by the bourgeois conviction that although capitalism unfortunately harms the environment, it is also in a position to make the necessary corrections. Thus, it claimed to bring together the

elements for a more balanced form of growth ('sustainable development').

The 1990s saw a deepening of the contradiction between promises of new international regulations of globalised capitalism and this very system's brutal social and environmental impact. The Rio Declaration, which came out of the Earth Summit (1992) certainly set forth certain principles, such as the precautionary principle, which did represent progress in awareness about the elements of the ecological crisis. Neither Agenda 21, a giant mixed bag of 2500 measures, nor the international conventions on biodiversity and climate change have led to the radical solutions needed. With the birth of the WTO further subjecting the environment to the effects of liberalised international trade, these conventions have had very little effect. Proclamations in defence of biodiversity are powerless against ongoing damage to the natural environment. On the political level, they run up against the interests of agrochemical and pharmaceutical multinationals that seek to take hold of living organisms by increased use of GMOs and patenting genomes.

The Bush Administration, backed by energy company lobbyists, rejected the Kyoto Protocol (1997) on the greenhouse effect. The fragile agreement that the other imperialist countries reached in 2001 does not put any onus on rich countries to implement domestic measures cutting their gas emissions, and amounts to giving up the already wholly inadequate targets included in the initial protocol. In fact, the protocol proposes a target of only a 5.2 per cent reduction in CO2 emissions, despite the fact that these emissions would have to be reduced by more than 50 per cent in order to keep CO2 levels in the air under 550 ppm - double the level of the pre-industrial era - and stop global average temperatures from rising more than 2°C!

125 billion dollars over 10 years had been announced in Rio for environmental defence policies on the world scale. In 1996, only 315 million dollars had been invested. Between the reformist ideas put forth by the Bruntland report, and again in Rio, and the dominant ultra-liberal imperialist model, the latter has won the day for the time being. The September 2002 Johannesburg summit ended in resounding failure: no significant international measure was adopted. The summit showed by contrast that the big multinationals had succeeded in a few years in imposing their views within the international institutions. They have thus acquired a tribune to promote privatization of public resources and goods through notions like 'public-private partnership'.

NGOs, with a strong presence at Rio and since then, have sometimes let themselves get caught up by the environmentalist discourse of the G7 and international institutions. In the future, they will have few other choices from a complete integration as an ecological veneer on capitalism or to go back to a radical ecological criticism, which for many of them means going back to their roots.

Today, a practical approach to environmental problems is part of every bourgeois government's programme. In general, there is an attempt to set limits to air, soil and water pollution. To these are added gradual plans to reduce the dangerous effects of production process residues. When all is said and done, these are band-aid measures that do not counteract the real destruction taking place. Economic programmes and policy orientations concerning the 'ecological market economy' have also taken on importance. Up until now, attempts to reorient the capitalist economy to an environmentally friendly functioning have not got off the drawing table.

However, in the context of capitalist globalisation, a vast offensive is underway to impose a system of 'marketing the right to pollute' on the world level in order to reduce the quantity of greenhouse gases. Advocated by the United States, this mechanism was accepted by the European Union. This is a dangerous development that must be fought. Firstly, it opens the way to strengthening under-developed countries' dependency on the North. In a mechanism assigning each country an exchangeable pollution quota, the decision-making power belongs to those who hold financial power to trade in pollution as they see fit. The highly indebted countries of the South and the East would run the risk of selling their quota to the Northern countries, though the latter pollute the most by far.

Moreover, the system aims to make pollution a commodity, hence a source of profit. How could we imagine under such conditions that this would lead to an effective reduction in pollution?

Finally, it must be emphasised that the purpose of this mechanism, the key element of the liberal offensive in the environmental field, is to defuse the subversive power of the ecological critique, which raises a challenge to the overall functioning of the capitalist system. It aims at restoring credibility to the idea that the market is the best instrument in the fight against pollution, that more capitalism would make for intrinsically 'cleaner' capitalism.

This idea must be fought, just like the thesis whereby environmental protection could become the motor behind 'a new modernisation of the capitalist economy'.

A great gap separates the rich states from the poor states. While in wealthy imperialist countries, some progress has been made in stemming some of the most problems of pollution and destruction, in the poor countries, even the slightest necessary measures fail due to lack of funding or in the face of the interests of a handful of firms that succeed in making a profit precisely by damaging the environment. In response to these obstacles, reactionary ideologues as well as some ecologists sometimes put forward the idea that overpopulation is a central cause of environmental problems and that a coercive policy of population control is necessary in underdeveloped countries. This position rests on a fundamentally authoritarian and even racist conception of social organization. It must be denounced as vigorously as possible.

EXPERIENCES IN THE POLITICAL ORGANISATION OF THE ECOLOGY MOVEMENT

In a growing number of countries, Green parties are developing. In Western Europe, they have gained parliamentary representation in countries as different as Germany, France, Austria, Belgium, Sweden and Portugal and constitute a significant European Parliamentary group with 47 Members. They now take part alongside left-wing coalitions in governments in three countries in the Union: Germany, France and Belgium. Green parties are even found in dependent countries (Brazil, Turkey, etc.) In the United States, Ralph Nader's candidacy in the presidential race symbolises the political emergence of a front uniting environmentalists, youth and trade unionists, on the basis of anti-globalisation struggles.

Of course, the development of green organisations and parties over the past twenty years or so can be explained by the emergence of ecological crisis on a global scale. However, it cannot be understood without supplementary political factors, such as the lack of overall perspectives by traditional leaderships of the workers movement or the absence of revolutionary breakthroughs in capitalist Europe since 1968.

It is completely wrong to put all the different 'Green' experiences in the same bag. Depending on the countries, political cultures, their concrete historical origins, they have specific characteristics.

Their palette ranges from a strong influence of bourgeois and petit bourgeois forces to the coexistence of leftist, alternative and eco-socialists, and includes reformist Green currents. We can say in general and with all due caution: o these are attempts at organising within the reformist left, most often somewhere to the left of the traditional leaderships;

– although 75% of their social base is made up of salaried employees, these currents do not view themselves as a part of the workers' movement;

– while they often began as informal electoral structures based on ecology-centred platforms, Green movements have taken critical stands in other areas too (social policy, arms race, Third World, etc.);

The Greens' activity bears the stamp of a combination of frequently correct criticisms of sectoral social injustices alongside illusory reformist "strategies". In most cases, government or parliamentary activity virtually stifles Green Party grassroots activism, fosters the appearance of traditional forms of power delegation, and by so doing tends to undermine the radical nature of its movement. Worse still, the German Greens, for example, are in the process of losing all the utopian power embodied by the ecological critique, and are becoming a simple "party of reform" among others. This institutional slide sharpened with the concessions on the nuclear question, the Kosovo war and the increasingly neo-liberal course of government policy. Just the same, it is fruitless to speculate on the rhythms and forms of changes ecologist parties may undergo and to what extent the very nature of the Greens will be transformed by the choices and policy shifts they make.

Revolutionary Marxists judge political actors first of all not on the basis of their claims, their programmes or their awareness of their own role, but on the basis of their actual function in the class struggle. In general, we can affirm that the appearance of Green organisations and parties has not been a step backward. On the contrary, in many cases, it has broadened the left's action. The Greens must not be ignored, on the contrary, an active policy must be developed in their direction: common actions, debates on their theoretical positions, etc. In certain countries, protest parties and ecological movements have arisen, forming electoral coalitions and harnessing a segment of critical opinion. It is up to each section of the International to concretely decide the best form of cooperation with such parties or movements.

THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL AND THE ECOLOGICAL CRISIS

As we have seen in Chapter 4, we find the premises of a radical ecological criticism of capitalism in the original Marxist texts. But, as was the case for most parties in the workers' movement, our International failed to take it up in the first years of its existence. For example, it would be useless to look for it in the Transitional Programme, the basic programmatic document of the 1938 founding congress. In the period following the Second World War, revolutionary Marxists did not ignore environmental destruction or air and water pollution. However, these phenomena were seen as one of the negative consequences of an exploitative, inhuman system and not viewed as a global phenomenon threatening to destroy the very basis of all life.

This has changed since the early 1970s, when capitalist society's self-destructive tendency became a widely discussed subject, a subject of debate for such bourgeois ideologues as the Club of Rome in 1972. Articles and studies written by members of our movement appeared.

But the real test for organisations of the workers' movement was the birth of a popular movement against nuclear energy, especially in Japan, Western Europe and the United States.

Practically all the sections of the Fourth International have been involved in these mass movements, although very few sections found ways of consolidating their ecology work when the antinuclear movement went into decline. The experience of these movements did make its way into our discussions for the World Congresses. In the 10th Congress's texts, ecology and related problems were not even mentioned. However, at the following congress, in 1979, the struggle against the nuclear industry was

viewed as a "question of survival for the working class" and it declared that the task of the International and its sections was to "strengthen the movement by bringing industrial workers" into the struggle. At the 1985 congress, the positions were further developed. The documents provide a more detailed analysis for each of the three sectors of the world revolution. The main resolution called on the International and its sections to put far greater emphasis on the ecology question in their propaganda and their activities and organise common actions alongside ecology movements. In 1990, a commission made up of different sections of the International drew up a draft resolution on ecology, which was presented during discussions at the 13th Congress, but it was decided to hold further debates before adopting a resolution.

Today, the Fourth International views environmental destruction as one of the main threats to humanity, a problem giving a new meaning to the Rosa Luxemburg's famous formula: Socialism or Barbarism. It sees a commitment by the workers' movement and its organisations in the struggle against planetary destruction as its primary task in this area. It is striving to pave the way for co-operation between the social movement and the ecology movement, not only against different forms of destruction, but also against the system causing them in the first place. It wants to contribute to discussions in these movements and tries to counteract widespread illusions on the possibility of "clean" capitalism.

In many countries, the International is taking an active part in ongoing struggles, such as the struggle against GMOs and the destruction of the Amazonian forest in Brazil. The European sections are increasingly involved in ecology movements in their own countries. In our analyses, the ecological issue is one of the most important poles around which the workers' movement must reorganise.

All of this does not mean that there have not been problems bringing these "new issues" into our movement's activities. Many comrades have continued to look upon ecological problems as one contradiction of capitalism among many others. They have not seen them as problems closely linked to everyday struggles for the survival of the working class, against subhuman living and working conditions and the threat of war. Most of the sections only started pondering ecological questions when they made the headlines in the news following actions by other forces. As a result, the debate within the International has taken shape rather slowly. While other currents and individuals have been discussing the question of ecology and socialism for many decades, revolutionary Marxists have remained relatively silent. It is becoming clearer and clearer that Marxists must make a special effort to apply their method to the real issues at hand. It is no longer possible to simply take a few elements of ecological thought and give them a dab of red paint.

The Fourth International does not wish to simply take part in discussions on concrete ecological policy. It also wants to take the political and organisational steps forward necessary for mass actions. Only through the action of mass movements can current conditions be changed.

ACTION PROGRAMME

Today, throughout the world there is a broad range of initiatives and movements against the pillage and destruction of nature. The Fourth International supports these initiatives and these movements and takes part in them, sometimes critically, because the general outlook of certain ecologists is at times rather confused. The experiences of the ecology movement prove that only broad mobilisations and mass protests make it possible to win over public opinion and obtain real results.

PROPOSALS

Let us recall some of the basic ecological problems that must be solved, or if not, face the disappearance of the human race. All of these questions can only be dealt with on an international scale. This is the field to which we wish to devote our strength - for example, in the case of trans-national campaigns, to put forward our proposals and show the means by which they can be achieved.

These mobilisations can be carried out around the following proposals, which should not be seen as a definitive list:

DEMANDS:

In Third World countries, a radical break with the agricultural system based foremost on production for export. This system is a source of hunger and misery;

- against capitalist agriculture, which is environmentally destructive and leads to grave public health crises (i.e. "mad cow" disease);

- an immediate exit from the nuclear cycle;

- stop to the destruction of tropical forests and damage to the forests in industrialised countries;

- the seas, rivers and lakes must no longer be used as a refuse dump;

- against capitalist patents on life forms; a moratorium on GMOs;

- halt to private appropriation of public goods such as water;

- halt to the accelerated destruction of life forms; safeguard biodiversity.

ALTERNATIVES

- In the Third World, an agricultural production system that first guarantees the satisfaction of the population's basic needs;

- rational and planned use of energy instead of pillage of non-renewable energy sources; development of alternative energy sources such as solar energy and wind power, biomass energy etc.

- organising agricultural production according to ecological criteria;

- instead of further development of private vehicle use, development of

public transport and railways;

– a radical policy tending to eliminate the production of waste and recycle remaining waste; filtering, purification plants etc. are not enough, what is called for is a fundamental industrial reconversion aiming to eliminate pollution at the source.

How can these alternatives be achieved?

We must struggle for:

– a profound agricultural reform in Third World countries;

– across-the-board cancellation of Third-World countries' debts;

– a development of alternative energy plans drawn up by the workers' movement and the ecology movement in cooperation with progressive scientists;

– an end to business secrets (which make possible such practices as hiding toxic emissions) and the obligation to keep logbooks specifying raw materials and products used, free access to these logbooks:

– establishing an "environmental counter-power" through the social control of production;

– production which responds to environmental criteria, based on the principle of the satisfaction of needs, and not on the profit principle or on bureaucratic power;

– a socialist, free, democratic, pluralistic and self-management-based society, which respects the environment.

CONVERGENCES BETWEEN ECOLOGY AND SOCIAL QUESTIONS

To a large extent, ecological crisis and social crisis are stoked by identical mechanisms. The interests of major economic lobbies, the ever-more exclusive dictatorship of 'the markets", the world order incarnated by the WTO, IMF, WB and G8, etc., are combining to bleed humans and nature dry. Common factors are at work in the contemporary ecological and social crises, common remedies can and must be put forth. It is essential to break the stranglehold of "economic liberalism" and put human needs and ecological imperatives at the forefront. This is why there is community of ecological and social struggle, and common terrain for convergence.

DEFENCE OF PUBLIC SERVICES

The example of transport is a clear example of the extent to which public policy is required for an adequate response to social and ecological imperatives. In Europe, the logic of the markets requires cutting the railway system to "profitable" technologies and routes, relying on roads and highways as the solution for everything else. Social needs (economical public transport, a complete system serving the entire territory, decent salaries and working conditions) and ecological ones (reducing the most polluting, physically destructive and energy intensive forms of transport) requires the development of public transport, in a public service logic. The same goes for other areas.

But this observation does not close the debate on how public services must be organised in the modern world. In fact, state monopolies tend to develop their policies on the basis of non-democratic objectives. (In the energy field, we can mention links between petroleum producers and imperialist interventions in Africa, or links between civil and military nuclear uses). They use narrowly capitalist management approaches and productive models, applying profitability/efficiency standards copied from private monopolies.

THE STRUGGLE AGAINST POLLUTION

We have become more and more aware of the human costs (damage to health, rising prices, etc.) and natural costs (attacks on biodiversity) of pollution, as well as the role played by many entrenched economic interests in aggravating this problem. These include the dominant place of the car, the resulting air pollution and growing health problems in urban centres; the power of agribusiness, brutal pollution of water systems, and almost irreversible pollution of ground water; the weight of the nuclear lobby and the accumulation of radioactive waste over very long periods, in France and other countries. The role played by major private interests in the socially unacceptable increase in the cost of drinking water in the North - and massive lack of access to drinking water in the South. In each of these areas, ecological and social struggles require counterpoising an alternative logic to that put forth by the dominant economic forces.

The gravity of pollution and public health problems has led to increased public awareness. It has become more difficult to present so-called ecological issues as marginal questions, as unrelated to social questions, or as elitist concerns, and petit-bourgeois luxuries. In Europe, the 'mad cow' crisis probably marked a sea change, analogous to Chernobyl in the area of nuclear power. It cast a light on the serious threat posed by the agribusiness mode of production.

It is also necessary to combat illusory strategies such as a market for the right to pollute that Northern countries are attempting to impose on the planet. Pollution should be eradicated, not sold to the highest bidder.

IN DEFENCE OF EMPLOYMENT

An environmental protection policy would create new jobs in many fields. It is also essential to point out that the dominant economic logic, which

overexploits the natural environment, also gives rise to unemployment. This is clearly the case with agribusiness, which is emptying the countryside both of its natural (drastic reduction in the variety of landscapes and biodiversity) and human features (drastic loss of employment and rural exodus). This is also the case of the automotive industry, which massively reduces its labour force - while increasing its production capacity and whose word has become law in terms of modes of transport, town and regional planning and urban development. An alternative socio-economic logic would make it possible to develop a means of production that is less predatory of nature and our way of life, while creating more jobs.

At the same time, it must be clear that revolutionaries do not defend all existing jobs, for example in the nuclear or automotive industries - to say nothing of animal-based feed... We struggle for everyone to have the right to a guaranteed job and income, but not necessarily for their existing job.

THE STRUGGLE FOR LAND

This is one of the most essential vectors of the convergence between social and ecological movements on the international scale. It is no accident that the most radical farm movements from a social viewpoint are also those with the most advanced environmental consciousness. They are up against polluting agribusiness, with its GMOs, its fertilisers and pesticides poisoning the environment; they take a stand against capitalist agriculture that destroys soil and forests. In the countries of the South, this struggle is inseparable from the struggle for radical land reform, against the latifundistas' monopoly over land ownership, and for land redistribution. But the struggle for an alternative agriculture, respectful of the environment and based on small farmers' work, co-operatives, rural communities or indigenous communities is a planetary challenge, concerning both the Third World and capitalist metropolises. One of the most important forces in this battle for land is "Via Campesina", an international network of the agricultural left, made up of movements as important as the Brazilian MST or the French Confédération paysanne. These social movements promote another outlook on agricultural production, aiming to satisfy the population's social needs rather than those of the global capitalist market, and respecting peoples' right to feed themselves.

ELIMINATING THE DEBT SYSTEM

"Development through debt", got its initial impetus from financial powers in the North, and led to a system of control over debtor countries' economic policies (above all in the South) and strengthened powers for the IMF and WB (including in the North). The diktat of debt interest charges and the WTO's ultra-liberal hard-liners have dire consequences for human societies (destruction of the social-safety net, of subsistence farming), and of nature (destruction of natural resources for export purposes...). This means the fundamental mechanisms of this system of domination must be fought from both the social and ecological standpoints.

The trade rules brought in by the GATT, followed by the WTO, reinforce domination by major multinationals in the North. By forcing local markets to open up to their products, these institutions have increased dependency (even in terms of food), undermined social equilibria and led to an irrational increase in international trade, which feeds the energy and ecological crisis.

LONG TERM AND DEMOCRACY

The ecological question requires that we take very long-term consequences into account, as natural rhythms have a very different time frame from the necessarily short one of the market. Many social needs (education, health, etc.) also demand a longer timetable than the "almighty market" does to achieve their aims - and this is one of the main reasons they are public services in the real sense. Ecological consequences and human needs both require that our alternative policies take these long and very long term time frames into account. This means thinking in terms of solidarity among generations. After the defence of social needs, ecology has given a new legitimacy to the concept of planning. What is planning, if not taking long-term effects into account? But ecology has also played a part in the development of an in-depth critique of the bureaucratic experiences of the former Eastern Bloc countries.

Is this indispensable meeting between ecological, democratic and social issues and forces possible? Yes, because contemporary ecological and social crises share a common origin - in capitalism. Common causes call for common solutions. Anti-capitalism is not a set of "negative" ideas. Indeed, it makes it possible to foresee a common ground between ecological and social struggles. It also helps to set forth shared alternatives, in a positive spirit of solidarity. It enlightens us as to causes and solutions. On the other hand, should political ecology fail to integrate/bring in a critique of capitalism, it runs the risk of adapting to the mainstream, losing its radical edge and falling back on elitist, ultimately anti-democratic solutions that are socially inegalitarian, and at once impotent and unjust.

This calls for true links, not merely identifying ecology with its social impact. Ecologist thought has indeed brought in a major dimension, not found as such in social thought - an analysis of the relation between human societies and nature. This is its original contribution and its specific terrain. So we can say that we must neither prune back the ecology question to the social terrain alone nor ignore social antagonisms in the name of planetary ecological imperatives.

VOTE: 94 - 1 - 1 - 0 CARRIED

Statutes of the Fourth International

10 August 2003

2 The aim of the Fourth International is to help the awakening of political consciousness and to help the organisation of the proletariat and other classes exploited by imperialism in all countries, in order to abolish capitalism with its oppression, poverty, insecurity, its wars and bloodshed. It seeks to establish a democratic socialist society, based on the principle that the emancipation of the working class and all the oppressed and exploited will be the "the work of the workers themselves", the first step to a future classless society. In order to ensure, in a democratically planned economy, an enduring peace, social equality, the defence of the environment, the struggle against all oppressions, and human solidarity.

3 The Fourth International seeks to incorporate in its programme the progressive social experiences of humanity. It bases itself, by keeping them alive, on the gains of the revolutionary Marxist movement drawing the indispensable lessons from the Paris Commune, the October 1917 Revolution in Russia, the gains and discussions of the first four congresses of the Third International, the struggle and the elaboration of the Left Opposition to Stalinism, the Transitional Programme adopted at its Founding Congress in 1938, and the key programmatic documents adopted by its congresses since then.

4 It is with this transitional approach, starting from immediate struggles to the break with capitalism and the bureaucracies that the Fourth International turns to the future in fighting (for):

- For the immediate and transitional demands of the wage-earners.

- For democratic rights and public freedoms.

- For a revolutionary break with capitalism; for the replacement of the bourgeois state by producers' own state administration; for the growing over, in the dominated countries, of democratic and national struggles into revolutionary, anti-capitalist ones.

- For democratic socialism based on the social property of the social means of production, the self-organization of workers, the self-determination of peoples and the protection of public liberties, with the separation of parties and the state.

- For the unity of the mass, people's and working class movement on democratic basis, respecting multi-partyism, the diversity of tendencies and ensuring independence vis-à -vis the bourgeoisie and the state.

- For extending self-organization and respect for democratic rights in the struggles.

- Against all parasitic bureaucracies (Stalinist, social-democrat, trade union, nationalist...) dominating mass organizations.

- Against women's oppression and for an autonomous women's movement.

- Against oppression of lesbians and gays and all forms of sexual oppression.

- Against national oppression, for the respect of the right to self-determination and the independence of oppressed peoples.

- Against racism and all forms of chauvinism.

- Against religious particularisms and for the separation of religion and state.

- For the environment from an anti-capitalist and anti-bureaucratic perspective.

- For active internationalism and international anti-imperialist solidarity, for the defence of the working masses' interests in every country, with no exclusions, no sectarianism, without any submission to diplomatic or utilitarian considerations.

- To build revolutionary, proletarian, feminist, democratic parties of active members in which the rights of free expression and tendency are granted and guaranteed.

- To build a mass, pluralistic, revolutionary International.

5 The national sections constitute the basic organisational units of the Fourth International. The aim of every national section is to bring together all the forces which share our common goals to build a mass revolutionary Marxist party capable of playing a decisive role in the class struggle within the country to a successful conclusion in a socialist victory. This is the means through which the Fourth International aspires to achieve its great emancipating goal since an international organisation does not replace or substitute for a national leadership in acting in a revolution.

VOTE: 82 - 0 - 9 - 4 NEM CON

CHAPTER I

THE SECTIONS

Article 1

The International is made up of national sections, which subscribe to the principles laid out in the preamble to its statutes, participate in its activities and organizational life, and pay the agreed dues. National sections are rooted in the reality of their countries' class struggles while building the International together, including by committing people and resources to it. The dues to be paid to the International are agreed with the

section leaderships taking into account their resources.

Article 2

Sections of the International integrate the political line that has been decided by the International into their political practice by their own free consent. They can express their own positions publicly, always provided that they do not cross the double demarcation line of opposition to capitalism and imperialism. A section of the Fourth International has however the obligation to make public the resolutions adopted by the leading bodies of the FI. It can propose to the following World Congress to change these positions.

Article 3

In order for the International to be effective the ranks of revolutionaries identifying with the FI should be united in each country. For this reason members of the International should act in such a way as to bring about such unity within the framework of one unified section of the International. This section may be an independent organisation or a current within a unified party of anti-capitalist forces, in which members of the International can be active without giving up their programmatic identity. In countries where a section has been recognised by the World Congress the International leadership will conduct relations with other political groups with the agreement of the section. Members of national sections elected to bourgeois parliamentary bodies are to follow the guidelines laid out by the national sections and be accountable to the leading bodies and congresses of the formations they represent.

Article 4

The internal life of the sections must be based on democratic norms and principles guaranteeing collective participation in discussions, decision and control of the application of decisions, and creating a climate in which all comrades feel able to participate on the basis of mutual respect.

These norms and principles include:

a) that information, draft texts and those adopted should be available to all comrades both at national and international level;

b) that the mandating of delegates is prohibited: in other words, no matter what the position of an elective body is, its delegates must be free to vote according to their own conscience and convictions as shaped by the discussion at a congress or convention;

c) that immediate report backs are made before the appropriate body by elected delegates to local, national or international (World) congresses;

d) that the necessary measures are taken to ensure that these democratic rights are really exercised without any category or sector of the membership suffering from any form of socio-cultural, gender or other oppression, including the right to self-organisation on the basis of gender, sexual, national, racial or other oppression.

Article 5

The sections of the International recognize and practice the right of tendency and faction in their ranks, that is: the right of political minorities to meet in order to organize the defence of their point of view in the organization's internal debates; the right of these minorities to express their own opinions within the organization, or even publicly through means agreed on by the organization's leading bodies; the right to be represented in these leading bodies; the right to proportional representation at the organization's congresses; and the right to communicate their opinions to the International. Minority tendencies have the duty to respect the unity and discipline of the organization as it carries out in practice the political decisions of its majority.

Article 6

In cases of disciplinary action, comrades shall be provided with written charges. They will also be provided with the opportunity to make a full reply to these charges. Wherever possible, comrades will be provided with the opportunity to confront their accusers. Any member or group of members of the International against whom a national section has taken sanctions may, once they have exhausted the procedures available to them within the framework of the section, appeal to the International. The International will charge a commission to investigate and report to the appropriate leadership body, which will take a decision about the sanction that has been challenged, as appropriate. Sections are required to comply with the International's decisions in disciplinary matters. The non-respect of organisational norms is incompatible with affiliation with the International. Nevertheless, a national section subjected to a disciplinary decision taken by an intermediate level international body may appeal to the next highest body of the International.

Article 7

To recognise that in varying conditions there will be organisations which support the FI and are not yet able or ready to assume the responsibilities of sections the World Congress, or its elected IC, can grant the formal status of sympathising organisation to such groups. Sympathising organisations publicise the positions and promote the press of the FI, support and participate in internal and external FI activities and make a regularised contribution to the FI.

Representatives of sympathising organisations will be invited to meetings of the IC and to the World Congress where they will be granted voice, and are entitled to cast consultative votes in cases where the criterion of formal financial contribution has been met. The goal of the formal status of sympathising organisation is to provide a bridge to the development of national sections in the countries concerned.

Article 8

Organizations who share the International's perspective of struggle but do not wish to join it formally can obtain the status of "permanent observer". This status enables organizations to participate in meetings of leading bodies - which bodies will be specified in each case -

with the right to speak but not to vote.

CHAPTER II

LEADERSHIP BODIES

Article 9

The International's highest decision-making body is its World Congress, which meets at least once every five years on the call of the International Committee at least six months in advance which is the minimum period of preparatory discussion. A special World Congress can be convoked at any time by the International Committee or one third of the sections.

As the climax of a process of democratic discussion and election of delegates among the national sections, the World Congress determines the political line of the International as a whole on all programmatic issues. On questions involving the national sections the World Congress serves as the final appeal and decision-making body.

The Congress is made up of elected delegates from national sections, represented in proportion to the numbers of their activists, with a minimum representation of one person per section whatever its size. A section's votes may be divided among the members of its delegation if for exceptional practical reasons the delegation has fewer members than the representation the section is entitled to by its size. Inversely, two delegates may share the vote of a section that is only entitled to one vote.

Article 10

The Congress makes its decisions by an absolute majority of votes on political and organizational issues, and by a simple majority of delegates, on procedural issues. It decides by an absolute majority on admitting new sections, and by a two-thirds majority on disaffiliating any section. It is the only body with the right to amend or modify the International's statutes, by a two-thirds majority.

Article 11

The World Congress elects a named body of 3 or 5 comrades belonging to different sections and not members of international leading bodies – all of whom enjoy the respect of the international membership – as an "Appeals Commission". It investigates cases involving violations of discipline, or our ethics, on the request of the International Committee or its own initiative, and investigates complaints concerning the procedures followed by the international leadership. The membership of the Appeals Commission must comprise enough women that it can sit as an all-women body should that be requested in any appropriate case the Appeals Commission will hear. It reports to the International Committee and recommends the action to be taken. It is accountable to the World Congress following that which elected it.

The disciplinary action that can be recommended includes suspension from membership and expulsion from the International.

Article 12

The highest decision-making body between meetings of the World Congress is the International Committee, which meets normally twice a year. It is elected by the World Congress from representatives of the sections taking account of the need to staff the International's central activities and to achieve the goal of at least 50% women members while not falling below 30%. Sections that do not have members of the Committee can nonetheless be represented by a person with the status of observer. A section may request that the members of its delegation elected by the World Congress be replaced either provisionally or permanently. This replacement must be ratified by the International Committee. The principles for dividing votes among members of delegations are the same as at a World Congress. Elections to leadership bodies are by name and made by secret ballot.

Article 13

The International Committee takes decisions on political and organizational issues by an absolute majority of the votes present when the vote is taken. It decides by a simple majority of those present, without weighting of votes, on procedural issues. It decides by an absolute majority on granting organizations the status of permanent observer, specifying the bodies to which these organizations are permanently invited. It decides on the membership of the Executive Bureau and any other subcommittees, and on the appointment of full-timers - in agreement with the national section of their country - by an absolute majority of the votes present.

Article 14

The Executive Bureau meets between International Committees in order to oversee the implementation of the preceding Committee's decisions and prepare the following Committee. The Executive Bureau is accountable to the International Committee for the decisions it takes. It is not normally empowered to take political decisions; in case of emergency it can consult the sections represented on the International Committee and publish in the International Committee's name any position that receives the approval of an absolute majority of IC members. It cannot make decisions on disciplinary issues, but can nonetheless formulate an opinion, which has an indicative status.

It is mandated to organise the implementation of the decisions of the IC, the good management of the International's practical components (press, education, regional and sectoral co-ordinating bodies), the preparation of meetings of the IC and the work of the International staff.

Article 15

The International Committee is thus responsible, through the structures it designates, for the publication of the official press of the International - if possible in three languages, English, Castilian, French- which will publish the main resolutions and statements of the International and its leading bodies, articles and documents on international events and the life of the

sections, and will be a transmission belt for international campaigns. It is responsible in the same way for the publication of an internal bulletin. The International Committee will establish the modalities for the publication of this bulletin in the discussion period preceding a World Congress in order to publish the preparatory documents, the texts submitted to the vote of leadership bodies and discussion articles allowing different points of view to be expressed.

Article 16

The International Committee oversees the financial management of the International through regular reports to its meetings and approval of financial balance sheets and proposed budgets. It will elect an accounts commission from its ranks at each meeting to audit the accounts. Financial management on a day-to-day basis is the responsibility of the Executive Bureau. Dues, fund drives and voluntary donations and income from the sale of our material are the sources of revenue for the International.

Article 17

Anything that is not foreseen in these statutes will be determined by special regulations, which each Congress will be able to revise.

VOTE: 87 - 6 - 3 - 0 CARRIED