

## **Ten years after Seattle.**

*One strategy, better two, for the movement against war and capitalism*

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A moral rebellion began in Seattle in November 1999: after the act of disruption of the WTO summit millions of people all over the world declared that capitalist globalization causes social and environmental devastation. For two years the global movement produced an effective process of critique of neoliberal policies, giving way to the hope of a radical change.

Then, after the G8 summit in Genoa, the global narrative changed, and war took center stage. The movement did cease its actions, but its efficacy was reduced to zero. It failed to spread in the daily life of the world society. It failed to give birth to a process of self-organization of techno-scientific labor.

Ten years after Seattle we have to invent a new strategy for the movement, starting from the consciousness that the prevailing form of the global power today is war, and that a military dictatorship is taking shape in the world.

Neoliberal policy destroyed the very idea of a public sphere in the field of the economy and in the field of the media. It has privatized every single fragment of production, communication, language and affection. Competition has taken the place of solidarity in every aspect of life, and crime has become the prevailing form of economic relationships.

Global war is the natural completion of this criminal mutation of the capitalist mode of production.

And the systematic devastation of the physical and psychic environment is the natural effect of this mutation.

The victory of Barack Obama has opened a window. But you see the paradox of the present situation. The United States of America has lost its military hegemony because religious fanaticism, Islamic fundamentalism, resurgent Russian nationalism and terror are strategically prevailing in the Euro-Asian mainland. From Afghanistan to Pakistan, Iraq to Iran and Libya, from the Caucasus to Ukraine, Western hegemony is definitely losing ground.

In addition, the financial crisis has given way to a breakdown of the American power and the spreading recession and inflation are carrying turmoil and distrust in the Western societies.

In the decade of the Clinton presidency it was possible to speak (although never really convincingly) of an American Empire. After the beginning of the infinite war those thinkers who believed in the existence of an American Empire argued that the Bush politics was a coup d'état inside the Empire. If so, we must say that the coup d'état has obtained its goal. Bush and the warmongers have lost their wars (the Iraq war is a complete failure, the Afghanistan is a never ending defeat, and a war in Iran will never be won). Nevertheless, they won their war for more oil profits and for more military expenses, and worse, they won their war against peace and humanity.

Nowadays, when the White House is occupied by a president of a more genuinely democratic culture, the American Empire is falling apart, and chaos is the only emperor of the world.

What can be done in such a landscape? What strategy can be elaborated by the movement of women and men who are looking for peace and for justice?

No hope is in sight as the criminal turn of capitalism is producing irreversible effects in the culture and in the behaviour of the planetary society.

One third of mankind is in danger of death: famine is spreading as never before. The energy crisis is fuelling aggression and inflation.

One third of mankind is working in conditions bordering on slavery and people are doomed to accept the blackmail of precarity and exploitation.

One third of mankind is armed to the teeth in order to defend their life standard against the army of migrants who are pushing at the borders.

We have to prepare to a long phase of barbarization and of violence.

We have to create a safe haven for the small minority of the world population that wants to save the heritage of humanist civilisation and the potentialities of the General Intellect, that are in serious danger of unredeemable militarisation.

The age that we have entered during the first decade of the century is quite similar to the so-called European Middle Age. While the territory was ravaged by invasions, and the legacy of ancient civilization was being destroyed, groups of monks saved the memory of the past, and the seeds of a possible future.

We cannot know if the present barbarian age is going to last for decades or for centuries, nor we can say if the physical environment of the planet will survive the present criminal-capitalist devastation.

But we certainly know that we have not the weapons to face the destroyers, so we have to save ourselves, and the possibility of the future.

Just one strategy is not enough, when things are so unpredictable as they are in the present times.

We cannot say what the consequences will be of the American loss of hegemony, nor the developments of the war from Pakistan to Gaza strip. And we cannot imagine what kind of effects will produce the low intensity ethnic civil war which is being waged in Europe, and which kind of explosions may follow the inflationary recession which is ravaging the economy of the western workers.

We have to be prepared to the prospect of a long period of monastic withdrawal, but also to the prospect of a sudden reversal of the global political landscape. Imagine the revolt of the Chinese workers against national-communist capitalism, the explosion of open ethnic warfare in the European society, the breakdown of the US military unable to face a fresh wave of terrorism fuelled by Afghan and Pakistanis wars, the apocalyptic collapse of the eco-systems in some important areas of the planet. These scenarios are perfectly realistic in the near future, and they could produce a dramatic change in the political mood of the majority of the world population. We have to be prepared for this, we have to prepare the narration for such a reversal, and we have to create the happy example of an other style of life, one that is not based on consumerism, growth, and competition.

Our central task in the next future should be in my opinion the redefinition of the very idea of well being, of wealth and of happiness.

Our task will be the creation of monasteries where frugal wellbeing is experimented. Critique of the naturalisation of the paradigm of growth, cultural elaboration of a new paradigm based on the abandonment of the obsession of growth, aimed to frugality, culture-intensive production, solidarity, and laziness, and refusal of competition.

Capitalism has identified wellbeing and accumulation, happiness with consumerism and richness with the destruction of natural and psychic resources.

We have to become the example of a life style where wellbeing is joined with frugality, happiness is joined with generosity, and production is joined with laziness.

Richness has nothing to do with compulsive consumption and obsessive accumulation.  
Richness is the pleasure of being, and the enjoyment of time.