

Antonio Martins: We have heard a vast and very interesting panorama of testimonies on poverty at an international level. But we are in Italy, a country where someone once said: "It is necessary to always add to the pessimism of the critique the optimism of action". I also believe that the tradition of the World Social Forum, to which I adhere, asks us to go beyond the critic of poverty, because poverty is something we understand because we are confronted with it everyday and we need to find the ways of fighting it; we have to go from saying No to poverty, to saying Yes to solutions, we have then to present those "yes" that are our capacity to mobilise society and to force those who are responsible for today's poverty to stop what they are doing or to admit that they are not willing to follow the concrete solution that exist to fight it. This alternative was widely discussed in the last World Social Forum, a system that would have duties that would redistribute the world's wealth. What are the bases for this idea? The first point is that the wealth is collectively produced in the whole world, it's origin is global and so the benefits need to be global too. The second point is that because of globalisation there are more and more countries that are unable to solve their environmental problems, health problems, and economic crisis: those are problems that no single government can solve alone. Third: Inside the system of globalisation, there are loopholes that allow the rich people of the world, especially the large corporation, to escape taxation in their own countries. For example the tax heavens or the countries that compete to have the lowest level of taxation. Those are the taxation that were discussed: first of all a tax on capital flows, like the Tobin tax. Second: a tax on the stocks of those institutions who have more than 30% of the world's wealth. The 200 banks that concentrate 15% of the world's wealth have to contribute to the fight against poverty. Third: environmental tax on the production of CO2, nuclear waste, and on the use of Fuel for the aviation system which are responsible for more than 5% of the greenhouse effect. If you read the studies by the French economist Jacques Cossart, with those taxations it would be possible to redistribute 500'000 million of Dollars, that would be more than enough to reach the Millennium Development Goals and guarantee Drinkable water for all of Africa, and medical assistance for those who would need it, especially AIDS patients. One last thing, it is clear that this system forces us to think about the international institutions and this reflection is very similar to the theme of the Peoples' UN; it is possible to fight poverty. It is possible to build a new international democracy. Those who say that this is an utopia are the same people who thought before the French revolution that the nobility shouldn't pay taxes. But the revolution happened, because the people believed it was possible to build a different society. Today it is possible to build a different society.