

A PROGRAMME FOR THE LEFT IN SOUTH AFRICA

Premises

The fall of the apartheid regime must be considered as a great political victory – the obvious precondition for any further progress. It also made possible undeniable immediate social advances to the benefit of the majority of the African working classes. Yet these positive changes remain limited and cannot be pursued to the extent needed to correct the gigantic inequalities built by colonialism and apartheid, unless the very fundamental basis on which the South African society is constructed (which is not only racism but also capitalism) is seriously questioned.

The premises on which the following proposals are constructed are :

(1) The South African “system” is not sustainable. South Africa is a microcosm of the global capitalist/imperialist system. The ratio of inequality between the 20% highest income citizens and the 80 % working classes is equal to the ratio which characterises the global system (20% of humankind in the North, 80 % in the South). Just as the global capitalist/imperialist system is explosive by nature (the South cannot “catch up”), the South African society is equally not sustainable.

(2) The global “liberal” system is also not sustainable. The fall of the first generation of “really existing socialist experiences”, may have created the illusion that there is “no alternative” to capitalism (to which many leftists unfortunately has succumbed). Yet this “victory” of capital will be short lived and already the recipes of neo liberalism have lost legitimacy and credibility in a few years. Nonetheless “positive alternatives” to the rejected liberal capitalism have not yet crystallised even if there are signs that this is possible (Venezuela, Bolivia, sections of the World Social Forum are proofs of that). These positive alternatives will necessarily find their natural place in the succession of phases moving towards a “post capitalist” (i.e. socialist) global world. For sure the “socialist” long run target cannot neither be “described in detail” not be a remake of the first generation. But the legitimacy of the principles and values on which it is based must be restored : equality of all human beings, equality of gender, sustainable eco-productive systems, supremacy of the values of solidarity over competition, emancipated minds, meaningful practices of democracy in all aspects of social life.

(3) The attempt to submit humankind to the current dictates of the dominant segments of oligopolistic financial globalised capital (i.e. in vulgar terms the “transnationals”), which took advantage from the fall of socialist systems and the erosion of national populist alternatives (which dominated in the South during the 60s and 70s), is itself not sustainable. It is for that reason that liberal capitalism has moved towards a militarised concept of globalisation, under the leadership of the USA. This power was therefore in a position to move ahead in its project of establishing its military control of the Planet, starting with the series of “preventive wars” in the Middle East (in order to control and plunder its oil resources and submit Europe, China and the rest of the world to permanent blackmail). Defeating this US criminal policy – starting by defeating it in the front line countries of the Middle East – has become the precondition for moving ahead towards democratisation and social progress. These two goals cannot be dissociated as they are in the recipe of “pluralistic electoral representative democracy” and

“good governance”. This dissociation has already led to a masquerade of “democracies” which do not benefit from the legitimacy of the popular classes. Defeating the US vision of “an American XXIst century” (the official terminology of major policy documents produced by the US establishment) will open the way for the construction of an authentic multipolar global system (a “negotiated globalisation”) offering room for progressive social changes. Therefore democracy and respect of national sovereignties must go together, reinforcing one another.

(4) In the present conjuncture the “front of the South” which characterised the previous period (the “Bandung era” from 1955 to 1980) has been dismantled. Some countries of the South seem to have “successfully” adjusted to the new capitalist global expansion and are constantly flattered by dominant medias as “emerging countries” (China first, but also India, Brasil, South Africa...) which “respect the rules of the game “of a so called” open global market” (which it is not in fact). Others (among which most African countries) are being “marginalised” (which in fact also is not the case, their peoples are disregarded, not their national resources), and it is being said that they are exclusively responsible for their “failure” to adjust ... “Emerging countries” are being said on the way of they “catching up” with the advanced societies. This is also totally unreal, and furthermore impossible. Through the “monopolies of which it benefits” (cf. S Amin, the “five monopolies”: high-tech over protected, access to the Planet national resources reserved, control of medias, control of global finance, monopoly of mass destruction armament) the new collective imperialism of the Triad (US, Europe, Japan) makes impossible for the new highly industrialising countries (China first) to become members of the restricted Club. Moreover internal social conditions (huge proportion of low income popular classes) make impossible a remake of social democracy here. This is true even for the highly successful China (in terms of rates of growth), a priori for the modestly growing South Africa. A “front restricted to the emerging countries” – while not negligible to reinforce their positions vis a vis the imperialist center – must be conceived as part of a wider South alliance.

We derive from these premises the following conclusions :

(i) it is time to be “radical”, move away from the illusions of “adapting to reality” (the global liberal/imperialism system), and restore the long run socialist perspective.

(ii) the political choice of short run continuously choosing the less bad” (in order to avoid the worse) leads nowhere but in a blind alley. The “less bad” is so often so close to the “bad” that this choice disempowers the popular classes, demoralises them and may even create conditions for popular blind alley false response (such as political/pseudo religions or pseudo ethnical movements suggest).

(iii) in contrast the choice of radicalism has led to brilliant victories, even if not yet stabilised and therefore vulnerable. That is the case of Chavez (who expected to get maximal 10 % of the votes on his radical proposals, while he got 60 %!), of Morales. A lesson for all.

The proposals for a radical programme which the progressive forces in South Africa may adopt for the coming electoral campaigns are designed in that frame. We shall indicate briefly the outline of its major substance, as well as the challenges which its implementation shall have to meet.

The substance of the program

Radicalism must characterize the substance of the program. It is not to be understood as “radical rhetoric” (slogans, demagogic short run targets etc...). Radicalism does not exclude respect for diversity (recognition of conflicting interests among the people), neither respect for realism (step by step progress). It includes them.

A radical clear, argued program, would convince and lead to victory. The popular classes in South Africa have been educated throughout their long standing struggles, they are among the best “politicised” peoples in the present world. This is why South Africa is a “weak link” in the system.

We summarize the proposals under the following headlines:

1. What future for our industries and further industrialisation?

The set of industries established in South Africa by international dominant colonial and apartheid regimes were either totally externally oriented (mining) or related to the expansion of a local market restricted to the white minority, the exclusive beneficiaries of “development”. These industries have not necessarily been “competitive” and were highly protected. The post apartheid governments have until now pursued the target of making these industries more competitive on global (“open” or so called open) markets, in accordance with the liberal recipe. That sad choice would not allow establishing a solid relation between growth of industries and the expansion of the national popular market, since it implies maintaining the work force in poor conditions.

Yet it is precisely establishing this relation which should be central in the macro industrial strategy. That implies substituting to the prevalence of the concept of competitiveness an alternative concept of efficiency. These are two different concepts. Competitiveness may be reached through deteriorating conditions for labour, waste of natural resources, and respond to a demand which is socially devastating. Efficiency takes into account all these conditions for a social and environmental progressive and sustainable project.

Industries must therefore be conceived in relation to a growing demand of popular classes, and continuous increases in wages have to be planned in accordance with the progress of overall productivity of the nation. That principle does imply a variety of property and management’s rules. It does not exclude private entrepreneurship, but implies the regulation of the market and a vast variety of state initiatives to support correct choices of investment. It also should encourage new forms of collective property, cooperative, municipal and local governments involvement etc... What has to be rejected is the capitalist principle of the absolute rule of the shareholders. Labour has to be really and meaningfully associated to the management of the enterprises.

Such a macro strategy gives priority to the expansion of the internal popular market. Maximal exports should therefore not represent its main target. Exports must be envisaged in accordance with the need to import those products (raw material, equipment, eventually some consumption items) that at each successive stage of the progress are not available locally.

This strategy, needless to say, is neither the “export oriented” proposal nor the “import substitution” (which considered demand as it is, not in a perspective of growing less unequal distribution of income). It is what could be called an “auto centered” model operating on the basis of a popular national democratic alliance.

2. A radical land reform is a top priority

Since 1913 African peasant societies have been massively expropriated in order to establish the colonial/apartheid pattern of settlers’ agriculture. It was also essential to create a reserve of cheap manpower needed by the mining industries and later apartheid manufacturing. “Homelands” are no more peasants societies, but devastated rural settlements. Urban growing slums are also the consequence of this structure accepted if not pursued unfortunately since 1994.

Should even the “rate of growth” of industries and meaningful services be relatively high in the future, urban “modern” efficient activities will not be in a position to absorb the “surplus population” (surplus from the point of view of a “competitive” South African system of production fully submitted to the rules of the game in the frame of the global capitalist/imperialist system). A proportion at least of this “marginalized urban population” must be resettled as efficient agricultural producers. Can it be so? And at what conditions?

South Africa is fortunately relatively rich in good/acceptable pieces of land proper for agriculture, whenever water resources can be provided and their use (not waste) mastered. Much of these lands are currently the formal property of former settlers and agro business companies, not necessarily exploited (or sufficiently exploited) and must be expropriated (with no or very small compensation). But, irrespective of that eventual availability of land, it is not acceptable (socially and politically) that a few tens of thousands of “farmers” own most of the county, independently even of the fact that they all belong to a same “racial stock” (a native latifundia system such as that of Brasil is not more acceptable).

A radical concept of the land reform was a priority in the programme of the SACP until the 30s. It is being said now that evolution has since cancelled that “need”. For two reasons . First the former settlers’ family farm have been gradually deeply integrated in a modern “agro business” nexus, providing inputs (equipment, selected seeds, fertilizers and pesticides), credit, access to markets etc. This “modern agriculture” is said highly efficient. That is questionable since a good part of this efficiency is related to very low wages paid to agricultural workers and high waste of land and natural resources. Second because there is no “demand from below” for a land reform. That is true to the extent that peasants societies have been dismantled and that the urbanised poor strata of the people are no more peasant minded.

These reasons do not cancel the need for a reform and the subsequent reestablishment of African new farmers on these lands. The fact that future candidates to farming are not traditional could be an advantage, making possible the settlement of modern farmers. In that respect the experiences of MST in Brasil which organised modern cooperative farms might be useful for South Africa;

We believe that the settlement of a new African peasant modern farming system should not be reduced to “ a few thousands”, but be in fact quite massive. In that way a radical land reform will contribute solving a number of major problems: (i) reduce urban poverty; (ii) ensure food sovereignty on a high level of good food consumption for the popular classes; (iii) establish in

the rural areas a better balance of populations of different “races”; (iv) reshape the geography of the country which has been lopsided by colonisation and apartheid, reduce the over population of previous hopeless “homelands”.

3. The Nation must reclaim the full control of its natural resources

The natural resources of South Africa have been exploited to the exclusive benefit of the masters of the imperialist British and global system, not only through the private appropriation of these resources by foreign companies and the extraction of high profits for their exploitation, but also (and this is no less important) as an important component of the management of global capitalism by British/Global monopoly capital.

These resources must be reappropriated by the Nation (Bolivia has proven that to be possible), and managed under its full control. That implies that eventual management/exploitation agreements and contracts with private firms (foreign and local) must be seriously conditioned and controlled.

Export levels should be fixed in accordance with South Africa’s needs for imports not in accordance with “global demand”.

4. The state must control the financial and banking system of the country

Presently this not the case. Banks, whether foreign or national (but these are linked to the former), are “free” to a very large extent in defining their policies and choices of investments. They are governed in that respect by the exclusive target of maximal financial profitability, irrespective of any other consideration. More over they exert a very strong influence on industrial and commercial choices of the business community.

That cannot continue. Time has come to move into the rebuilding of a national autocentered financial system, which implies:

(i) the creation of a state owned major Bank. This bank should collect, by law, all public and semi public funds such as: the funds of parastatals, local governments, the pension funds of all nature etc. This may involve a scrutinised study of the present system of pension funds legislation, revision of their legal status (responsibilities of the trustees etc.). This is far from being impossible. The South Africa system (at least for those funds inherited from the previous system) is not only “liberal”, but to a large extent inspired by the American (more than Anglo American) tradition relating pensions to investment profits. This was not, and still is not to a very large extent, the European Continental system where the state (and not the Stock Exchange) guarantees the pensions. South Africa must move in that direction.

(ii) re-establish a more serious control over international flows of capital, not only those of a “speculative” nature, but even other. There is no reason for the “opening of the capital account” advocated by IMF other than facilitating the plunder of the savings of all nations to compensate the deficit of the US, living over its real means. Malaysia has proven that rejecting this odious recipe of IMF is possible and advantageous. The argument, repeated ad nauseam, that such “control” will discourage “foreign investors” is pure blackmail, and not seriously established as being an actual real danger.

5. Social security and good social services must be provided to all citizens – poor included of course – on maximal equal footing.

This is not a “demagogic” set of slogans. A democratic popular based state must provide:

- (i) education free for all at all levels, as equal as possible.
- (ii) health care for all, poor included of course. That target, in the case of South Africa implies a set of policies which aim at eradicating AIDS including the production of local medicine irrespective of WTO and other overprotective scandalous decisions of transnationals and international bodies at their service.
- (iii) public transportation in all urban areas cheap and effective.
- (iv) housing for all, including the poorest. That target, of course, calls for an overall national system able to finance the needed constructions, associate communities and local governments in their management.

For sure if the concept of priority to “competitiveness on global markets” is accepted as the ruling major rule, such a program is “irrealistic” (labour indirect costs must be reduced!). But in the frame of an auto centered strategy it is fully realistic. People (popular classes included) are ready to contribute for the success of such programmes if they are convinced (by experience, i.e. through a correct democratic management of the institutions – national and local – in charge of the implementation) that it “works” to their real benefit. Such support includes financial efforts covered by popular classes.

The challenges

The program above described will certainly not be « easily » put into practice. The challenges must be recognised and openly explained to the people of South Africa, not with a view to qualifying it as “irrealistic” and therefore withdrawing towards the “less bad choice”, but on the opposite with a view to having it really strongly supported.

1. Annex 1 provides a formulation of these challenges conceived in a global frame (“Main Themes for the WFA”).

These four sets of challenges are:

- (i) progressing towards an authentic popular democracy
- (ii) progressing towards an authentic multipolar global system respecting nations’ sovereignties
- (iii) progressing towards a restoration of the unity of the labouring classes
- (iv) progressing towards a restoration of a peasants/workers alliance.

These challenges are common for all countries of the present world system, South and North. But of course they operate in different sets of conditions. These challenges were discussed in Durban, in an African perspective. They will be discussed in Nairobi in a global frame.

2. The Unity of the South is vital. There will be no multipolar global system, based on negotiated globalisation, allowing a room for social progress and democratisation, unless the peoples and countries of the South defeat the imperialist liberal capitalist system in place.

That needed unity cannot be a “remake” of Bandung. It implies as a first step:

(i) derailing the US criminal target of establishing Washington's military control over the planet, starting with the countries of the Middle East front line (see Annex II).

(ii) derailing the global colonial system put in place under the false name of WTO. This organisation does not operate as an Institution managing international trade (which is needed), but as a Ministry of Colonies of the Triad's collective imperialism. In fact WTO enforces rules governing the reorganisation of the productive systems in order to comply with the needs of further expansion of the dominant segments of oligopolistic financial capital, which in its turn implies particular patterns of international trade annihilating any prospect for a relevant development of societies of the South. In that respect the recent failure of the Doha round should be considered positive: it opens the door for real re-negotiations of the global system.

3. Facing with success the major challenge ("restoring the unity of popular classes in struggle") implies serious re-consideration of the methods, patterns of organisation and behaviour, of all the partners in struggle against current management of the national/global system.

It is a fact that to day many of the popular movements, in struggle have developed negative attitudes towards the "old" movements (parties, trade unions). They often claim to be "anti politics", "anti state" for various reasons which are not necessarily "unfounded", taking into account the practices of political parties and trade unions (often auto proclaiming themselves "vanguards" which have the monopoly of "correct knowledge and strategies") as well as the results of the historical experience.

Restoring a full confidence of the people in struggle needs a clear radical programme, identifying targets and strategies. But it needs also new methods of establishing effective wide alliances including parties, trade unions (or segments of them) as well as popular movements in struggle. These methods have to be really and seriously democratic (ref. Annex III Building Convergence in Diversity).

That is a challenge which in South Africa should be considered seriously by ANC, SACP and COSATU.

4- Reading the issue of that magazine which reported a debate on the prospects of BEE , we cannot but express here a strong reservation with respect to its implicit philosophy.

South Africa is not "only" a racist based society; it is primarily a capitalist society in the frame of which racism finds its place as a very useful tool to control labour.

Therefore meeting the challenge cannot be successful if based on the utopia of transforming South Africa into a "normal" capitalist/non racist society. Promoting "black entrepreneurship", while perfectly arguable to a certain extent, cannot respond to the demands of the majority of Black working people. It may even contribute reinforcing the means of domination of capital (which will remain "global based", i.e. "white", even if some Black cronies are associated to its management) over labour.

5. There is a need for "catalyst" forces to move the programme ahead. SACP should be one of the major such catalysts.

6. We finally recommend the reading of two major books:

(i) Lin Chun, *The transformation of the Chinese Socialism*, Duke University Press 2006.

This book provides the most serious analysis of the experiences of Maoism, little known in South Africa.

(ii) Luciano Canfora, *Democracy, history of an ideology*, Basil Blackwell 2005.

This is far the best modern marxist analysis of the question of democracy.

ANNEX ONE

MAIN THEMES FOR THE WORLD FORUM FOR ALTERNATIVES

These are four :

1- The struggle for democracy : an endless process, not an imported blue print

Democracy is a means for the popular classes to achieve their goals: a society which guarantees effective equality. Democracy cannot be restricted to the management of political life; it must also provide the means to ensure the management of economic life in a way which produces the required effective social equality. In that sense democracy is an endless process of democratisation of societies aiming at emancipation of human kind. Political democracy cannot be dissociated from the struggles for social justice and therefore finds its place in the long run perspective of socialism. Socialism itself must be understood as necessarily based on a real continuous deepening practice of democracy. At each stage of this long process social justice implies social security for all , even in “poor countries”.

This concept of democracy implies the reject of the blue print exported by the dominant capitalist/imperialist ideology: i.e. pluripartism, elections, representative and procedural practice of democracy, good governance. This formula which separates politics from social and economic life has been conceived in order not to facilitate social progress but to defeat the struggles of the popular classes aiming at it. It therefore also implies the reject of the strategy of “choosing the less bad” in order to avoid the worse and accept to that effect the mentioned blue print as a “second best”. Experience shows that this mediocre alternative does not help moving out of the blind alley. In fact it turns to an antidemocratic masquerade: the “less bad” being often little different from the bad, contributes demoralising the popular struggles.

Democracy cannot be but the product of the struggles of popular movements on all the fronts which constitute the challenge. In that respect WFA invites precisely the movements in struggle to make explicit their targets for the short and the long runs, their concepts of effective strategies and the substance of their programmes.

2- The struggle to defeat political unequal globalisation and impose a real multipolar system of globalisation.

This strategic target goes beyond " resisting globalisation ", defeating neo liberal ultras or attempting to give to liberalism a “human face” as the “third way” says. It therefore assumes a full free expression of peoples and nations and therefore respect of peoples’ sovereignty and the progressive construction of an authentic multipolar world system and a “negotiated” globalisation.

The political precondition for such developments assumes defeating the US project of their " military control " over the planet, and in particular defeating the ongoing project for the

Middle East, in the countries of the front line (Iraq, Palestine and Lebanon, Afghanistan, Iran).

3- The struggle to ensure the future of peasants societies.

Capitalist further expansion implies a rapid disintegration of peasants societies (" enclosures " at a global level), leading necessarily to a planet of slum-cities since " modern activities " cannot absorb in the visible future this immense reserve of cheap labour (peasants are half of humankind).

The alternative implies :

- guaranteeing full and as much as possible equal access to land and the means of using it to all peasants.
- Creative invention of new ways of progress of productive efficiency in agriculture (other than agro business), associated with standards of living moving up in rural areas.
- At the political level re creating the conditions for strong " peasants-workers " alliances (that target affects the concepts related to democracy). Correcting social balances of forces to the benefit of popular classes (i.e. correcting the present imbalances which give its strength to liberalism) will not be possible at any national level in the South (75% of humankind) without this broad popular rural-urban alliance. Failing achieving this target should produce in the developed capitalist centers a situation whereby capital will be able to play successfully against the working classes (through delocalising etc.) and eventually mobilize chauvinism against the peoples of the South (ref the immigration issue).

4- The struggle to re built the unity of the working classes

The other side of the central challenge (i.e. correcting the social balances of forces to the benefit of the popular classes) relates to the " urban working classes ".

Recent developments of capitalist expansion have broken the previous forms of " unity " of labour, whenever they existed, through the expansion of disoccupation, precarity, informal work etc.(the proportion stabilised labour force/unstabilised has moved from 85/15 to 60/40 in the centres and from 50/50 to 20/80 in the peripheries).

This is a central challenge for Trade Unions and other popular movements : re invent the forms of organisation and actions which can unite the whole of the working classes.

For each of the four areas mentionned the target is to identify platforms for action in accordance with the Bamako Appeal, not only proceed to an " exchange of views ".

Therefore participants should be selected among those who gradually can produce the " organic intellectual " for the movement as a whole, being fully involved in the struggles conducted by active social movements, trade unions, peasants organisations, significant popular organisations of women , progressive political organisations and eventually parties.

ANNEX TWO

Samir Amin

Derailing the USA, Israel, and their allied countries in the front line (Afghanistan, Iraq, Palestine, Iran).

The USA project, supported by its allied subordinates from Europe and by Israel, consists in establishing its military control all over the world. The «Middle East» has been chosen as the «first impact» target for four reasons: (I) there are the most plentiful oil resources in the world, and its direct control by the USA army would grant Washington a privileged situation and would make its allies –Europe and Japan– and its possible rivals (China) depend on them in terms of oil supplies; (II) it is located in the heart of the ancient world and would be suitable for a permanent military menace against China, India and Russia; (III) it is undergoing a stage of weakness and confusion which assures the aggressor at least an easy short-term success; (IV) in that region there is a USA unconditional ally, Israel, which has nuclear weapons.

To the countries in the front line (Afghanistan, Iraq, Palestine, Iran) the aggression brings about a situation of destruction (the first three countries) or menace (Iran).

Afghanistan

Afghanistan reached its best in modern history during the so-called «communist» Republic. It was a modern enlighten despotism regime, which favored education for children of both sexes, against obscurantism, thus strengthening the decisive basis of the society. Its «agrarian reform» was essentially a set of measures aiming the reduction of the tyrannical power of the tribal chiefs. The support –at least implicit– by the majority of the citizenship granted a possible success of that already oncoming evolution. The propaganda conveyed both by the Western media and the politic Islam presented that experience as a «communist atheist totalitarianism» rejected by the Afghan people. Indeed, just as that of Atatürk in his times, the regime was far from «unpopularity».

It is not surprising at all that its supporters, at least in its larger fractions (Khalq and Parcham) called themselves Communists. The paradigm of the achievements by the Soviet peoples of Central Asia (despite any criticism and the autocratic practices by that system), in contrast to the permanent British imperialism social disaster in the neighbor countries (India and Pakistan), had lead the patriots here and in many other regions to an acknowledgement of what a big obstacle imperialism was to any attempt of modernization. The invitation to an intervention, sent by some fractions to the Soviets, as an attempt to get rid of the others, has really had a negative impact and mortgaged the possibilities of the national-popular-modern project.

Specially, the USA, and generally speaking, its allies of the triad have been the stubborn adversaries of the Afghan parties of modernization, communist or not. They are the ones who have mobilized the obscurantist forces of the political Islam, the Pakistani (Taliban) and the war lords (the chiefs of tribes, neutralized by the so-called «communist regime»), and have given them training and weapons. Even after the Soviet withdrawal, the resistance of the government of Najibullah to the assaults of the obscurantist forces would have probably not

been defeated without the military Pakistani offensive which came to support the Taliban, stimulating chaos, and the reconstitution of the forces of the war lords.

Afghanistan is devastated by the military intervention by the USA, its allies and agents, particularly the Islamite. A reconstruction will not be possible as directed by these actors, a power hardly concealed by a clown with no roots in the country, encouraged by the Texan transnational where he had been an employee. The salvation of the fake «democracy» claimed by Washington, NATO and UN, is nothing but an attempt to legitimate their «presence» (occupation, indeed). It had always been a white lie; it has become a mean farce.

There is only one solution to the Afghan problem: that the foreign forces leave the country and that all the powers are forced not to give financial support and weapons to their «allies». To those good souls showing their fear that the Afghan tolerate a Taliban dictatorship (or a *war lords*' dictatorship), I would answer that the foreign presence was and still is the best support for such dictatorship! Also, the Afghan people went on a different direction – may be the best one – in the times when «the West» did not participate in their issues. The civilized West prefers the obscurantist despotism, rather than the enlighten autocracy, as it is less dangerous for their own interests!

Iraq

The US armed diplomacy aimed at the goal of literally destroying Iraq, long before finding an excuse. First when Kuwait was invaded in 1990, and then after September 11, an event cynically and hypocritically manipulated by Bush junior following the Goebbels' principle («repeating a lie enough times, causes it to become true»). The reason is simple and has nothing to do with the discourse that claims the «freedom» of the Iraqi people from the (real) bloody dictatorship of Saddam Hussein. A major part of the world oil resources is under the Iraqi soil. Besides, Iraq would qualify scientific and technical cadres capable, due to their critical mass, to keep a consistent national project. This «danger» had to be eliminated by a «preventive war», something the USA has given itself the right to start whenever and wherever it finds it suitable, with no respect for the international «law».

Beyond this sample of common evidences, there are still some series of questions: (I) How could the plan of Washington show so easily the façade of a brilliant success? (II) What is the new situation created for the Iraqi nation ? (III) How do the different components of the Iraqi people face this challenge? (IV) What solutions can the Iraqi, Arab and international democratic and progressist forces provide?

It was possible to foretell the defeat of Saddam Hussein. Facing an enemy whose basic strength is that of exercising genocide by means of unpunished air bombing (expecting the use of nuclear bombing) there is only one effective answer the peoples can give: displaying resistance on their invaded place. Well, Saddam's regime devoted its effort to eliminate the means of defense the people could reach, by exterminating systematically every organization or political party (beginning by the communist) that had taken part in the modern history of Iraq, including the Baas itself, one of the main actors in such history. Therefore one might not be surprised by the fact that the «Iraqi people» has allowed the invasion in without fighting, or by certain behaviors (such as the supposed participation in the elections summoned by the invaders, or the upsurge of fratricide struggles between Kurds, Sunnite Arabs, and Shiite Arabs) which appear to indicate the acceptance of the defeat (calculated by Washington), but

rather by the fact that the resistances on the battlefield go stronger everyday (in spite of the serious weaknesses these resistances have), that they have made impossible the establishment of a servile regime with a facade of «order», and that to some extent they have shown the failure of the Washington project. The fact that the tamed United Nations have recognised such a fake government does not change the truth; it is neither legitimate nor acceptable.

However, the military occupation creates a new situation. The Iraqi nation is really threatened. The project of Washington, unable to keep its control over the country (and plunder its oil resources, which is its main priority) by means of a «national» - looking government as an intermediary, could not be attained but by destroying the country. The division of the country into at least three «States» (Kurd, Sunnite Arab y Shiite Arab) could have been from the very beginning an objective of Washington, together with Israel (in the future the archives may reveal that). At present, «civil war» is always the card played by Washington when trying to legitimize keeping its occupation. Permanent occupation was – and still is – the objective: it is the only means for Washington to guarantee the control of oil. For sure one should not believe Washington «declarations» of will like «we will leave the country once order is restored». Let's remember the British said nothing since 1882 but that their occupation of Egypt was «provisional» (it lasted until 1956!). Meanwhile, everyday the USA destroys a bit more by all means, including the most criminal, the country, its schools, its factories, its scientific capacities.

The answer given by the Iraqi people as a response to this challenge does no seem – at least, up to now – suitable to the extreme severity of the circumstances. That is the least we could say. Why? The Western media repeat again and again that Iraq is an «artificial» country, and that the oppressive domination of the «Sunnite» regime of Saddam over Shiites and Kurds is the origin of the inevitable war (that the duration of the foreign occupation could maybe stop). The «resistance» in that case would be limited to some Islamist pro Saddam cells of the Sunnite «triangle». One could hardly be able to put so many lies together.

After World War I, it was difficult for the British colonization to face the Iraqi people's resistance. According to their imperial tradition, in order to keep their power, the British created an imported monarchy and a class of land owners, and gave Sunnite Islam a privileged position. The Communist party and the Baas were the main organized political forces which undermined the power of the «Sunnite» monarchy hated by everyone, Sunnites, Shiites and Kurds. The violent confrontation between both forces, being the focus of attention between 1958 and 1963, ended up with the victory of Baas, which the Western powers celebrated with relief. The communist project potentially implied a democratic evolution, not at all included by Baas. Baas was a nationalist pan Arab and unitarian party, admirer of the Prussian model of construction of the German unity, willing to summon the small modern laicizing bourgeoisie, hostile to the obscurantist trends of religion. It became, as it was possible to expect, a dictatorship only half anti imperialist, in the sense that, according to the conditions and circumstances, it was possible to reach a compromise between both parts (the Baas power in Iraq, and the American imperialism in the region). Such «compromise» encouraged the megalomaniac hopes of the leader, who believed Washington would accept becoming its main ally in the region. Washington support to Baghdad (also, with a provision of chemical weapons) during the criminal and absurd war against Iran between 1980 and 1989 seemed to make that believable. Saddam had not imagined that Washington was lying, that the modernization of Iraq was unacceptable to imperialism, and destroying the country was already a decision. Once in the trap (Saddam had been allowed to annex Kuwait, indeed an Iraqi province that the British imperialists had detached in order to make it one of its oil

producing colonies) Iraq suffered for ten years sanctions designed to weaken the country and pave the way to an easy “glorious conquer” by the American troops.

We could impute the successive Baas regimes, even that of the last stage of its decay under the «direction» of Saddam, for everything but having stimulated the religious conflict between Sunnites and Shiites. Then, who is responsible for the wounds that today make an opposition between the two communities? For sure one day we will know how the CIA (and undoubtedly the Mossad) organized many of these massacres. Yet it is true that the political desert created by Saddam’s regime and his example in terms of opportunistic methods without principles «stimulated» the candidates in power to follow the same way, often protected by the occupants, sometimes maybe naïve enough to believe they could «use» the occupants. The candidates, «religious» chiefs (Shiites or Sunnites), paratribals headmen, or «business men» outstandingly corrupted and exported from the USA, never had real roots in the country. The same can be said about the religious chiefs respected by the believers, they had not had any political activity acceptable to the Iraqi people. Were it not for the void left by Saddam, their names would have never been mentioned. In the context of this new «political world» built by the liberal globalization imperialism, will the other political forces, authentically popular and national, eventually democratic, have the means for a reconstitution?

There was a time when the Communist Party was the space for the best produced by the Iraqi society. The Communist Party was based all over the country, was the most widespread among the intellectuals, particularly those of Shiite origin (in my opinion Shiism produces revolutionaries and religious leaders, and seldom bureaucrats or compradores!). The Communist Party was authentically popular and anti imperialist, hardly inclined to demagogy, potentially democratic. Is it now doomed to definitely disappear from history, after the Baas dictatorships massacred thousands of its best militants, the USSR collapsed (something it was not prepared for), and some intellectuals thought it was acceptable to come back from exile in the vans of the American troops? That is not impossible, yet it is not «inevitable». It is far from being so.

The «Kurd» problem is a real one, in Iraq, Iran, and in Turkey. But on this issue we should remember that the Western powers have always put into practice, with the same cynicism, the rule of double standard. In Iraq or Iran, the repression to the Kurds’ claims has never reached the degree of violence (military or by the police) than that of Ankara. Neither Iran nor Iraq has denied the existence of the Kurds as Ankara did. However, Turkey has been forgiven, a member of NATO – an organization of democratic nations, as the mass media remind us, in which that outstanding democrat, Salazar, got involved as a founder member, the same as those no less unconditional supporters of democracy, the Greek colonels and the Turkish generals!

The Iraqi popular fronts constituted around the Communist Party and the Baas in the best stage of their history, every time they exercised responsibilities of power did found a place for understanding with the main Kurd parties, which have always been their allies.

The «anti Shiite» and the «anti Kurd» acts of Saddam regime are a truth: Saddam’s army bombed the region of Basorah after their defeat in Kuwait in 1990; gas has been used against the Kurds. Yet these actions came in «response» to the moves by Washington armed democracy, which had mobilized the wizard apprentices eager to take the chance. Nonetheless they were stupid and criminal choices since the appeals of Washington had a limited force. But, is there anything else we could expect from a dictator as Saddam?

At the same time the powerful image of the resistance against the foreign occupation, is something «unexpected» in these conditions, almost a “miracle”. That is not the case. The elementary reality is simply that the Iraqi people as a whole (Arab and Kurd, Sunnite and Shiite) hates the occupants and has been aware of their everyday crimes (murders, bombing, massacres, tortures). We should then expect a Resistance United Front (call it as you please), self defined as such, that publishes the names, lists of organizations and parties involved, and their common program. Up to now, there is no such thing. Especially because of all those reasons brought about by the social and political destruction caused by the occupants and by Saddam’s earlier dictatorship. But whatever the reasons, such lack is a severe shortage, which favors division, encourages the opportunists, and stimulates confusion in the objectives of liberation.

Who will overcome these weaknesses? Communists must be willing to make it happen. Militants –already present at the field– make their difference as opposed to those «leaders» (the only ones the mass media seem to know!) who do not really know what way to take and attempt to give an appearance of legitimacy to their «alignment» to the collaboration government, pretending to be a complement to the actions by the armed resistance!! However, many other political forces, according to the circumstance, could take initiatives aimed at the creation of that front.

Still, despite its «weaknesses» the Iraqi resistance has already derailed (politically speaking, not militarily speaking yet) Washington project. This is precisely what worries the Atlantists of the European Union, its faithful allies. Washington subordinated associates fear the defeat of the USA because that would strengthen the capacity of the peoples of the South to have the globalized transnational capital of the imperialist triad (US, Europe and Japan) respect the interests of the nations and peoples of Asia, Africa and Latin America.

Iraqi resistance has made proposals that could avoid the dead end and encourage the USA to leave the wasps nest. It proposes: (I) the constitution of a transitional administrative authority supported by the Security Council; (II) the immediate cease of the actions by the resistance, and of the interventions (military and by the police) by the occupation troops; (III) that all the military and civil foreign authorities leave the country within 6 months. The details of these proposals appeared in the prestigious Arab magazine *Al Mustaqbal Al Arabi*, published in Beirut, January 2006.

The European mass media total silence about the message shows, from this outlook, solidarity among imperialists. The European democratic and progressist forces should oppose this strategy of the imperialist triad and support the proposals by the Iraqi resistance. Leaving the Iraqi people alone, as it faces its enemy, is not an acceptable choice: it entails the dangerous idea that there is nothing to expect from the West and its countries and, in term, stimulates unacceptable trends –criminal, indeed– in the practices by certain resistance movements.

The stronger the support to the Iraqi people by the democratic forces from Europe and the world, the sooner the occupation troops will leave the country; the stronger will be the possibilities of a better future for that martyr people. The more the occupation remains, the darker will be the future after its inevitable end.

Palestine

Since the famous declaration of Balfour, during world war one, the Palestinian people is a victim of a foreign colonial project, experiencing the fate of the «red skins», something as ignored as recognized. Such project has always been supported unconditionally by the imperialist power dominating in the region (first Great Britain, then the USA); since the creation of a country foreign to the region could be nothing other than the creation of an unconditional supporter of the continuous interventions aiming the submission of the Arab Middle East to the imperialist capitalist domination.

Understanding that is commonplace to all the peoples of Africa and Asia for whom the defense of the rights of the Palestinian people is spontaneous. In contrast, in Europe the «Palestinian problem» brings about a division caused by the confusion encouraged by the Zionist ideology, which usually finds here favorable echoes.

More than never before, the display of the American project of the «great Middle East» entailed the abolishment of the Palestine people's rights. Meanwhile, the PLO had accepted the plans of Oslo and Madrid, and the route designed by Washington. It was Israel who openly rejected to sign, and put into practice an expansion plan even more ambitious! The PLO was in turn weakened: it would be fair saying it naively believed in its adversaries' honesty. The support given to the Islamic adversary (Hamas) by the Israeli authorities – at least, at first –, the chain of corrupted practices performed by the Palestinian administration (obviated by the «financial donors» -the World Bank, Europe, many NGOs) would lead – it could be foretold (and it was possibly desired) – to the electoral success of Hamas, a complementary excuse immediately used to justify the unconditional support to Israeli politics «whatever they were»!

The Zionist colonial project has always been a threat, both for Palestine and for the Arab neighbor countries. Some proofs are its interest in annexing the Egyptian Sinai, and its effective annexation of the Syrian Golan. In the «great Middle East» project, there is a special place for Israel, the regional monopoly of its military nuclear equipment, and its role as «obligatory partner», using the excuse that Israel had «technological capacities», something no Arab country is able to achieve! (an evidence of the spontaneous racism of the imperialist ideologues).

Our intention here is not to suggest analyses concerning the complex interactions between the struggles against the Zionist colonial expansion and the conflicts and political choices in Lebanon and Syria. The regimes of Baas in Syria resisted in their way the demands of the political powers and Israel. That this resistance had equally been useful to legitimize the most questionable ambitions (the control of Lebanon) is not questionable. On the other hand Syria carefully chose its «allies» among the «less dangerous» in Lebanon. It is known that the resistance to Israeli moves in South Lebanon (including the deviation of water) had been lead by the Lebanese Communist Party. The Syrian, Lebanese and Iranian powers collaborated in order to destroy this «dangerous basis» and substitute that of Hezbollah. The murder of Rafic el Harriri – far from being clear – apparently gave the imperialist powers (United States in the front, France back) the chance for an intervention with two objectives: making Damas accept a definite alignment to the group of servile Arab Estates (Egypt, Saudi Arabia) –or, at least, eradicate the remains of degenerated Baas power -, eliminate the remains of the capacity to resist the Israeli moves (demanding the «disarmament» of Hezbollah). The speech about «democracy» can be quoted, in this context, in case it is useful.

At present, defending the legitimate rights of the Palestine people is a main duty to all democrats worldwide. Palestine is at the center of the greatest conflicts of our times. Accepting the Israeli plan of destroying the whole Palestine and its people would be the same as denying the peoples their first right: the right to exist. Accusing of «anti Semitism» those against the completion of such project is unacceptable.

Iran

It is not our objective to make the analysis the «Islamic revolution» suggests. Being the way it defines itself and how it is usually seen by political Islam, or by «foreign observers», i.e. the announcement and starting point for an evolution that in the end should comprise the whole region, in fact, the whole «Muslim world», then rebaptized as «the *umma*» («nation», what it has never been). Or was it a special event, particularly because it is suitable for the combination of interpretations of the Shiite Islam and that of the expression of Iranian nationalism?

From the point of view we are interested in, I will only make a couple of comments. First, the political Islam regime in Iran is not in its roots incompatible with the integration of the country to the world capitalist system as such (the principles on which it relies find their way in a vision of a «liberal» management of economy). Second, Iran is a «strong nation»; in other words, its best components, if not all of them – popular classes and leaders – do not accept the integration of the country as a dominated nation within the world System. There is an obvious contradiction between these two dimensions of the Iranian reality and the second explains those trends of the foreign policy of Teheran showing a will to reject the foreign commands.

It is Iranian nationalism –strong and, in my opinion, historically positive– what explains the success of the «modernization» of the scientific, industrial, technological and military capacities, started up by the successive regimes of Shah and khomenism. Iran is one of those rare States of the South (together with China, India, Korea, Brazil, and maybe some others, but not many more!) which enjoys the conditions to have a «national bourgeois» project. Whether the completion of that project is, in the long run, possible or not (and this is my opinion) is not the focus of this presentation. Today such project exists; it is there.

Because Iran constitutes a critical mass capable of an attempt to impose itself as an independent partner, the USA decided to destroy the country by means of a new «preventive war». As we know, the «conflict» takes place in the area of the nuclear capacities Iran has been developing. Will not this country, the same as any other, have the right to become a military nuclear power? Is there any right for the imperialist powers, and its puppet Israel, to aim at controlling the monopoly of the massive destruction weapons? Can we believe the speech according to which the «democratic» nations will not use such weapons as the «criminal states» could? When will we hear that such «democratic» nations are responsible for the bigger genocide of modern times, including that of the Jews, and that the USA already used the atomic weapon and reject the general and absolute prohibition to use it? Unfortunately, the European are aligned to the Washington project for aggressing Iran.

As a conclusion

At present, three groups of forces are involved in the «political conflicts» operating in the area: those that claim a nationalist past (but are nothing but the corrupted and degenerated heirs of the bureaucracies of the nationalist-populist earlier stage), those who belong to the

political Islam family, those that tend to emerge as related to «democratic» demands compatible with the liberal management of economy. The power of none of these forces is acceptable for a left thought aware of the interests of the nation and the popular classes. In fact, the interests of the compradore classes dominate in these three «families». Trying to «get involved» in their internal conflicts, searching for the alliances with this one here or that one there (preferring the established regimes so as to avoid the political Islam alternative; or looking for an alliance with some Islamic movements so as to get rid of the regimes) is doomed. The left should keep on supporting the struggles in those areas where it finds its own place: in defending the economic and social interests of the popular classes, democracy, and the consolidation of a national sovereignty, as inseparable targets. All democrats of the world should support the chances of the progressive forces and, in the same spirit, condemn without limits any intervention by the USA, NATO, Israel, the tamed United Nations, and their allies in the region.

The «Great Middle East» is nowadays essential in the conflict that opposes the imperialist Center and all the peoples of the world. Derailing Washington project there is a condition to encourage the possibilities of all the avant-gardes worldwide. Without this the avant-gardes would be extremely vulnerable. That does not mean under estimating the importance of other struggles in other parts of the world –Europe, Latin America. It just means that these struggles should be inserted into a global perspective, contributing to derail Washington interests in the region chosen as its criminal target number one.

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This paper was written before the aggression of Israel on Lebanon, which simply reminds us that the US is pursuing its criminal project for the whole region.

ANNEX THREE

Samir Amin

Building convergence in diversity

Building the convergence of all social and political movements through which the victims of the global new-liberal capitalist order express themselves certainly demands the respect of their diversity.

I propose here to categorise all social and political forces (left or right) which operate in the contemporary world by combining their positions on five axes that define five major criteria of the possible options:

- (i) The intensity of radicalism in the critique of capitalism will be measured on the OX axis. Unconditional supporters of the new-liberal order are placed at point O. Next to them are those who have yielded to its main demands and advocate cosmetic reform with a view to save capitalism from the excesses of new-liberalism (in line with George Soros' formula). The World Bank discourse, and programmes that intend to "alleviate poverty" (without questioning the new-liberal system that generates this poverty) are part of a right-wing strategy, the real objective of which is to weaken, not strengthen, peoples' movements. Further on the axis are the moderate reformists who in the current environment advocate for the defence of established rights currently threatened (including workers' rights, social security, education and health). Further towards X are the radical reformists whose proposals open up to a social logic that goes beyond capitalism. These radical reformists are close to the positions of those who define themselves by the outlook of a socialist society.
- (ii) The intensity of radicalism in the critique of capitalist globalisation will be measured on the OY axis. Unconditional supporters of globalisation as it is, and others who regard it as overall not just "without alternative", but also potentially positive, are close to point O. According to them, globalisation could offer opportunities that have to be seized. Further towards Y are those who are aware of the imperialist dimension of capitalist globalisation as it is, and in particular of its new-liberal form, as well as of the reality of US hegemonism.
- (iii) The degree of radicalism of the concepts of democracy one proposes to enforce will be measured along the OZ1 axis. Openly antidemocratic positions run through the contemporary world. They are found not just in the South and the ex-East, in particular in the new comprador classes and powers aligned with the new imperialist and new liberal project and with those nostalgic of populism and sovietism, but also in the North, not just in the United States (where the Christian and parafundamentalist, new Maccarthyst inspired right represents nearly half of the Republican voters), but also in traditionally democratic Europe (new populisms, Haider and Berlusconi style, bear witness to this). Further towards the centre of this axis we will find most of the people content with minimal democratic practices. This ranges from electoral farce (in the United States and throughout the Third World) to "low-intensity democracy" based on a so-called depoliticised consensus. In this instance, the vote, whether for the right or for the left, is devoid of all meaning, as elected governments accept the helplessness that results from the inevitability of the "laws of the market". On this axis, the left is defined by the fight it intends to carry out to give democracy the emancipating sense it should carry, encompassing from the start all the dimensions of

the challenge of affirming human and citizen rights, individual and group social rights, as well as the right to control the economic system. As they get more radical, these claims tend to meet those of social projects which go “beyond capitalism”.

- (iv) The degree of radicalism in positions on gender issues is measured on axis OZ2. Close to point O are the asserted antifeminist ideologies (based on religious fundamentalism in the United States and the Islamic, Hindu and Confucian worlds) as well as de facto machist behaviours. Further on the axis are the political currents ready to adopt feminist claims, provided they do not question the capitalist (or new-liberal) order. Like radical democracy, radical feminism necessarily rests on an emancipation logic that opens up to an outlook “beyond capitalism”. The strong parallelism of positions taken along the OZ1 and OZ2 axes precisely results from the intimate link between feminist and democratic claims and the emancipation outlook. Emancipation requires the radicalisation of both the democratic and the feminist claims.
- (v) It would be useful to consider the fifth dimension of these challenges, and define the degree of radicalism in the ecologist critique of the dominant world order. Close to point O are those who ignore the challenges, a position taken by the establishment in the United States, where the future of the planet is sacrificed to the short-term profits of transnational corporations and the continuation of the wasteful American lifestyle. Further on the axis are the naïve environmentalists who refuse to acknowledge the destructive dimension of capitalism, which cannot be dissociated from the short-term financial calculations that define the very relative “rationality” of this mode of production. In contrast, radical ecologists, aware of this link, get closer to the radical critics of capitalism. Because the critique of capitalism and the ecologist critique must logically be closely associated, it should be possible to merge the OX2 axis, on which the radicalism of the ecologist critique is measured, with the OX axis.

All ideological positions, political forces and social movements can be located on either one of the two plans defined by the OX-OY and OX-OZ axes, or in the three-dimensional OX-OY-OZ space. Each of these plans can be divided in quadrants, whereas the three-dimensional space can be divided in eight cubic components (see chart).

In such a space, some regions are practically empty, as the combination of criteria taken into account is too contradictory for these criteria to co-exist. In contrast, other combinations show the locations where the dominant right wing forces concentrate. Finally, many of the still fragmented social and political movements that constitute, at least in part, the potential of the left alternative are scattered throughout the corresponding space.

To be rallied around new liberal theses and the associated dominant globalisation outlook today means to be right wing, even if one votes for the left (as is often the case in Europe) or subscribes to a discourse (but just a discourse) with nationalist and anti-imperialist tones (which may happen in the South). The mainstream hegemonic right is situated in quadrants A and E (the three-dimensional AE space), at best moderately reformist, and based on the democratic consensus, as understood in the common language. This right, which in Europe represents the majority across the whole spectrum of political parties, is being outflanked on the right, in particular in the United States, by non-democratic ideological and social movements, violently antifeminist and racist. The new-McCarthyism of the Republican establishment includes this so-called “moral front” in a power-sharing alliance. In the South and ex-East peripheries, the *compradore* right, which represents most of the de facto powers, finds a social base in the circles of “speculators” promoted by the new-liberal globalisation. The term “speculators”, frequently used in the Third World and ex-Soviet countries,

illustrates well the nature and fragility of this artificial, hardly democratic or entrepreneurial “bourgeoisie”. The hachured areas in quadrants A and E indicate the areas where these hegemonic rights are positioned.

The left to be built, radically against the new-liberal order, at least anti-hegemonic if not anti-imperialist, and democratically advanced, must be found at the antipodes, e.g. in quadrants D and H (or the DH three-dimensional space). But all the forces and movements involved in the current struggle against the dominant right-wing powers are not necessarily situated in this area. In the capitalist centres, there is a left wing, sometimes even a radical one, which shows little sensitivity to the imperialist dimension of the system. The anti-imperialist awareness is currently very weakened throughout the North. The national liberation movements around which the “third-worldist” youth had mobilised have drifted and fed subsequent disappointments. In the peripheries, there are people with a nostalgia for sovietism and hardly democratic populism, who are nonetheless critical of new-liberalism and/or imperialism. Other segments of ideological and political forces in the periphery with better future potential yearn to defend legitimate national interests. A number of governments in these regions seem to have rallied globalisation only under constraint, as they estimate that they had no possibility to refuse. These forces currently swing between the illusion of a scarcely democratic right-wing nationalism (this is an understatement), whereby they accept to align with a new-liberal global order and nevertheless believe they can still “negotiate”, and an eventual alliance with a democratic and anti-imperialist peoples’ front. Only in the latter case will they gather real strength and rally the side of the global left to be built. If not, they will remain indecisive or be attracted by chauvinistic ethnicism or pseudo-religious fundamentalism (as in the case of political Islam or Hinduism). These anti-democratic movements, which de facto accept to subject their people to the demands of global capitalism, are, in spite of a rhetorical, cultural and anti-Western discourse, part of the worldwide right-wing alliance.

The building of a left-wing alternative requires the development, here and there, of strategies and tactics calling for the rallying of all left of centre political forces, all ideological currents and all social movements involved in struggling with either new-liberalism, or imperialism, or towards democratic advances, women’s liberation or the respect of the requirements of a sound, ecologist management of the planet.

The centre left, indicated by a cross in quadrant D, is the central starting point for the strategies and tactics suggested here.

It is indeed possible to attract towards this point many of the fragmented movements scattered in the three-dimensional space that illustrates our point. There is no reason to think that the reformists, the promoters of democracy, of women’s rights, of peoples’ rights, of ecology, or the peace movements are and will remain unable to draw the lessons of the failures of the “moderate” options that characterise, still today, many of their positions. However, not all will be able to do so, and we must accept this. There will remain reformists who will be satisfied with cosmetic reform and remain unable to see that they are co-opted by the dominant right. There will be revolutionaries who will indefinitely accept to remain locked in dogmatic ghettos and avoid confronting the question of how they could help mankind move towards their own societal project.

It is also possible to drive the currents, if not the organisations, of the anti-imperialist segments of the public opinion in the South towards more consistent positions that could

receive wide popular support. However, there will always remain fragments of these forces that will be attracted by compradores, as there will always remain peoples' movements drifting further towards culturalism.

The hegemonic right-wing front is much less strong than what it seems. It is crossed with contradictions that will only get deeper as its project apparently looks more "successful". This right-wing coalition is doomed to split. The South, which has nothing to gain from this project, is composed of a series of "weak links" (China, India, Brazil, South Africa and others). The North will itself see the democratic, humanistic and socialist tradition rooted in European history erect a growing hurdle to the catastrophic outlook of US hegemonism. Capitalism certainly does not represent the "unsurpassable horizon", as many ideologues and leaders of progressive peoples' movements think. In the immediate future, struggles can only be fought against new-liberalism (the extreme reactionary form of capitalism) or the arrogant hegemonism of the United States, that spearheads new imperialism. As they score successes in this direction, these struggles will get more radical.

The world will remain crowded with what I call "drifting politicians". What I mean by this is these active men and women who remain prisoners of a fundamentally opportunistic conception of politics. They believe that politics means taking advantage of the balance of forces as it is. In contrast, radicals and revolutionaries mean to transform this balance. Drifting politicians are not necessarily insensitive to the opinions of the segments of society on which their success depends (whether in an electoral system or not). As a result, they are visual navigators on an ocean strewn with reefs without always knowing where this will lead them. Many of them will rally the left if it reconstitutes and reverses the balance of forces. They will not always do so out of sheer opportunism or to advance their own career, but also because in this left they will find values to which they are wedded. Reformists here and revolutionaries there are, at least partly, moved by these values which are ours.

Building convergence means building this necessary left. The step-by-step reinforcement of convergence in diversity will therefore manifest itself by the enlargement of a circle around the centre left point situated in quadrant D. To this point corresponds a centre left point in quadrant H. These two points coincide to form the centre of the sphere of convergences in the three-dimensional space. When this circle on each of the ABCD and EFGH surfaces (or on the corresponding sphere) eventually fills a significant part of the relevant surfaces (or volume), the battle will be won, as the balance of forces will shift to the benefit of working classes and people.

Convergence building can be formulated in political terms that in various ways complement each other.

"For a united front in support of social and international justice." Emphasising that the two concepts are inseparable, that social justice in the centres must be matched by a clear anti-imperialist conscience, that anti-imperialism in the peripheries has no future if it is not supported by working classes aspiring to social justice and democracy.

"The democratic State in the long transition beyond unbridled capitalism is a State that imposes social and citizen regulation." Or "socialisation by citizen and social democracy includes, whereas socialisation markets excludes". Or "no answer to social needs is possible without democracy, and no democracy is possible without answering social needs".

These “slogans” draw lessons from recent history. In the South, governments which accepted to restrict their will to democratise to the limits imposed by the new-liberal order contributed to discredit democracy (see the tragic Argentine example), as they called for a return to either populism or violent dictatorship subordinated to imperialism. In the North the left-right consensus of electoral majorities around the economic liberalisation substitutes the US form of “low-intensity democracy” for the citizen and social democracy of left-wing movements. It also perpetuates the conditions of the fragmentation of resistances and destroys hopes that an anti-imperialist conscience will mature.

Convergence, i.e. the widening of the central circle, does not exclude diversity but strengthens it and unleashes its potential, as the these circles then cover substantial areas of each of the quadrants on our chart. The challenge is to build this convergence. No force through which the victims of unbridled capitalism, modern imperialism, or US hegemonism and the global war it conducts against the peoples of the South express their voices can ignore that it will progress towards achieving immediate and limited, or longer-term, objectives only if it affirms the solidarity of all the segments of a global united front for social justice and international justice.