

Rete dei Comunisti International Bulletin

April 2021

El Partido es el alma de la Revolución
DEL 16 AL 19 DE ABRIL EN EL PALACIO DE LAS CONVENCIONES

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The Euro-Atlantic bottleneck

Editorial of 24 marzo, [Contropiano.org](https://www.contropiano.org)

Let's consider Italy's "Euro-Atlantic positioning" seriously – as is obligatory – as Mario Draghi reiterated clearly.

What does this mean in concrete terms? That as far as strategic geopolitics and political-military alliances are concerned, ***this unfortunate country remains exactly in the position it has been in since 1945***, that is, in conditions of limited sovereignty under the "NATO umbrella". An alliance so to speak, in which Italy counts almost nothing.

As far as budgetary policies, economic policies, labour legislation, health and welfare in general are concerned, this unfortunate country is part of the European Union and is bound by the treaties that govern it. Treaties designed to always favour "the market" to the detriment of the people, as commanded by the export-oriented model imposed from the beginning by the economies of the North (Germany, out of the teeth).

A double cage that is in fact particularly constrictive and socially harmful, given that it prevents – both institutions, NATO and the EU, were born for this – any possible evolution towards models of social organisation based on other priorities and other social, as well as geopolitical, interests

But in what condition is this double external constraint in today, at the height of the pandemic?

Very bad, it seems. Which is a serious problem, given that no imperialism in crisis gives up hegemony without first trying everything to stay on the throne. But, on the other hand, if it were always at the height of its powers, there would never even be a hope of glimpsing the possibility of radical change.

The pandemic, in this Euro-Atlantic bloc, has been dealt with in much the same way.

a) **"Living with the virus" to keep as many economic activities open as possible, sacrificing the "marginal and non-strategic" ones** (tourism, catering, hotels, leisure, culture, entertainment, etc.) in order not to lose too many points in the core ones (steel, mechanics, IT, telecommunications, etc.).

b) **waiting for vaccines, financing research with public money but entrusting it to private multinationals** that could thus impose patents to be 'protected'.

c) then conduct mass vaccination campaigns, hoping to achieve herd immunity as soon as possible and resume 'normal life'.

The failure in this field is complete.

The economy has also collapsed by several points, in all the countries of this Euro-Atlantic bloc. The privatised health service is everywhere an organisational and proprietary obstacle to mass vaccination campaigns (after having been so in the prevention and initial fight against the virus).

The 'authorised' vaccines - so far only four within the 'bloc' - have been selected on a 'geopolitical' basis, excluding from the outset the 'exogenous' ones (Russian, Chinese, Cuban)

This is not the end of the story. The fierce competition between the Big Pharma multinationals themselves is very much in evidence, with the three American ones (Pfizer, Moderna, Johnson & Johnson) aiming to destroy the credibility of the Anglo-Swedish AstraZeneca (which, for its part, is doing so much that it seems suicidal).

In short, the Atlantic and the 'euro' sides are not going in the same direction, despite Draghi's reassurances.

Moreover, research on the virus is registering new characteristics and variants on a daily basis, to the point that its endemicisation seems certain. The mutant Covid is on its way to becoming as cyclical as an annual flu. But it sows ten times as many deaths as the dear old flu.

Imagine "competitive" capitalist economies facing every year the hellish purgatory we have been experiencing for over a year now, and ask yourself how long it can last before ruptures - in economic structure or social resilience - begin to manifest themselves in earnest

In such a situation, the new 'democratic' US administration has coldly chosen to raise the level of 'strategic confrontation' with Russia and China, treated as potential enemies simply because they exist independently of the Euro-Atlantic bloc. In fact, they have two different social systems (Russia does not deviate much from the Western neo-liberal model, while China shows a 'mixed public-private model' oriented by state planning), and **therefore this is not an 'ideological' opposition** ('liberal freedoms' versus 'communist dictatorships').

It can also be seen from the 'narrative' offered unequivocally by the entire mainstream media system, which desperately clings to a few relatively problematic pieces (Navalny, the Uighurs, Hong Kong), while trying to silence as much as possible the successes (the increase in wages and welfare in China, with the elimination of poverty; the defeat of the virus and 17 vaccines in the field, distributed in the rest of the world).

We are inside a bloc in crisis, that is the simple truth. Competition is also increasing within the "Euro-Atlantic bloc" (between the United States and the European Union, with threats to Germany over the Russian gas pipeline plus other "trifles" in the automotive or aerospace sectors).

But it is also increasing within the European Union, with the Recovery Fund in charge of rewriting the division of labour and industrial supply chains within the Old Continent. Here Germany and France are aiming to take the lion's share (more the former, of course), only temporarily setting aside the "end of the world" weapon, namely a return to austerity and a balanced budget.

Is there any hope of getting out of this deadly situation? Yes, if we acknowledge that this is the real situation. Yes, if we listen to the discontent growing within the various social figures we use to call 'popular'.

Economy Minister Daniele Franco has already explained that the "measures to support the economy" - and workers and small businesses - "will gradually run out by the end of the year". The little bit of financial morphine that has so far prevented the full intensity of the social pain from being felt will soon disappear.

Then this endless stalemate will also expire.

Mila Pernice - Rete dei Comunisti Roma
 Michela Flores - Unione Sindacale di Base
 Marta Collot - Noi Restiamo

La condizione delle donne ai tempi della crisi pandemica

QUALE "EMANCIPAZIONE FEMMINILE" DAL VIRUS DELL'OPPRESSIONE CAPITALISTICA?

SABATO 13 MARZO - ORE 16.00
 DIRETTA FB RETE DEI COMUNISTI ROMA



The condition of women at the time of the pandemic crisis

Rete dei Comunisti Roma

On March 13th, the Rete dei Comunisti of Rome organised the initiative "The condition of women at the time of the pandemic crisis: what 'female emancipation' from the virus of capitalist oppression?".

For communists, at this stage, the need to provide an adequate response to the condition of exploitation of women, **as well as the urgency of an ideological counterattack to the bourgeois model of women's emancipation, is compelling.**

Below is the opening speech of the initiative.

The Rete dei Comunisti of Rome organised today's meeting on the question of the condition of women and women's emancipation because of the now strong need to contextualise it and identify the issues around which as a communist organisation we must reflect and insist in our political action.

It is a theme that has been, and is being, addressed in different disciplines, psychoanalysis, sociology, economics, politics, etc., and from different points of view, such as that which

insists on the question of gender difference or that of equality and parity. The history of the feminist movement has always revolved around this dichotomy.

*Today we are interested in – and we choose – to start from the material datum within the current context, which is that of the pandemic within the systemic crisis and the ongoing competition between imperialist poles, where precisely **the Covid crisis is on the one hand the product of that crisis and on the other the opportunity for a change of phase***

So let us start with the data, which is what struck us in recent weeks, when ISTAT published the numbers of jobs lost in December 2020, which involved, out of 101,000 workers, as many as 99,000 women, so practically 99% of the new unemployed. Compared to December 2019 there are also 444,000 fewer workers, of which 312,000 are women. **Thus, in the year of Covid, the overwhelming majority of those who lost their jobs are women**, i.e. the exploited, precarious workforce with no contractual guarantees and whose access to or removal from the world of work has always been linked to the needs of capital.

History provides us with many examples of how the female workforce has always functioned as a surplus value within the capitalist mode of production. As early as the beginning of the 20th century, documents can be found showing how female labour was sometimes preferred to male labour because it was cheaper and less guaranteed by law. It was clear even then how the capitalist system has pivoted and continues to pivot on the question of 'economic blackmail'.

Let us consider the role of women during the wars: with the male population being called up for military duties, the needs of factories and offices required an increase in the number of women in the workforce, who received lower wages than the men whose place the new workforce had taken. In the factories they were employed as general labourers, but this replacement was temporary and linked to the years of conflict. In the clerical and service sectors, women were also employed on a massive scale, but again on a temporary basis. At the end of the conflict, a large part of the female workforce was laid off and women were encouraged by the State to help repopulate the country.

In the intertwining of the productive and reproductive functions within society, the role of women was the result of constructions structured around the socio-economic needs of the system: in periods of crisis women have greater difficulty entering and easier exit from the world of work, just as in moments of economic growth there is an advancement in the living and working conditions of women and other exploited categories. Taking up Fourier's statement, later quoted by Marx in "The Holy Family", that the level of civilisation of a society is measured by the condition of women,

we can speculatively state that the index of exploitation of women becomes the measure of the exploitation of all the most precarious categories.

*As Carla Filosa writes, **women have been reduced [...] to a historical function of capitalist relations:** trained to mediate consensus between generations for the temporal continuity of these relations, they are also adaptable to enter and leave the labour market – where they are mostly relegated to the lowest income levels – in order to constitute a perennially usable wild card for social savings, without any signs of organised rebellion against the command of capital.*

Since the 1970s there has been a steady increase in the female workforce in industrialised countries, as more schooling has enabled them to enter the business and service sectors. Today, faced with a crisis that is not only pandemic but more generally systemic, capitalism is trying to find a way out by proposing a restructuring of the current production model, focusing on specific sectors such as the so-called green economy or digitalisation. With the EU's de facto commissioning of Italy through the imposition of Draghi at the head of the government, we are encountering this profound restructuring of the economic apparatus for the benefit of the interests of big business and profit, which obviously cannot be reconciled with the interests of the working classes.

So in what direction can the Next Generation EU plan point when it dedicates an entire section to the theme of inclusion and cohesion (within which, among other things, the condition of women and the condition of young people are united), with particular attention to what is defined with the scenographic term of "female empowerment"? In the direction of reiterating the policies of exploitation of what we could define as a reserve industrial army, in its broadest sense of a weapon in the hands of the capitalists (as Marx defined it in *Capital*), through the precariousness, the blackmailing of women in the subordinate groups and through policies of support, on the contrary, to that female entrepreneurship compatible with the objectives of the present state of affairs that does not exclude, indeed favours, the possibility for that component to reach positions of leadership.

Today there are women who have reached high levels of responsibility, public figures with authoritative roles within the system, those that Elisabetta Teghil calls 'the patriarchs', whose successes pass for examples of female emancipation within the bourgeois narrative flattened on belonging to gender rather than class. ***The tools in the hands of the bourgeoisie in this case are represented by recourse to transversal themes such as gender violence, or the question of civil rights for example***, which in the history of the reformist strand of the women's movement has led to

the victory of important battles, such as education, the right to vote, and divorce. ***These are all important struggles which, however, focus mainly on issues of equality and equity, and do not contemplate the hypothesis of 'isolating' the class question.***

The issue of sexist violence is also certainly transversal, but it has a greater incidence within the exploited groups, because it is on them that the effects of economic blackmail fall, and because in society, therefore in the workplace and in many cases in the family, the patriarchal model and domination is also culturally internalised and re-proposed. ***In the family, the man is the bourgeois and the woman represents the proletariat, wrote Engels.*** It is violence that is established – Pierre Bourdieu states – when the schemes he [the dominated] employs to perceive and evaluate himself or to perceive and evaluate the dominant [...] are the product of the incorporation of the classifications, thus naturalised, of which his social being is the product. In the section of the Statistical Yearbook of the Municipality of Rome dedicated to social issues, the graphs make immediately visible how most of the women who turned to the Anti-Violence Centres in the last year came from the peripheral areas of our city.

This flattening on gender specificity, which inspires the mainstream policies (but also, albeit with different intentions and different objectives, the platforms of women's movements in the West in recent years, such as Me Too), ***is all the more insidious when it insists on the difference between two different 'natures'***, the female one, the feminine nature, weaker, more inclined to care work and taking care of the family and children, or to work in less qualified and lower paid sectors, and the masculine nature, strong, dominant, active, projected outwards, into the world of work and profession where men can enjoy greater life and career opportunities.

As the French sociologist Colette Guillaumin wrote in 1977, a social relationship, here a relationship of domination, of force, of exploitation (such as the one between man and woman or between whites and blacks), the one that secretes the idea of nature, is considered as the product of the internal traits of the object that undergoes the relationship, traits that would be expressed and unfold in specific practices (such as the care activities for women or, using Guillaumin's example, "cleaning shit"). In Guillaumin's words, the specific nature of the social group that undergoes the relationship of domination is thus traced. In this way the idea of a natural group is invented: of "race", of "sex", which inverts the reasoning.

Therefore, we can see how the roles attributed to the different social components are the result of constructions structured on the socio-economic needs of the system. What is more, in many cases power appropriates the key words of historical feminism in order to use them for the purposes of pacification

The power tends to replicate in the media representation the figure of the woman as the passive victim, who eventually needs to delegate to other subjects the resolution of their demands. ***But to ask for more rights, or more equality, to a system that has subsumed the secular patriarchy to manage the exploitation from which it is fed is at this point not only useless for a real emancipation, but functional to social control.*** The OSA comrades have done well in recent days, in the video released on the occasion of the harassment suffered by one of them, to say "we will not be victims, but revolutionaries", which is the refusal not only of an objective condition but is the refusal to wear a dress deliberately sewn on the female figure.

The fact that the victimisation of women is the stereotype through which the perfect network woven between patriarchy and the capitalist system harnesses the self-determination of exploited women is demonstrated once again by history: think of the Resistance, during which 70,000 women were organised in Women's Defence Groups, committed precisely to supporting the Resistance, 35,000 worked as fighters and many also took on leadership roles, not delegating the monopoly of violence to men. This is demonstrated by the movements around the world that have seen and see an important role of women in the struggles for liberation: coming to the present day we think of the Kurdish women who, with the Units for the Defence of Women in Rojava or with the PKK have freed from Isis thousands of square kilometres in northern Syria. In their appeal for 8 March this year, the Kurdish women fighters themselves said they were inspired by the resistance of women "from Sudan to Palestine, from Latin America to Asia, against fascism, sexism and nationalism". Or think of the Zapatista fighters who last year, again on 8 March, refused to take part in the international women's meeting because they had to carry on, weapons in hand, their struggle following the election of Obrador in Mexico, and then launched an appeal: 'we know that capitalism is everywhere and we women must not stop fighting so that no one in any corner of the world is afraid to be a woman'.

To conclude, we return to our initial question: what response are we as communists called upon to provide with regard to the exploitative condition of women? That of framing it within the condition of exploitation of the class and that of structuring the ideological counter-attack to the response of the bourgeoisie using Marxist analysis as an instrument of struggle. Because only through the struggle against the capitalist system within a strategic and organised project of revolutionary rupture can real emancipation be achieved. ***The struggle for women's emancipation necessarily passes through the struggle against this system***, just as all of us, when we take to the streets in the many moments of struggle that engage us politically, we do so bearing in mind that a revolutionary process cannot disregard the issue of women's emancipation from the exploitation perpetrated, including through patriarchy and the bourgeois ideological offensive, by this system.

Below is a link to the video of the entire initiative:



Mila Pernice - Rete dei Comunisti Roma
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Rete dei Comunisti



la nuova era del precariato
amazon

Amazon: a tentacular model

Rete nazionale Noi Restiamo

Noi Restiamo is a national organization of students and young workers

Logistics, already a strategic sector within the systemic crisis in which the capitalist mode of production finds itself, has seen its centrality further increase globally with the outbreak of the pandemic. In particular, the e-commerce giants, thanks to the foreseeable increase in online purchases and the strong push towards digitalisation that the pandemic phase has facilitated, have seen their profits increase exponentially, Amazon above all, arriving at tripling its net profit in 2020 and reaching the highest profits in its history.

The logistics sector is particularly important in Italy because of the country's position in the EU's manufacturing reorganisation process and its consequent deindustrialisation: the socio-economic crisis, caused by the repercussions of the Covid restrictions on workers, primarily those in the retail sector, has instead strengthened Amazon's position in Italy, which this year has opened 1,600 new jobs and announced the construction of two new sorting centres

Almost all the newspapers have welcomed and relaunched the news with favour, keeping silent about the real social costs, which we young people will be the first to pay, of the Amazon model, based on the privatisation of cutting-edge technological research,

particularly in the field of automation, which allows it to be hyper-competitive on the international market, increasing productivity and lowering labour costs, to the detriment of workers' conditions and environmental impact; this in the silence of the mainstream trade unions and institutions.

An example of this is the recent case of the new sorting centres, one in the province of Modena, where, despite the urban planning law of the Emilia-Romagna region talking about 'zero land consumption', the construction of the plant was approved as an exception; the other in Novara, where the centre is part of a plan to redevelop a rural and wooded area.

Consistent with the market's need for a green image, Amazon has also launched a series of measures to reduce its environmental impact. ***In line with these policies, both plants are presented as eco-sustainable: however, zero emissions are mentioned for the single warehouse and not for everything that revolves around it.*** The news was picked up with general enthusiasm by the press at the same time as a study published in Lancet Planet Health 2021 ranked Brescia and Bergamo, the epicentre of the first pandemic wave, and other cities in the Po Valley, as the European centres with the highest number of premature or excess deaths linked to air pollution, where there is a high capacity for fine dust to penetrate the respiratory tract. In May, an epidemiological study on the correlation between air pollution and the risk of infections of the lower respiratory tract, coordinated by the Superior Health Institute and the National System for Environmental Protection, also started in Italy.

The need to remain competitive and make a profit inevitably clashes with environmental and health protection, and Bezos' statements about reducing CO2 emissions in the coming years are nothing more than a bland greenwashing operation.

But it could not be otherwise: solutions such as the green economy or the concept of sustainable development only open up new markets in which pushing technological innovation, hiding the real irremediable contradiction between the infinite reproducibility of capital and the physical limits of nature, shifting the problem from causes to effects.

We see the same kind of subservience once again in the positions of the CGIL trade union at the table undertaken by Amazon for the negotiation of the new labour contract, which caused the exodus of four hundred workers to USB trade union: to the proposals that provide for the nullity of the option to work on holidays and an increase in working hours and temporary work from 30% to 50%, the mainstream trade unions, with the CGIL at the head, did not oppose, despite the net worsening of working conditions to which they will lead.

But what is a real limbo of exploitation and precariousness begins with the system of cooperatives: Amazon, rather than employing the workforce directly, prefers to rely on them, with the aim of freeing itself from legal responsibilities. ***Most of these workers are***

employed under precarious fixed-term contracts of about two months, which are most often not renewed, creating a circular migration of workers from one cooperative to another. In addition to this, on-call work, which allows for a constant flow of labour, is also delegated by Amazon to temporary employment agencies, which are in turn subordinated to the interests of the multinational.

The direct impact on the working conditions of logistics workers, which the surge in the growth of e-commerce has had with the outbreak of the pandemic and its associated restrictions, in parallel with the retail crisis, has benefited in turn from the opportunities for restructuring and experimentation at work that capital has seized at the moment of crisis, such as the acceleration of digitalisation or smart working, which have moved mass consumerism into the home, consistently contributing to the atomisation and disintegrative tendencies of the social body.

It is not surprising that these processes have been accompanied by a narrative on the part of the political class, supported by the main national and local media, which, since the lockdown, has told a mystified reality, centred on the opportunity of rediscovering the domestic dimension, making the home one's office, library, school, gymnasium, garden, buying everything you need online and, thanks to Amazon's automated warehouses, receiving it comfortably at home the next day, thanks also to the heroic work of the delivery men, portrayed as the new neighbourhood postmen, but forgotten with the end of phase 1.

This evident classist rhetoric hides a very different reality, and the struggles of the logistics workers since March have demonstrated this: ***the speed with which Amazon is able to deliver its products derives from the gruelling rhythms to which the thousands of logistics workers are subjected, of which the messengers are only the last link in the chain in the Chinese box system of cooperatives***; the algorithm that makes the catalogue's proposals personalised, anticipating and generating the wishes and needs of each individual customer, does not live a life of its own, but is constantly trained, corrected, improved by thousands of underpaid workers.

It is also thanks to the lowering of labour costs and the increase in productivity that Amazon is able to be so highly competitive on the market: an example of this is the launch of the online pharmacy in the United States at the height of the pandemic crisis, which makes it convenient for those who do not have health insurance to subscribe to Amazon, which offers huge discounts on medicines, thus making up for the lack of a welfare state

Technological research towards automation, in which Amazon is at the forefront, is only directed towards profit, to the detriment of the workers, as is evident from the machines already introduced in their warehouses, capable of signalling in real time with a red, yellow

or green light the productivity of each individual worker compared to the established average; or from various patents filed, among which the best known is that of the electronic bracelet, capable of monitoring and timing the movements of workers, to speed up the search for products; but there is no lack of patents for underground, underwater or air warehouses.

But the patent system not only guarantees huge profits for private individuals, it also expresses the highest point of the contradiction between the level of development of the productive forces and the current production relations. The valorisation of social intelligence for the purposes of competition between private individuals ends up being an obstacle to the satisfaction of the needs of the community, which the technological development achieved would be able to offer.

This is a contradiction that is now made evident by the development of the vaccine against Covid, but which, given the strategic importance of technological innovation in international competition, embraces all sectors, especially those of communication and knowledge, creating a real 'knowledge economy', where it is no longer possible to think of the latter as separate from the production sector. This generates a new paradigm and, alongside the traditional one, a new working class, made up not only of logistics workers, central to global distribution, but also of 'mental workers', of whom knowledge is an essential element for improving productivity and competitiveness.

A system that finds its complementarity in the model of higher education, where the management of knowledge has been subordinated to the priorities of the market, with the entry of the private sector into strategic training and research sectors, and in this Amazon is no exception

The Amazon model is the near future of our generation

A generation betrayed by a narrative that continues to be fed to us in its double face: in universities, where we are educated to the value of competition, and by the mass media, which bombard us with celebrations of beautiful stories of individual achievement through self-denial, sacrifice and hard work, despite the fact that reality itself is now dropping the mask of false meritocracy, which has covered the experiments on us that have been made for the future labour market by a political class enslaved to the interests of capital: We will be the ones who will have to deal with future welfare cuts, with a labour market even more based on precariousness, unemployment and ever higher living costs.

That is why the struggles of the logistics workers are also ours: the exploited delivery boy is a victim of the same system that, through on-call work, takes over the workforce of the younger generations, forming the delivery boys of the future, the precarious workers of tomorrow. ***Welding the struggles between generations, through practices***

of conflictual unionism and stripping the class enemy of its ideology is necessary to fight at all levels against a model that is based on exploitation, precariousness, flexibility and that, at a time when the margins of redistribution are reduced, shows its true face, violent and voracious towards the weakest categories.

The Amazon model is capital's answer to the crisis of civilisation we are experiencing, but ours is the organisation.



The internationalist activity of Unione Sindacale di Base

Interview to Cinzia dalla Porta, USB

Internationalist activity is one of the core aspects in the activities of USB which adheres to the FSM-WFTU.

This trait of USB's militant trade unionism is increasingly intertwined with relevant issues affecting working men and women in Italy.

The USB, despite the difficult conditions in which it has operated due to the pandemic, has created campaigns, individual initiatives, and training sessions on a wide range of issues with a strong internationalist character.

We talk about this with Cinzia della Porta from the USB National Executive in charge of the international department.

Q: Let's start with a general overview of what is the activity of the International Department of the USB and how it relates to the activity of the World Federation of Trade Unions and its member unions, in particular those countries that are part of the EU?

A: *Internationalism is an essential element of the USB, in theoretical and practical terms. It is the thread that links us to the history of the best class union movement of the 20th century.* A history that finds material continuity in the World Federation of Trade Unions and our natural positioning within it.

We joined the FSM-WFTU in 2010, after the founding congress of USB. Today, after the years of crisis following the end of the USSR, the FSM-WFTU is an internationalist trade union organization with new characteristics that has been structured on all continents through the construction of regional offices and categories that do very important work at a global level. Its growth and work have been strongly opposed by the ITUC, the International Trade Union Confederation, to which the collaborationist unions, including CGIL, CISL, and UIL, belong. ***Today the FSM-WFTU has 105 million members in 130 countries and continues to grow.*** At the European level USB is in the European secretariat of the FSM-WFTU and the world secretariat of the public sector structure.

In recent years we have developed an intense international activity, linking internationalist solidarity to the more general class conflict, which reflects the will and strength that workers still express, even today, in every corner of the planet, as demonstrated by the great movement of Indian farmers, the claims of the peoples of Latin America, but also those of the dockers and workers in the United States, who have joined the battles of the Black Lives Matter Movement. The list of places of conflict is very long, and it also affects our troubled continent, affected by the policies of a European imperialist pole under construction, which cynically uses the pandemic to carry out continental restructuring processes, at the service of multinational pharmaceutical companies and the various leading sectors of production, infrastructure, and advanced services. The struggle for the proceeds of the Recovery Plan is proof of this.

International activity is and will increasingly become a defining element of our union, an inseparable part of our commitment to building a class, unitary, independent, confrontational union in Italy

But our internationalism does not just stop at the fundamental link with the conflict that confronts us daily with our class enemy. The reasons that lead us to give strength to this area of intervention go beyond the field of bargaining, taking shape as an integral part of the great inspiration that has always moved the international workers' movement towards overcoming the economic relations imposed by the capitalist mode of production, the sole source of the suffering of mankind and nature.

For the USB, being internationalists means directing the economic struggle towards breaking this profoundly unjust and irrational system, for the construction of Socialism in the 21st century, the only possible way out of the barbarity of today

On this ground, real common paths of struggle are emerging at the international level, revealing the karst lines of the ever-changing value chains, implemented by big capital in the constant search for maximum profit. A scenario where the old assembly lines delocalized to the peripheries of the planet coexist alongside the super-exploitation of logistics chains, business services, and the exploitation of mental labor on digital platforms in the countries of the imperialist center.

The growth of awareness within USB of the importance of this front is increasingly perceived by our intermediate framework, but there is still a lot of work to be done, and we need to be even more committed in the near future.

In the face of the challenges imposed on us by our class enemy, lingering in a vision that is only national or, even worse, a simple dispute-oriented one, would take USB off the track of history, of a world running towards new social conflagrations, the result of the irreducible contradictions produced by the capitalist mode of production.

Q: One of the central issues for USB is the contrast to the policies imposed on (not only) Italy by the European Union and in general a radical critique of this strongly anti-democratic device. The failed management by the EU of the Covid-19 containment and vaccination campaigns is part of this pattern, in a context where cuts to the health sector - mainly due to the austerity policies dictated by the EU - have dismantled the National Health System. Can you tell us how USB has carried out and will carry out its broad mobilization activities on this issue, combining it with criticism of the EU cage?

A: We, like everyone else, are wondering about the consequences of Covid 19. It is now clear to everyone that the capitalist system came off worst from this harsh challenge that is killing hundreds of thousands of people, clearly demonstrating not being able to ensure a future for humanity. **Above all, it is now extremely clear what are the results of policies of robbery of resources and dismantling of every system of collective protection that, in our country but more generally throughout the world, had been affirmed thanks to the struggles of the workers' movement after the end of the Second World War and, essentially, until the fall of the USSR.** Now it is clear that a very hard struggle is opening up to prevent the exit from the pandemic crisis, which has turned from a health crisis into an economic and

social crisis, from being at the expense of the working classes and from being an opportunity to change the balance of power between capital and labor for the worse, for example, by changing the contractual system for the worse or by introducing Smart Working to introduce further flexibility and an increase in time and workloads. The game being played by our "entrepreneurs" and the multinationals is for capital to appropriate the available resources and thus manage to get through a crisis that is largely the result of its criminal management of power almost unscathed. The enormity of the resources that Europe and the governments of the countries involved are pulling out is staggering and should make it clear to everyone that the austerity policies to which governments and the EU have forced millions of people for years, strangling entire economies and massacring the lives of ordinary people, are the result of economic choices and not of a real lack of resources. The current clash, in which it is necessary to take part, is therefore to determine where and to whom the resources provided should be directed and how the state should return to playing a general and ***decisive role in the management of these resources and, ultimately, in the economy.*** It is clear that the entrepreneurial system, mindful of the glories of Italian-style assisted capitalism, is trying in every way to secure the largest slice. We, therefore, have two fundamental tasks: one is to make the analysis of what is happening a common knowledge, of what the real causes are, starting from our organizational structure so that it can reach every workplace, every neighborhood through a wide and in-depth training of cadres; the other is to hold together the struggles that will certainly be the key to the coming months and years. It is obvious that the economic and social consequences of the post-Covid era will not affect everyone in the same way, even if everyone will have profound scars for a long time.

The task of a class organization is to hold together at the confederal level all the impulses for the struggle that will arise, orienting and directing them so that the classic game of the ruling classes of using different interest groups against each other to prevent the struggles from having a strong impact does not succeed once again

In these ten years, we have gone through difficult and complicated situations, but our organization has always been able to come out of them thanks to its capacity for analysis, investigation, and forecasting and thanks to the organizational structure we have given ourselves. I believe that also in this phase the whole USB will be able to occupy the trade union, social and political spaces that will open up and to successfully engage in the battle we are facing.

Q: USB supported the campaign to award the Nobel Peace Prize to the Henry Reeve Brigade of Cuban doctors who also operated in Italy during the first pandemic period. As you rightly wrote: ***"The Nobel Peace Prize to these men and women, who faced with every catastrophe are ready to leave their country and their***

affections to risk their lives on behalf of unknown people, is a reward for the conception of the world they represent, at a time when the very existence of the humankind is in danger, due to the irrationality of an economic system that still dominates a large part of the planet." Can you tell us the reasons for this campaign and how it is carried out?

A: We have carried out an intense campaign in terms of both quantity and quality; the approach and the reasons were to highlight that the terrible situation our country is experiencing is not the result of bad luck but of very specific political choices, choices made both in the management of the pandemic and previously: that is, prioritizing profit and sacrificing the health and lives of citizens. ***That is to say comparing the rationality of capitalism with the rationality of a socialist system like Cuba, which is not only safeguarding the lives of its own people but has also sent its own brigades of doctors to help various countries around the world.***

We have seen a small island subjected to an economic blockade that at a terrible time sends its doctors to one of the richest places in the world, Lombardy. This is the materialization of internationalist solidarity under the eyes of a people, the Italian people, who at the same time were witnessing the closure of the European Union's borders and thousands of deaths.

Covid-19 pandemic again compared two radically different social and economic models, which gave both immediate and structural responses to the pandemic, with diametrically opposed results. This is what we have been discussing in our activities supporting the Nobel Prize to the Cuban medical brigade.

We have carried out many events, as USB and FSM-WFTU, a first national conference to launch the campaign involving, among others, the general secretary of the FSM-WFTU and the representative of the Cuban trade union, followed by an event in each region. The aim was to discuss the issue within our organization most broadly and extensively, involving first and foremost the health and research structures, which today increasingly represent the failure of the capitalist system.

As we have said throughout our path, ***Cuba has already won the Nobel Peace Prize to us and we will continue to draw inspiration for our work from that socialist experience, bringing support and solidarity to the Cuban people and government.***

Q: The USB paid particular attention to Palestine and concrete actions in its support. I am thinking in particular of initiatives in support of Palestinian political prisoners held in Zionist jails and for the military embargo against Israel, with which Italy, unfortunately, collaborates several leading sectors. The trade union's activity is precious, given the alignment of the political formations of the whole institutional framework and the overwhelming focus of the Italian media on Israeli needs. Can you explain to us what is the approach of USB and what are the actions undertaken?

A: USB has always been at the side of the Palestinian people, through campaigns, events, moments of struggle, and also by bringing our concrete solidarity directly to Palestine. ***The Palestinian class unions that have no ties with Israel are affiliated with us to the FSM-WFTU, the activities we carry out*** (of struggle and counter-information) are based on our and the FSM-WFTU's anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist character.

We have been to Palestine more than once and directly experiencing the life of the Palestinian people is devastating. An entire people forced into a cage, surrounded by walls, barbed wire, and checkpoints.

Speaking of normality in Palestine is an oxymoron. Any form of normal everyday life is denied. In solidarity with the Palestinian people and workers, since 2016 we have given USB formal membership to the international BDS campaign - Boycott Divestment Sanctions, against the State of Israel

A campaign that we believe can have significant effects internationally, through increased democratic pressure to stop the crimes committed by the Israeli state against the Palestinian people, similar to the successes of the BDS campaign against South Africa's Apartheid regime.

In our meetings we are also encouraged to develop constant pressure on the governments of the various countries and the EU, calling in particular for the interruption of all scientific and academic cooperation with Israel. We have recently joined the international campaign for the release of Palestinian children from Israeli prisons and participated in the initiative to present the BDS dossier on the arms embargo on Israel, and we will also promote other similar events.

Q: An important part of the working class that has expressed greater combativeness in Italy works in logistics and in agricultural work, where USB has an increasingly important organizational presence. Some of those same workers of Indian origin organized by USB who are fighting for better overall rights and not only for work have mobilized in support of the struggles of Indian farmers against the legislative package approved (though suspended) by Modi's government in India which overturns conditions in agricultural work.

How has USB supported this struggle?

A: The response is twofold, encompassing both the struggle of the logistics workers in our country, composed mainly of immigrant workers and the concrete solidarity given by USB to

the Indian farmers, which has seen the natural exposure of workers from that country present in Italy, employed in this sector.

With regard to logistics in our country, we can say without fear of contradiction that USB's trade union and organizational support was a fundamental element in the development of the conflict in Piacenza, the epicenter of the first wave of strikes, which cost the life of Abd El Salam, our union militant crushed by a "boss" on a truck in the evening of 14 September 2016, during a picket in front of the GLS company. A victim of a very harsh conflict, which still pits workers against bosses in a strategic sector for the capitalist production system. A conflict that has continued in recent years in Piacenza and other cities and regions, obtaining concrete results in terms of rights and opening up previously unimaginable bargaining spaces. It is a struggle that continues, finding nourishment and strength in a young working class that is not conditioned by the defeats suffered by our working class in all these years of backwardness, caused by the complicity of the confederal trade unionism and anti-worker legislation that is among the worst in Europe, thanks to governments of the right and false "left".

In this context, the solidarity of the Indian workers in Italy with their compatriots fighting against a bill that, if implemented, would set back the rights won by the farmers of the Indian continent by a century has been genuine. ***Just as natural has been the solidarity of USB, through a series of activities conveyed worldwide by the FSM-WFTU alongside the largest mobilization in the history of the peasant movement worldwide, obscured only by the servility of our mass media.***

Q: Italy is part of NATO. The new North American administration seems to want to use the Atlantic Alliance as an instrument to launch a new Cold War against China and Russia. The individual member countries are expected to contribute to this renewed war policy by allocating as much as 2% of their GDP to NATO-related war spending. Because of the EU's budget mechanisms, this means - for Italy, but not only there - further cuts in welfare funding. How will the trade unions act in this context of a warlike tendency and an increase in military expenditure not linked to any concrete threat?

A: Capitalism has always used, in conditions of systemic crisis, the weapon of wartime as a last resort to recover political hegemony and, above all, the ability to resume its hellish system of exploitation and profit maximization.

Once again, as in other historical phases, capitalism in its imperialistic phase is facing a crisis of unprecedented depth, which takes on 'systemic' characteristics, involving not only the economy but also the environment and its 'objective' limits, spilling over into the whole of society, scarred by over thirty

years of fiercely neoliberal policies that have laid the foundations for the current manifest inability to manage the pandemic

Public healthcare, reduced to its lowest terms, is exactly the product of those policies, turning into a noose around the neck of the majorities. A crisis that involves the very legitimacy of the ruling classes in the various Western imperialist countries and poles, clearly unable to maintain a stable political and ideological hegemony, producing power vacuums filled by figures like Trump, Bolsonaro, Johnson or like Draghi in Italy, representing the failure of an entire national ruling class, unable to manage the "expansive" policies of the Recovery Fund.

In this situation, it is natural for capitalism to push for a new cold war, managed by the 'democrat' Joe Biden, who is outdoing his predecessor in terms of provocation and shamelessness. The obvious targets of the decadent stars-and-stripes imperialism are the direct economic antagonists, starting with China and Russia, which are inseparably linked with a series of other countries unwilling to submit to US and EU diktats.

We are, therefore, facing a new historical period of great upheaval, where the option of generalized war - the only one that could meet the needs of destruction/reconstruction sufficient to give capitalism a new lease of life - is held back by the widespread possession of atomic weapons and by power relations that have changed profoundly in the short period that separates us from the beginning of so-called "globalization" dominated by the United States

The International Workers' Movement and the class unions that have nourished it have always sided with the peace and anti-war movements. This is the 'mission' of USB, which has fought and will fight with all its might against military spending, militarism, and the war effort.

It is not only an ethical struggle against the barbarity of war, but also a material one. Military spending takes the lifeblood out of a welfare system already prostrated by more than 30 years of cuts and anti-worker policies, aimed at extracting maximum profit where it is still possible for an agonizing system: wages and pensions.

All our efforts will be concentrated on uniting these elements, in order to make it possible to relaunch a strong anti-war movement. We have to make comprehensible to the broad masses the meaning and value of this battle for the maintenance of peace, overcoming the

stereotypes of self-referential pacifism, involving the old and new figures of wage labor in this battle for the survival of humanity, which can continue to exist if it can get rid of capitalism.

Q: One last question: this year the FSM-WTUF Congress is scheduled to take place in Vietnam in December. Can you tell us about the value of this appointment in a context still strongly marked by the pandemic, in a country that has been characterized by one of the most virtuous managements in containing the spread of the disease?

A: A very important appointment, especially because of the enormous work that the FSM-WFTU is doing all over the world and the need for the definition of the class union that is necessary for this historical phase.

Added to this is the fact that the congress is being held in a country that has responded to the pandemic in a completely different way from capitalist countries, i.e. in a country that has priorities other than the profit of capital.

It will be a decisive moment for all of us also to redefine the internal structure given the great growth we have had in recent years since the last congress in Durban in South Africa.



Stop US blockade against Cuba. Caravans in the streets!

Rete dei Comunisti

Today [24 April] in Italy, as in Cuba, France and other countries, Caravans are circulating in the streets against the US blockade that for decades has wanted to strangle the island that brought the Revolution to the US "backyard".

In Rome, Milan, Naples and many other cities, activists in solidarity with Cuba have taken up the call to make this day a day of mobilisation and awareness-raising against the US blockade of a country that in recent months has confirmed to the world grappling with the Covid pandemic what solidarity means.

Solidarity with Cuba is a widespread sentiment that has grown during this period, when the Doctors' Brigades - also nominated for the Nobel Prize by a vast front of supporters - have



#JuntosPorCuba
Tendamos #PuentesDeAmor
#NoMásBloqueo
#UnblockCuba



Desde Italia la CONACI te invita a unírte a las caravanas Puentes de Amor por la Familia Cubana.

El sábado 24 de abril, levantemos juntos nuestras voces para decir NO al Bloqueo de EEUU contra Cuba.

Estaremos en Roma, Milán, Venecia, Nápoles, Ancona, Bari y Sicilia.

Si quieres unírte a nosotros escríbenos a: segretarianazionaleconaci@gmail.com



rushed swiftly and gratuitously to where the Covid pandemic has plunged the health structures of several countries into collapse.

The fact that the United States continues to maintain a shameful and criminal economic blockade against Cuba, despite repeated motions calling for its lifting by the UN Plenary Assembly, is a horror that is becoming increasingly incomprehensible and unacceptable to anyone with any sense of justice or, if you will, common sense.



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