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1. CURRENT LIBERAL CAPITALIST EXPANSION GENERATES POLARIZATION AND PAUPERIZATION AND IS THEREFORE UNBEARABLE SOCIALLY AND INTERNATIONALLY

A discourse on poverty and the necessity of reducing its magnitude, if not eradicating it, has become fashionable today. It is a discourse of charity, in the nineteenth-century-style, which does not seek to understand the economic and social mechanisms that generate poverty, although the scientific and technological means to eradicate it are now available.

Capitalism and the new agrarian question

- All societies before modern (capitalist) time were peasant societies. Their production was ruled by various specific systems and logics- but not those which rule capitalism in a market society such as the maximization of the return on capital.

Modern capitalist agriculture - encompassing both rich, large-scale family farming and agribusiness corporations - is now engaged in a massive attack on third world peasant production. The green light for this was given at the November 2001 session of the World Trade Organization (WTO) in Doha, Qatar. There are many victims of this attack- mainly third world peasants, who still make up half of humankind.

Capitalist agriculture governed by the principle of return on capital, which is localized almost exclusively in North America, Europe, Australia, and in the Southern Cone of Latin America, employs only a few tens of millions of farmers who are no longer peasants. Because of the degree of mechanization and the extensive size of the farms managed by one farmer, their productivity generally ranges between 2 and 4.5 million pounds (1 to 2 million kilogram) of cereals per farmers.

In sharp contrast, three billion farmers are engaged in peasant farming. Their farms can be grouped in two distinct sectors, with greatly different scales of production, economic and social characteristics, and levels of efficiency. One sector, able to benefit from the green revolution, obtained fertilizers, pesticides, and improved seeds and has some degree of mechanization. The productivity of these peasants ranges between 20,000 and 110,000 pounds (10,000 and 50,000 kilograms) of cereals per year. However, the annual productivity of peasants excluded from new technologies is estimated to be around 2,000 pound (1,000 kilograms) of cereals per farmers.

The ratio of the productivity of the most advanced segment of the world's agriculture to the poorest, which was around 10 to 1 before 1940, is now approaching 2000 to 1! That means that productivity has progressed much more unequally in the area of agriculture and food production than in any other area. Simultaneously, this evolution has led to the reduction of the relative prices of food products (in relation to other industrial and service products) to one fifth of what they were fifty years ago. The new agrarian question is the result of that unequal development.

- Indeed, what would happen if agriculture and food production were treated as any other form of production submitted to the rules of competition in an open and deregulated market, as decided in principle at the last WTO conference <Doha, November 2001>? Would such principles foster the acceleration of production?

One can imagine that the food brought to market by today's three billion peasants, after they ensure their own subsistences, would instead be produced by twenty million new modern farmers. The conditions for the success of such an alternative would include the transfer of important pieces of good land to the new agriculturalists (and these lands would have to be taken out of the hands of present peasant societies), capital (to buy supplies and equipment), and access to the consumer markets. Such agriculturalists would indeed compete successfully with the billions of present peasants. But what would happen to those billions of people?

Under the circumstance, agreeing to the general principle of competition for agricultural products and foodstuffs, as imposed by WTO, means accepting the elimination of billions of noncompetitive producers within the short historic time of a few decades. What will become of these billions of human beings, the majority of whom are already poor among the poor, who feed themselves with great difficulty? In fifty years' time, industrial development, even in the fanciful hypothesis of a continued growth rate of 7 percent annually, could not absorb even one-third of this reserve.

The major argument presented to legitimate the WTO's competition doctrine is that such development did happen in nineteenth and twentieth century Europe and the United States where it produced a modern, wealthy, urban-industrial and post-industrial society with modern agriculture able to feed the nation and even export food. Why should not this pattern be repeated in the contemporary third world countries?

The argument fails to consider two major factors that make the reproduction of the pattern in third world countries almost impossible. The first is that the European model developed throughout a century and a half along with labor-intensive industrial technologies. Modern technologies use far less labour and the newcomers of the third world have to adopt them if their industrial exports are to be competitive in global markets. The second is that, during that long transition, Europe benefited from the massive migration of its surplus population to the Americas.

- Can we imagine other alternatives and have them widely debated? Ones in which peasant agriculture would be maintained throughout the visible future of the twenty-first century, but which simultaneously engage in a process of continuous technological and social progress? In this way, changes could happen at a rate that would allow a progressive transfer of the peasants into non-rural and non-agricultural employment.

Such a strategic set of targets involves complex policy mixes at national, regional, and global levels.

The survival of half of humankind has to be given serious consideration. It will not be guaranteed unless the right of all peasants to have access to land and means to

farm it properly is recognized. In that spirit, WSF should organize a global campaign aiming at having this right recognized.

The New Labor Question

- The planet’s urban population now represents about half of humanity, at least three billion individuals, with peasants making up the other half. The data on this population allow us to distinguish between what we can call the middle classes and the popular classes.

The large mass of workers in the modern segments of production consists of wage-earners who now make up more than four-fifths of the urban population of the developed centers. This mass is divided into at least two categories, the border between which is both visible to the outside observer and truly lived in the consciousness of affected individuals.

There are those who we can label stabilized popular classes in the sense that they are relatively secure in their employment, thanks among other things to professional qualifications which give them negotiating power with employers and, therefore, they are often organized, at least in some countries into powerful unions. In all cases this mass carries a political weight that reinforces its negotiating capacity.

Others make up the precarious popular classes that include workers weakened by their low capacity for negotiation (as a result of their low skill levels, their status as non-citizens, or their race or gender) as well as non-wage-earners (the formally unemployed and the poor with jobs in the informal sector). We can label this second category of the popular classes “precarious,” rather than “non-integrated” or “marginalized”, because these workers are perfectly integrated into the systemic logic that commands the accumulation of capital.

Although the centers account for only 18 percent of the planet’s population, since their population is 90 percent urban, they are home to a third of the world’s urban population.

Table 1. Percentages of Total World Urban Population

(Percentages may not add up exactly due to rounding.)

	Centers	Peripheries	World
Wealthy and middle classes	11	13	25
Popular classes	24	54	75
Stabilized	(13)	(11)	(25)
Precarious	(9)	(43)	(50)
Total	33	67	100
Population concerned (millions)	(1,000)	(2,000)	(3,000)

If, as a whole, the popular classes account for three-quarters of the world’s urban population, the subcategory of the precarious today represents 40 percent of the popular classes in the centers and 80 percent in the peripheries, that is, two-thirds of the popular classes on a world scale. In other words, the precarious popular classes represent half (at least) of the world’s urban populations and far more than that in the peripheries.

- A look at the composition of the urban popular classes a half century ago, following the Second World War, shows that the proportions that characterize the structure of the popular classes were very different from what they have become.

At the time, the third world's share did not exceed half of the global urban population (then in the order of a billion individuals) versus two-thirds today. Megacities, like those that we know today in practically all countries of the South, did not yet exist. There were only a few large cities, notably in China, India, and Latin America.

In the centers, the popular classes benefited, during the postwar period, from an exceptional situation based on the historic compromise imposed on capital by the working classes. This compromise permitted the stabilization of the majority of workers in forms of a work organization known as the Fordist factory system. In the peripheries, the proportion of the precarious – which was, as always, larger than in the centers – did not exceed half of the urban popular classes (versus more than 70 percent today). The other half still consisted, in part, of stabilized wage-earners in the forms of the new colonial economy and of the modernized society and, in part, in old forms of craft industries.

The main social transformation that characterizes the second half of the twentieth century can be summarized in a single statistic: the proportion of the precarious popular classes rose from less than one-quarter to more than one-half of the global urban population, and this phenomenon of pauperization has reappeared on a significant scale in the developed centers themselves. This destabilized urban population has increased in a half-century from less than a quarter of a billion to more than a billion-and-a-half individuals, registering a growth rate which surpasses those that characterize economic expansion, population growth, of the process of urbanization itself.

The organizations which represent labour are facing a new challenge. They have to be inventive and create new forms of organization and action bringing together in a united front those segments of labour which are relatively stabilized with those who are not.

Accumulation is pauperization and polarization on a global scale.

- Pauperization – there is no better term to name the evolutionary trend during the second half of the twentieth century.

Pauperization is a phenomenon inseparable from polarization at a world scale – an inherent product of the expansion of real-existing capitalism, which for this reason we must call imperialist by nature.

Pauperization in the urban popular classes is closely linked to the developments which victimize third world peasant societies. The submission of these societies to the demands of capitalist market expansion supports new forms of social polarization which exclude a growing proportion of farmers from access to the use of land. These peasants who have been impoverished or become landless feed - even more than population growth - the migration to the shantytowns. Yet all these phenomena are destined to get worse as long as

liberal dogmas are not challenged, and corrective policy within this liberal framework can check their spread.

- Pauperization calls into question both economic theory and the strategies of social struggles.

Conventional vulgar economic theory avoids the real questions that the expansion of capitalism poses. This is because it substitutes for an analysis of really-existing capitalism with a theory of an imaginary capitalism, conceived as a simple and continuous extension of exchange relations (the market), whereas the system functions and reproduces itself on the basis of capitalist production and exchange relations (not simple market relations). This substitution is easily coupled with the a priori notion, which neither history nor rational argument confirm, that the market is self-regulating and produces a social optimum. Poverty can then only be explained by causes decreed to be outside of economic logic, such as population growth or policy errors. It is often attributed to the ongoing technological revolution and considered as transitory difficulty. This fallacy is based on a concept of “neutrality” of technologies ignoring its operating only in the frame of social relations and its relation to the actual logic of capitalist accumulation. Yet this veritable liberal virus, which pollutes contemporary social thought and annihilates the capacity to understand the world, let alone transform it, has deeply penetrated the various lefts constituted since the Second World War. The movements currently engaged in social struggles for “another world” and an alternative globalization will only be able to produce significant social advances if they get rid of this virus in order to construct an authentic theoretical debate. As long as they have not gotten rid of this virus, social movements, even the best intentioned, will remain locked in the shackles of conventional thought and therefore prisoners of ineffective corrective propositions - those which are fed by the rhetoric concerning poverty reduction.

2. THE NEW PATTERN OF COLLECTIVE IMPERIALISM UNDER THE LEADERSHIP OF THE US IS NO LESS THAN APARTHEID ON A GLOBAL SCALE

First hypothesis: *Imperialism has now become a collective imperialism (of the triad).*

In the course of the previous phases of deployment of capitalist globalization, the centres were always conjugated in the plural. These centres maintained among themselves relations marked by constant violent competition even to the extent that the conflict of imperialisms was at the centre of the historical scene. The return to globalised liberalism as from 1980 compels the structural review of the contemporary centre of the system. For one thing, at least in terms of the liberal economic management, the states forming the central triad constitute an apparently solid bloc.

The indisputable question to be answered is therefore to know whether the said evolutions portray a lasting qualitative change - since the centre is no longer conjugated in the plural but has become definitively “collective” - or that they are only attributed to economic circumstances.

This evolution could be attributed to the change in the conditions of competitiveness. A few

decades ago, the big farms waged their battle for competitiveness mainly on the national markets, and these could include that of the United State (the world's largest national market) or even those of the European States (in spite of their modest size, which put them at a disadvantage in relation to the United States). The winners of the national "rounds" could occupy ideal position on the world market. Today, the market size needed to be a winner of the first round of matches is estimated around 500 – 600 millions "potential consumers". The battle must therefore be waged straightaway on the world market and won in that arena. And it is those who win the match on this market that will impose themselves then and afterwards on their respective national grounds. Extensive globalisation is becoming the primary operational framework for the big firms. In other words, in the national, world couple, the terms of causality are reversed.

Formerly, the national power dictated presence at the world level but today, it is the opposite. As a result, the multinational firms, regardless of their nationality, have common interests in the management of the world market. Such interests are superimposed on the ordinary market conflicts that define all the forms of competition peculiar to capitalism, irrespective of what they are.

The solidarity between the dominant segments of transnational capital and the members of the Traid is real, and it explains their rallying to globalised neo-liberalism. The United States is seen as the defender, militarily if necessary, of "common interests", though Washington hardly intends to "share fairly" the profits of its leadership. On the contrary, it seeks to make it allies into vassals, and is only ready to make minor concessions to junior allies in the Traid. Will this conflict of interests within dominant capital lead to the break-up of the Atlantic alliance? Not impossible, but unlikely.

This Solidarity of the triad is operated at the level of the economic management of the global system through a set of institutions established to that effect. That is the case of the World Bank. This institution, often pompously presented as the major "think tank" formulating strategic choices for the global economy, is certainly not that important. World Bank is hardly more than a kind of Ministry of Propaganda for the G7 in charge of producing slogans and discourses, while actual responsibility for making economic strategic decisions is reserved to WTO. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) is more important, albeit not as much as is being usually said. As long as the principle of flexible exchange rates govern the international monetary system and as long as IMF is not accountable for the relations between major currencies (dollar, mark-euro, yen), the Fund operates only as a kind of collective collective colonial monetary authority for the South, governed by the North. In spite of its name, WTO is not meant to organize international trade. Its real function is to reshape and eventually dismantle the economics of the South in accordance with the need of maximizing profits of transnationals. That solidarity is also operated at the political level by the G7 and its military instrument NATO and fed ideologically by atlanticism.

Second hypothesis: *In the collective system of imperialism, the United States has no conclusive economic advantages.*

The current opinion is that United States' military strength is just the tip of the iceberg prolonging this country's superiority in all fields, particularly in the economic or even

political and cultural spheres. The subjection to hegemonic tendencies which it claims might therefore be inevitable.

In fact, the United States' productive system is far from being "the most efficient in the world". On the contrary, none of its segments might be sure of defeating its rivals on really open world market, as purported by liberal economists. A typical testimony is United States' trade deficit that is worsening from year to year, increasing from 100 billion dollars in 1989 to 500 in 2002. Moreover, this deficit concerns virtually all the segments of the productive system. Even the surplus that the United States boasted in high technology goods, which stood at 35 billion in 1990, has given way to a deficit. The competition between Ariane and the NASA space rockets, Airbus and Boeing, attests to the vulnerability of America's advantage. If faced with competition from Europe and Japan in terms of high technology products, with China, Korea and other industrialized Asian and Latin American countries for ordinary manufactured goods, and with Europe and the Southern cone of Latin America in the area of agriculture, United States of America would probably not win any match without resorting to "extra economic" schemes that violate the principles of liberalism and on rivals!

In fact, the United States does enjoy comparative advantage exclusively in the arms sector precisely because this field amply gets round the rules governing the market and also receives state support. Certainly this advantage has some repercussions on the civil sector (Internet is a well known example, but it is also the root cause of the distortions that constitute handicaps to many productive sectors.)

The North American economy operates as a parasite at the expense of its partners in the world system. "The United States of America covers 10% of its industrial consumption through imports which are not covered by national commodity exports" The world produces for consumption by the United States of America (whose national savings are virtually zero).

The world produce, and the United States, which has practically no funds in reserve, consumes. The "advantage" of the US is that of a predator whose deficit is covered by loans from others, whether consenting or forced. The means put in place by Washington to compensate for deficiencies are of various kinds, including repeated unilateral violations of liberal principles, arms exports (60 per cent of the world market) largely imposed on subaltern allies, such as the Gulf countries that never use these weapons, search for greater profits from oil, which presupposes greater control over the producers- the real reason for the wars in Central Asia and Iraq.

The essential part of the American deficit is covered by contributions of capital from Europe, Japan and the South - from oil-rich countries and comprador classes of every country of the Third World. The poorest included- to which are added the additional sums brought in from servicing the debt that has been forced on practically all the countries on the periphery of the world system. The reasons behind the continuing capital movements that feed the parasitism of American economy and society, and that allow this superpower to live from day to day, are certainly complex. But they have nothing to do with supposed "laws of the market" that are at once rational and unchangeable.

3rd Hypothesis: The purported military control of the planet is intended to compensate for the United States' economic deficiencies. This Phenomenon poses a threat to all people of the Third World.

This hypothesis logically follows from the previous one. Washington's strategic decision to take advantage of its military superiority and resort, in this context, to "preventive wars" decided and planned by the country alone, is calculated to dash all hopes of a great nation (like China, India, Russia and Brazil) or of a regional coalition in the Third World to acquire the status of a real partner helping to shape the world system, be it capitalist.

The political strategy that accompanied this programme set up the pretexts for it, whether these had to do with terrorism, with the fight against drug trafficking, or with accusations of producing weapons of mass destruction. These are obvious pretexts when one recalls the CIA's invention of convenient terrorist adversaries, whether the Taliban or Bin Laden.

There is no need for a common front against "terrorism" as claimed by the US establishment in order to conceal its real target. What is needed is a positive common front for social and international justice. Once provided justice, there will be no room for terrorism.

Accusations of producing dangerous weapons, made today against Iraq and North Korea, but tomorrow against any convenient state, pale besides the actual use of these weapons by the United States. The US used nuclear weapons at Hiroshima and Nagasaki and chemical weapons in Vietnam, and it is threatening the further use of nuclear weapons in future conflicts. Such pretexts are only propaganda tools, in the sense that Goebbels gave that term: they are useful perhaps to convince slow-witted US opinion but less and less credible elsewhere.

The idea of "preventive war", now claimed as a "right" by Washington, does away with any notion of international law. The United Nations Charter forbids the recourse to war except in cases of legitimate self-defence, and it allows military intervention only under strict conditions, any response having to be measured and provisional. All specialists in international law know that the wars undertaken since 1990 have been completely illegitimate, and therefore those who bear the responsibility for them are also war criminals. Indeed, the United States, with the cooperation of other countries, is already treating the United Nations as the fascist states treated the League of Nations.

The abolition of the common rights of all peoples, already underway, has substituted the distinction between a "Master Race" (*Herrenvolk*)- the people of the United States, and behind them, those of Israel- and other peoples for the previous principle of the equality of peoples. The existence of those peoples that do not belong to the US Master Race can only be tolerated if they do not constitute a "threat" to the ambitions of those calling themselves the "masters of the planet". This Master Race reserves the right to conquer whatever "living space" it judges necessary for itself and for those peoples it supports.

We, therefore, have all become “Red Skins”, the contemptuous name reserved for the Native Americans, in the eyes of the Washington establishment- that is to say, peoples who have the right to exist only in so far as they do not frustrate the expansion of US-based multinational capital. We have been promised that resistance to the US will be crushed using any every means, even extermination if necessary. If it is a question of making an additional 15 million dollars in profit for the American multinationals at the expense of 300 million victims, then there will be no hesitation. **The “rogue state” par excellence, to borrow the language used by Presidents Bush Senior and Junior, as well as by Clinton, is none other than the United States itself.**

The actual target of the US global strategy is not at all to create a global open market as is being claimed by the World Bank but on the Opposite to establish a system of plunder through the military control of the planet. Its real target is to turn the “flow of capital” to its benefits, now vulnerable, into a tribute.

This is a project of brutal domination (through military control) without hegemony (as understood in the Gramscian sense of the concept). That project annihilates the conventional discourse of American “liberals” (US domination being “benign”).

The US programme is certainly imperialist in the most brutal sense of that word, but it is not “imperial” in the sense that Antonio Negri has given the term, since it does not aim to manage the societies of the planet in order better to integrate them into a coherent capitalist system. Instead, it aims only at looting their resources. All this is part and parcel of the reduction of social thought to the mantras of vulgar economics, the unilateral attention paid to maximizing the financial profitability of dominant capital in the short term, supported by putting military means at the disposition of this capital, and the delinking of this capital from any system of human values. Such capital is behind the barbaric expansionism capitalism carries within itself, substituting an absolute demand of submission to the co-called laws of the market for human values.

The militarist programme adopted by the United States now threatens all peoples. It is the expression of the logic adopted by Adolf Hitler – to change social and economic relations by military force in favour of the “Master Race” of the day. This programme, now filling the foreground, over-determines all political circumstances, since the pursuit of such a programme weakens advances obtainable through social and democratic struggle. Halting the US militarist programme becomes, therefore, a major aim and responsibility for all.

Such an option – i.e. domination when the capacity to be hegemonic is lost – illustrates the fact that the system (Capitalism) has reached the stage of obsolescence. But precisely for that reason it is bound to develop into a criminal project.

4th Hypothesis: The United States’ option for militarized globalisation poses a serious threat to the interests of Europe and Japan.

This hypothesis follows from the second one. Among other concerns, the United States objective of controlling militarily all the important resources of the planet (oil in particular) is

geared towards relegating the European and Japanese partners to the status of vassals. America's oil wars are "anti-European" wars.

Europe (and Japan) can partially react to this strategy by drawing closer to Russia, which is capable of supplying some oil and a few other essential raw materials.

Europe must and can be freed from the liberal virus: nevertheless, this initiative cannot be taken by segments of the dominant capital, but by the peoples.

The dominant segments of capital, whose interests the European governments are still bent on defending at all costs, as an exclusive priority, are of course the defenders of the globalised neoliberalism and that explains why they accept to pay the price of their subordination by the North American leader.

Peoples throughout Europe have a vision different from the European project that they want to assume social dimensions and from their relations with the rest of the world, which they want to be governed by law and justice, as they have recently been expressing in their overwhelming majority by denouncing the United States' drift. If this humanist and democratic culture of the "old Europe" prevails – which is possible – then an authentic cohesion between Europe, Russia, China, the whole of Asia and the entire Africa will constitute the foundation on which will be constructed a multi-centrist, democratic and pacific world.

The major contradiction between Europe and the United States is therefore not the contrast between the interests of the dominant capital here and there, but rather the type identified in their political cultures.

The imminent conflict lies in the arena of political cultures. In Europe, one leftist alternative is still possible. It might simultaneously impose a break with neo-liberalism (and the shattering of the vain hope of subjecting the United States to its exigencies, thereby allowing European capital to wage war on the mine-free field of economic competition), for instance, by conforming to the United States' political strategies. The surplus capital that Europe has so far opted to "invest" in the United States could therefore be assigned to economic recovery and social rehabilitation projects, without which the latter will be impossible. But since Europe might then choose to give priority to its economic and social progress, the artificial health of the United States' economy would decline and the American ruling class would be confronted with its own social problems. The meaning I give to my conclusions is that "Europe will go left or not be".

To that effect, Europeans must rid themselves of the illusion that the card of liberalism should – and could – be played "honestly" by all and that, in this case, things would get better. The United States cannot renounce its option for an asymmetrical practice of liberalism because this is the sole means whereby America can compensate for its own deficiencies. The price of America's "prosperity" is the stagnation of others.

The European question can be situated here. In fact, its impact cannot be ignored and an in-depth discussion of what I refer to as the “quicksand in the European project” is indeed needed.

“European political cultures” are diverse, even if they somewhat contrast with that of the United States. There are political, social and ideological forces in Europe that lucidly support the vision of “another Europe” (social and friendly in its relations with the South). But there is also Great Britain, which has since 1945 made the historical option of enlisting unconditional support for the United States. There are the forces among the ruling classes of Eastern Europe moulded by a culture of servitude, bowing yesterday to Hitler, then to Stalin, and to Bush today. There are “pro-American” rightist populisms (Style of those nostalgic for Francoism and Mussolinism in Spain and Italy respectively). Will the conflict between these cultures split Europe? Will it result in an alignment with Washington? Or in the victory of progressive humanist and democratic cultures?

5th Hypothesis: The South must and can be liberated from the liberal illusions to embark on renewed forms of self-centred development.

There is no doubt that, for the time being, governments of the Southern countries still seem to be fighting for a “true neo-liberalism” whose Northern partners, like those of the South, would agree “to play the game”. The Southern countries can only realize that this hope is completely illusory.

They will then have to revert to the inevitable concept that development is necessarily self-centred. To develop oneself means defining, in the first place, national objectives allowing for the modernization of productive systems and creating internal conditions that uses it to promote social progress, and then subjecting to the exigencies of such logic, the modalities governing relations between the nation and developed capitalist centers. This definition of delinking – which is not autarky – situates the concept miles away from the opposite principle of “structural adjustment” to the exigencies of globalisation, which is therefore necessarily subjected to the exclusive demands for expansion of the dominant multinational capital, thereby deepening inequalities at the global level.

The reconstruction of a strong Southern front entails the participation of its peoples.

The political regimes set up in many of the Southern countries are not democratic, to say the least, and are sometimes really odious. These authoritarian power structures favour compradore groups whose interests consist in expanding the global imperialist capitalism.

The alternative – construction of a front comprising peoples of the South – can materialize through democratization. This necessary democratization will be a difficult and long process but it certainly cannot be realized by establishing puppet regimes to open their countries’ resources to plunder by North American multinational companies, regimes that will consequently be even more fragile, less credible and less legitimate than those they succeeded under protection by the American invader. Incidentally, the United States goal is not to promote democracy in the world despite its purely hypocritical discourse on that subject.

6th Hypothesis: *A new internationalism of peoples associating Europeans, Asians, Africans and Americans is therefore possible.*

This hypothesis emanates from and concludes the preceding one. This means that there exist conditions capable of promoting closer relations between at least all the peoples of the ancient world. This union could be given concrete expression at the international diplomatic level by thickening the Paris – Berlin – Moscow – Peking axis, that could be strengthened by developing friendly relations between this axis and the reconstituted Afro-Asian front.

Obviously, initiatives in this direction reduce the United States' inordinate and criminal ambition to nothing. Washington would therefore be compelled to accept coexistence with nations determined to defend their own interests.

At present, this objective must absolutely be considered as a priority. The deployment of the American project over-determines the stake inherent in all struggles: there will be no social and democratic progress so long as the American is not smashed.

Organising a global campaign for the dismantling of all the US military bases throughout the world must become a top priority item on the agenda of WSF.

7th Hypothesis: *Issues concerning cultural diversity should be discussed as part of the new international perspectives outlined here.*

Cultural diversity is a fact. But it is complex and ambiguous. The forms of diversity inherited from the past, however legitimate they might be, are not necessarily synonymous with diversity in the construction of the future, which should not only be admitted but also advocated.

Dwelling exclusively on diversities inherited from the past (political Islam, Hindutva, Confucianism, Negritude, chauvinistic ethnicity, etc.) often constitutes a demagogic formula of autocratic and compradore powers that enables the latter to dodge the challenge of universalizing civilization and actually submitting to the diktat of the dominant trans-national capital. Moreover, the exclusive emphasis on such legacies divides the Third World in setting political Islam and Hindutva in Asia, Muslims, Christians and followers of other religions in Africa against one another. Such divisions sustained by American imperialism who expresses a vicious preference for autocracies based on ethnicity or para religious movements can be surmounted through new foundations for a united political Southern Front. But what are and may be the “universal values” on which the future can be founded? The Western-centrist and restrictive interpretation of these values legitimizes unequal development, the immanent product of the past and present-day globalised capitalist expansion. It must be rejected. But in what way can authentically universal concepts enriched with inputs from all parties be put forward? At any rate, it can by no means be ignored.

3. SOCIAL AND INTERNATIONAL INJUSTICE ANNIHILATES THE CREDIBILITY OF DEMOCRACY

- The alternative to the US project of organizing and controlling apartheid on a global scale has to combine Social Progress, democratization, and negotiated interdependence

What people need today, as well as yesterday, are society-wide projects (national and / or regional) articulated to regulated and negotiated globalized structures (while assuring a relative complementarity between them), which would simultaneously permit advances in three directions:

- a) Social Progress: this demands that economic progresses are necessarily accompanied by social benefits for all.
- b) The democratization of society in all dimensions, understood as a never-ending process and not as a “blue print”, defined once for all. Democratization demands that its reach is felt in social and economic spheres, and not to be restricted to just the political sphere.
- c) The affirmation of society-wide economic and social development, and the building of forms of globalization that offer this possibility

The “alternative” that we are defining by advances in three directions – demands that all three progress in parallel. The experiences of modern history, which were founded on the absolute priority of “National independence” whether accompanied by social progress, or even sacrificing it, but always without democratization, continually demonstrate their inability to go beyond the rapidly attained historical limits. **As a complementary counterpoint, contemporary democracy projects, which have accepted to sacrifice social progress and autonomy in globalized interdependence, have not contributed to reinforcing the emancipatory potential of democracy, but have, instead, eroded it – even to discredit and finally delegitimize it.** If, as the predominant neo-liberal discourse pretends, submitting to the demands of the market presents no other alternative, and if, this idea would by itself produce social progress (which is not true), why bother voting? Elected governments become superfluous decorations, since “change” (a succession of different heads who all do the same thing) is substituted to alternative choices by which democracy is defined. Many empirical evidences have been collected, particularly in Latin America, which show that a growing majority disappointed with the results of democracy having been associated with liberal economics are moving away from the defense of democracy. The reaffirmation of politics and the culture of citizenship define the very possibility of a necessary alternative to democratic decadence.

- American ideology is careful to package its merchandise, the imperialist project, in the ineffable language of the “historic mission of the United States”. A tradition handed down from the beginning by the “founding fathers”, sure of their divine inspiration. American liberals – in the political sense of the term, who consider themselves as the “left” in their society – share this ideology. Accordingly, they present American hegemony as necessarily “benign”, the source of progress in moral scruples and in democratic practice, which will necessarily be to the advantage of those who, in their eyes, are not victims of this project but beneficiaries. American hegemony, universal peace, democracy, and material progress are, joined together as inseparable terms. Reality, of course, is located elsewhere.

In contrast with this project legalizing apartheid on a global scale, what is needed is an “international (global) law of peoples” (not a law for business, as if business interests

constituted the exclusive legitimate rights). In that frame can we hope to develop a new, higher law that will guarantee that everyone on the planet is treated with dignity, which is the prerequisite for their active, creative participation in building the future? A complete, multidimensional body of law that deals with the rights of the human being (both men and women, of course, in full equality), with political rights, social rights (to life, to work and to security), the rights of communities and of peoples, and finally with relations between States. That is certainly an agenda that will take decades of reflection, debate, actions and decisions.

The principle of respect for the sovereignty of nations must remain the cornerstone of international law. And if the framers of the Charter of the United Nations chose to proclaim that principle, it was precisely because it had been denied by the fascist powers. The solemn adoption of the principle of national sovereignty in 1945 was logically accompanied by the prohibition of recourse to war. States are authorized to defend themselves against anyone who violates their sovereignty by aggression, but they are condemned in advance if they are the aggressors. Yet NATO member countries have been the aggressors in former Yugoslavia, US and its associates in Iraq.

No doubt the interpretation of the principle of sovereignty given in the United Nations Charter was absolute. Today democratic public opinion no longer accepts that this principle authorizes governments to do whatever they want with the human beings placed under their jurisdiction, a change in attitude that represents definite progress in the moral conscience of mankind. But how are we to reconcile these two principles that can conflict? Certainly not by eliminating one of the terms – either the sovereignty of States or human rights. Because the path chosen by the United States, followed by its subaltern European allies, not only is certainly the wrong one but also conceals the true objectives of the operation, which have nothing to do with respect for human rights, notwithstanding the media blitz that tries to make us think so.

- To identify the conditions of this humanist alternative, it is essential to start with the diversity of the aspirations motivating social mobilization and social struggles and perhaps to classify these aspirations subsequently under five headings: (i) aspiration for political democracy, rule of law and intellectual freedom; (ii) aspiration for social justice; (iii) aspiration for respect for various groups and communities; (iv) aspiration for improved ecological management and (v) aspiration for a more favourable position in the global system.

It can easily be recognized that the protagonists of the movements meeting these aspirations are seldom identical. For instance, it is imagined that the concern to offer the country a higher position in the global hierarchy, which is defined in terms of wealth, power and autonomy of movement, will constitute a major concern among the ruling classes and authorities even if this objective might win the sympathy of the population as a whole. Aspiration for respect – in the full sense of the term, in other words, respect for a really equal treatment – can mobilize women as such, or a cultural, language or religious group subjected to discriminations. The movements inspired by such aspirations may be trans-classicist. On the other hand, the aspiration for greater social justice, defined at will (in conformity with the wishes of the movements motivated by such aspiration) – for improved material well – being, a more pertinent and effective legislation or a system of social relations

and a radically different system of production – will almost inevitably find expression in class struggles. This can take the form of a claim by the peasantry or by one of its groups for agrarian reform, property redistribution, a legislation favourable to tenant farmers, more favourable prices, etc. it can may be expressed in the context of union rights, labour legislation, or even a demand for State policy that would enhance its effective intervention in favour of workers as far as the nationalization, joint management or more radically labour power. But it can also appear in the form of demands by groups of professionals or entrepreneurs claiming tax relief. It can be channeled through claims concerning all citizens, as testified by the movements pressing for the right to education, health or housing and, mutates mutandis, the right to a suitable environmental management. The democratic aspiration can be limited and definite, particularly when it inspires a movement fighting against an undemocratic authority. At the same time, it may be integrative and can therefore be conceived as the lever helping to promote all the social demands.

A current distribution chart of these movements would certainly show vast inequalities in their presence in the field. But we know that this chart is not static because in the event of a problem, there is almost always a potential movement to find an appropriate solution. However, it would necessarily smack of naïve optimism to imagine that the resultant of the chart of forces operating in these very diverse fields will promote the coherence of a joint movement mobilizing societies to press for enhanced justice and democracy. Chaos stems as much from the nature as from the order. Similarly, one would be naïve to overlook the ruling authorities reaction to such movements. The geographical distribution of these powers and the strategies they develop to meet challenges facing them at both local and international levels, respond to considerations other than those underlying the aspirations in question.

In other words, the possibility of drift on the part of the social movements, their exploitation and manipulation also constitute some of the realities that could eventually render them powerless or compel them to adopt a perspective different from theirs.

There is a global political strategy for world management. Its objective is to ensure the maximum disintegration of potential anti-systemic forces by contributing to the decline of the State system. As many Slovenias, Chechenias, Kosovos and Kuwaits as possible! The use of demands for recognition and even their manipulation, are welcome in this regard. The question of community, ethnic, religious or other forms of identity therefore constitutes one of the major concerns of our era.

The basic principle of democracy – which implies real respect for national, ethnic, religious, cultural and ideological diversity – cannot be circumvented. Diversity cannot be managed in any fashion other than the sincere practice of democracy. Otherwise, it inevitably becomes an instrument that opponents can utilize for their own purposes.

In the Third World of Bandung, the national liberation movements often succeeded in uniting the various ethnic groups and religious communities against the imperialist enemy. Whereas the ruling classes in the first generation of African States were often really trans-ethnic, few power systems were able to manage such diversity democratically and consolidate the achievements, if there were any. In this regard, their meagre propensity for democracy produced results as deplorable as in their management of other problems facing their

societies. With the ensuing crisis, the ruling classes in desperate straits, and helpless, often played a decisive role in resorting to community withdrawals as a means of prolonging their “control” of the masses. However, even in many authentic bourgeois democracies, community diversity is often far from being managed correctly.

The success of culturalism measures up to the inadequacies inherent in the democratic management of diversity, culturalism being understood in the assertion that the differences in question might be “primordial”, and should “have priority” (in relation to the class differences for instance) and sometimes are supposed to be “trans-historical”; in other words, based on historical invariants (this is often the case of religious culturalisms which easily leads to obscurantism and fanaticism).

An essential criterion will therefore be proposed for enhanced understanding of the jumble of demands of recognition at social and other levels. The aspects considered progressive are the claims intended to fight against social exploitation and pressing for increased democracy in all of its dimensions. On the other hand, all the claims presented “without a social programme” (because that is said to be unimportant!), claims purportedly “not opposed to globalisation” (Because that may also be insignificant!), and that are presented, a fortiori, as falling outside the concept of democracy (accused of being “western”) are clearly reactionary and they absolutely serve the interests of the dominant capital. All the same, the latter is aware of the existing situation and supports such claims even when the media take advantage of their barbarous content to denounce peoples who are victims of the system using or even manipulating such movements.

The humanist alternative to apartheid on the global scale cannot be sustained by backward-looking nostalgia; neither can it be based on the assertion of diversities inherited from the past this will not be effective unless it comes within a framework resolutely oriented towards the future. This entails going beyond the truncated and polarizing capitalist globalisation, constructing a new post-capitalist globalisation based on real equality among peoples, communities, States and individuals.

Inherited diversities create problems because they exist. But in concentrating on them, one loses sight of other diversities that are otherwise more interesting –those that the future invention necessarily generates in its movement. The concept associated with such diversities proceeds from the very concept of emancipatory democracy and the perpetually uncompleted modernity accompanying it. The creative utopias around which may crystallise peoples’ struggles for equality and justice always find their legitimacy from the multiple systems of values. The systems of social analysis – their necessary complement – are inspired by social theories which are themselves diverse. The strategies proposed with a view to moving effectively in the suitable direction cannot themselves be the monopoly of any organization. These diversities in the future invention are not only inevitable they are also welcome.

The alternative to global apartheid is therefore a pluricentric world, in which less unequal economic and political relations between regions and countries which have inherited the destructive effects of polarization produced by the expansion of capitalism are systematically organized through a complex set of negotiations, policies and regulations aiming at:

- (1) Renegotiating “market shares” and the rules of access to them. This project of course challenges the rules of the WTO which, behind all the talk of “fair competition”, is exclusively concerned with defending the privileges of the oligopolies that are active on a world scale.
- (2) Renegotiating the systems of capital markets, with a view to putting an end to the domination of financial speculation and orienting investment toward productive activities in the North and South.
- (3) Renegotiating monetary systems, with a view to putting into place regional arrangements and systems that would ensure the relative stability of exchange rates, supplemented by the organization of their interdependence. This project challenges the IMF, the dollar standard, and the principle of free and fluctuating rates of exchange.
- (4) Starting establishing a worldwide system of taxation – for example, by the taxing of income derived from the exploitation of natural resources, and the redistribution of these funds for designated purposes around the world according to appropriate criteria.
- (5) Demilitarizing the planet, beginning with the reduction of the weapons of mass destruction in the arsenals of the most powerful countries; and dismantling of the US bases disseminated throughout the planet

4. MEETING THE CHALLENGE IMPLIES THE REBUILDING OF THE SOLIDARITY OF THE PEOPLES OF THE SOUTH

Guidelines for a far-reaching alliance as a basis for the eventual reconstruction of solidarity among peoples and States of the South.

The ideas propounded suggest the guidelines for the eventual revival of a “South Front”. There positions concern the political sphere as well as the economic management of the globalisation process.

- A. Taking shape, in terms of economic management of the world system, are guidelines for an alternative that the South could defend collectively, since the constituent countries share common interests in these respects.
 - (i) The idea that international capital transfers must be controlled has assumed topical dimensions again.

In fact, only one goal is targeted by the opening of capital accounts, which is imposed by IMF as a new dogma of “liberalism”: facilitating substantial transfer of capital to the United States to offset the growing deficits incurred by America –which are at the same time the product of economic deficiencies in the United States’ economy and of the deployment of its strategy for the military control of the planet.

The Southern countries have no interest in facilitating in that way the siphoning of their capital and possibly the devastations caused by the speculative raids.

As a result, the subjection to all the uncertainties inherent in the system of flexible rates of exchange, which comes as a logical deduction from the requirements for opening capital accounts, should be called into question. Systems of regional organizations guaranteeing the

relative stability of exchanges should be established instead and this could be examined through research and systematic negotiations within the Non-Aligned Movement and the G-77.

(ii) The idea of regulating foreign investment has resurfaced.

Certainly, the Third world countries do not envisage closing their doors to all forms of foreign investment, as some of them did in the past. On the contrary, direct investments are solicited. But the procedure for hosting such investments are again subjected to critical reflections to which certain governmental sectors of the Third World have remained sensitive.

In relation to this regulation, the notion of intellectual and industrial property rights, which the World Trade Organisation (WTO) wants to impose, is henceforth contested. It is understood that far from promoting “fair” Competition on open markets, this notion was rather intended to strengthen the monopolies of multinational companies.

(iii) Many of the Southern countries have realized again that they cannot do without a national agricultural development policy that takes account of the need to protect peasants from the devastating consequence of their accelerated integration under the influence of the “new competition” that the World Trade Organisation wants to promote in this domain and to preserve food security at the national level.

In fact, the opening of the agriculture commodity markets, which allows the United States, Europe and a few Southern countries (those of the Southern cone of America) to export their surpluses to the Third World does threaten in that way the objectives of national food security, without providing compensation, as productions of the Third world peasantry encounter unbearable difficulties on the Northern markets. And yet this liberal strategy disintegrating such peasants and accentuating their migration from the rural areas to urban slums accounts for the reappearance of peasant struggles in the South, which now constitutes a source of anxiety among the public authorities.

The agricultural issue is often discussed in the WTO arena in particular, from the sole angle of subsidies granted by Europe and the United States not only to their farmers produce but also to their farmer’s agricultural exports. This focus on the sole question of world trade in agricultural commodities eclipses straightaway the major concerns mentioned above. It also creates strange ambiguities, because it urges the Southern countries to defend positions that are even more liberal than those actually adopted by the Northern governments amid the World Bank’s applause (but since when has the World Bank been defending the interests of the southern countries against those of their Northern counterparts?). Nothing makes it impossible to separate the subsidies granted to farmers by their governments (after all, if we defined the principle of income redistribution in the South, the Northern countries also have that right!) from those intended to sustain the dumping of agricultural exports from the North.

The failure of the WTO Cancun conference (September 2003) should be understood as a victory for the concerned peoples. The mere fact that the vast majority of countries of the South have rejected the diktat cooked by WTO is by itself a victory. But it remains limited and even ambiguous as long as what was rejected was not “liberalism in principle” (i.e. the

frank and reciprocal opening of all markets to all) but only the scandalous and biased plan for its implementation. The South should understand that it has to move further, since even a generous and reciprocal opening of all markets to agricultural and food productions (with or without subsidies) would be catastrophic for its peasant societies.

(iv) Debt is no longer solely considered as economically unbearable. Its legitimacy is now being called into question. A claim currently taking shape is designed to enforce the unilateral renunciation of odious and illegitimate debts, as if to pave the way for an international law on debt- worthy of this term- which does not yet exist.

A generalized debt audit would actually make it possible to present a significant proportion of illegitimate, odious and sometimes even criminal debts. And yet the sole interests paid on these debts have reached such levels that the legally justified demand for their refund might actually help to cancel the current debt and reveal the entire transaction as a really primitive form of plunder. To that effect, the idea that external debts should be regulated by a normal and civilized legislation, like domestic debts, should be sustained through a campaign aimed at promoting international law and enforcing its legitimacy. Obviously, it is precisely because the law is silent in this sector so the question is resolved only through brutal balance of power. Such relationships therefore make it possible to legitimize international debts which would bring debtor and creditor to count “for criminal conspiracy” if they were domestic debts (and the creditor and debtor hailed from the same nation and are governed by its legal system).

B. In the political sphere: denunciation of the new principle of United States’ policy (“preventive war”) and the demand for evacuation of all foreign military in Asia, Africa and Latin America.

The choice made by Washington in respect of its zone for military interventions uninterrupted since 1990 is the Arab Middle East- Iraq and Palestine (for the latter, through the unconditional support of Israel) - the Balkan States (Yugoslavia, new US installations in Hungary, Romania and Bulgaria), Central Asia and the Caucasian region (Afghanistan, the former Soviet Central Asia and Caucasian region), Iraq.

The objectives pursued by Washington comprise several aspects: (i) controlling the world’s most important oil-producing region, and exerting pressure in the process, with a view to relegating Europe and Japan to the status of subordinate allies: (ii) establishing permanent American military bases in the heart of the Old World (Central Asia equidistant from Paris, Johannesburg, Moscow, Peking and Singapore) and thus preparing other future “preventing wars” primarily against the powerful countries likely to impose themselves as partners with which “one would have to negotiate” (China in the first place, but also Russia and India). This goal may be achieved by establishing in the countries of the region concerned, puppet regimes imposed by United States’ armed forces. From Peking to Delhi and Moscow, it is becoming increasingly obvious that the wars “made in USA” ultimately constitute a threat to China, Russia and India more than to their immediate victims, such as Iraq.

Coming back to Bandung, the policy of “no American military bases in Asia and Africa” is now a topical issue. Let us hear from every part of the world a growing common glamour: US- Go home!