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AFGHANISTAN: DAL RITIRO DELL'ARMATA ROSSA ALLA FUGA DEGLI STATI UNITI

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Rete dei Comunisti Roma

Gli USA ancora una volta in fuga dalle proprie sconfitte

Roma, 11 settembre ore 17
Casa della Pace
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The finger in the eye... on Afghanistan

Editorial of 25 august, Rete dei Comunisti

What is happening in Afghanistan cannot be correctly interpreted without going to the political and historical roots that have determined the current situation. Around the tragedy of that people, indecent falsehoods and mystifications have been produced whose main actors have been the USA (followed by European countries since the 1970s), Pakistan and the reactionary rulers of Saudi Arabia. It was in fact President Carter in July 1979, a good six months before the intervention of the USSR, who decided to support the fundamentalists and Pakistan militarily in the war against the Afghan government.

Taking a fiercely critical view of the official versions provided by governments and the 'ideological apparatuses of the state', such as television and the mass media in general, is an obligation for a communist force such as ours, because at the height of the anti-Soviet dogma in the 1980s our area, which was then called the Movement for Peace and Socialism, was the only political organisation in Italy to publicly practise internationalist solidarity with the Afghan government.

A government attacked by feudal forces such as the Mullahs, the landowners who saw their power called into question by the socialist reforms that were made in the countryside, social services, schools with literacy, up to the emancipation of all women, banning arranged marriages and the burqa (as was well explained in the article of Contropiano of 22 August entitled "Globalized Monsters" by Leonardo Masone).

Ours was an uncomfortable and isolated position, even by the most radical left, but we supported it with all the necessary determination, being aware that, however, the Soviet intervention could safeguard the social and democratic characteristics of that experience, necessary for the emancipation of the Afghan people.

A very difficult position and a convinced "Kabulist" one, as it was called at the time, but a clear one that today allows us to represent and strengthen a point of view that is now imposed by the facts that are coming to light in this second half of August, blowing up all the lies and mystifications of the imperialist countries, of the US but also of the EU.

The first was that the Afghan government in the 1980s existed thanks only to the USSR. The reality is that that government resisted imperialist and fundamentalist external aggression for a good three and a half years (from 1989 to 1992) after the Soviet withdrawal, showing that it had a strong relationship with important sectors of Afghan society. A very different thing from the current puppet government which, left alone with its own forces, did not even last three weeks, further demonstrating its inconsistency.

Certainly, the Westerners cannot deny that they were well aware of the obscurantist and reactionary characteristics of their allies and that they even encouraged and supported them in an anti-communist key. Therefore, the tears shed on those who are fleeing from the Taliban barbarism appear completely false, and here some reflections are necessary.

The first is that relative to the massacre in '92 against the communists, their families and all those who defended a progressive social vision against the obscurantism of the mujaheddin. At the time, however, Westerners were quite happy for those massacres to be perpetrated, whether they involved men, women or children, and even drew a veil of silence over it, focusing only on the military defeat.

Nor did they say anything when Afghan President Najibullah was barbarously emasculated and then hanged in the streets in '96. Even our fine left-wing souls remained silent in the face of an episode that the 'civilised' West then repeated

with Saddam Hussein and Gaddafi but failed, fortunately, with Syrian President Assad.

The other is that if one has to identify a person responsible for what is happening today in Kabul, it is precisely the West, which first used the integralist wave and is now abandoning its supporters to that barbarity evoked like an improvised sorcerer's apprentice.

The real danger facing the 'refugees' and the collaborationists today is that which comes from the wheels of the American planes as they take off and from fleeing from the allies, no more and no less than what was done in 1975 with the collaborationists in Vietnam, in the face of the now unsustainable and brazen rhetoric in defence of women and children, who are now cynically abandoned to themselves.

In the coming months, we must continue to work on political and historical "counter-information" on the Afghan affair, systematically countering an increasingly less credible neo-colonial ideological operation that since the 1990s has made the masters of the world "dream" that history was truly over.

But while no one should be given a discount for the past, the Afghan affair is the culmination of a sharp reversal in the historical course of the last thirty years. For some years now, it has been clear that the situation is changing radically: from increased global competition, to Britain's exit from the EU, to the tragedy of the pandemic, which has been most intense in countries where liberalism has devastated the social fabric.

For some time as the RDC we have been working on the analysis of this change and we have done so in particular in two national forums, in 2016 and 2019 on the crisis of capital's hegemony and the stalemate in the relations of force between imperialisms, in which we identified a historical passage that we defined as being of the same depth as that of the crisis of the USSR, but of the opposite political sign.

In this sense it is necessary to identify - albeit still in an approximate way as a long phase of change is opening - which are the characters that are emerging, both the more evident ones and the less visible but potential ones that may break out in the near future.

Going by points:

(a) ***The defeat is ideological rather than military.***

The greatest and most burning defeat for the West is the IDEOLOGICAL one. The shameless use of weapons, in terms of real colonial interventions from the 1990s onwards (to list them would be useless as well as very long), was possible because in those years a general revolutionary vision had capitulated and the so-called humanitarian interventionism, the "endless" war for democracy, etc. had asserted itself.

This allowed the ideological motivation necessary to justify any kind of interference and military intervention towards the outside world, but also to justify to the populations of the imperialist countries the economic expenses and human costs paid to perform a "superior" task, precisely humanitarian.

However, it should not be forgotten that the passivity that has been established in recent decades by the peoples of Western countries was also due to the implicit awareness that these crimes would have allowed the distribution to the "masses" of the crumbs of a generalised robbery towards the countries of the periphery, a "world periphery" that at the time also included China due to the low cost of labour.

The failure in Afghanistan, which came after those in Iraq, Syria, Yemen and many other places including Latin America, puts an end to Western hegemony over the fight for democracy, human rights and women's rights. The ideological lintel has collapsed and all those civil and military structures that have rested on it for decades will collapse.

b) ***The material causes of the US defeat***

The causes that led to this outcome are political and military, but they are above all material, since the self-appointed policeman of the world did not have the material strength to sustain this role, starting with the weaknesses of its economic and financial structure, which had been taken to its extreme possibilities with the zero interest rate policy and an abnormal overproduction of capital.

A structural weakness and a new historical truth are thus emerging: ***after barely thirty years of a unipolar world of the USA, it is becoming clear that a single country cannot control the planet***, especially in a phase of economic-financial, social and finally environmental crisis that has been going on for more than ten years.

What is emerging is a multipolar world, which will however be subjected to many contradictions and conflicts if it maintains its material basis in the capitalist

mode of production, and within which the drive to overcome the present social order could find new vigour.

c) ***The failure of a ruling class***

There is also a failure of strategic conception that demonstrates the limits of the US ruling class. The intervention and control of central Asia was the product of the strategic thinking of Zbigniew Brzezinski, President Carter's advisor and member of the Trilateral, who theorised the need to occupy the centre of the Asian continent in order to obtain a decisive strategic position in that area away from the US. From there they thought they could condition China, Russia and Iran to maintain their world dominance. This new Vietnam shows how unrealistic such a calculation was.

d) The use of military Keynesianism

Since the Korean War in 1950 in the US, who has had a decisive influence on American international policy has been the military industrial apparatus, i.e. the use of military Keynesianism. It has been decisive because it is the most important production sector, as the US is by far the largest arms producer and exporter in the world.

The recoil that US interventionism is now undergoing, the greater prominence and role of its competitors, not only has a strategic effect but also an economic and therefore social one. In other words, where will this leading sector turn to increase its profits? The internal market, which is still protected and 'flourishing', will certainly not be sufficient.

This necessity will produce other chain effects of a different kind: on the one hand, the deepening of an industrial and social crisis that is already weighing heavily on the American economy, and on the other, knowing full well how the 'beast' operates, what other war scenarios are being prepared to support the military industrial apparatus?

e) A new international order

It is clear that in the coming months and years a new international order will take shape, perhaps even new relations of force that could break the stalemate of imperialisms that we have analysed and that has been going on for at least a decade, that is, since the previous financial crisis. Understanding what the international scenario will be, proceeding by hypothesis and verification, is not an intellectual exercise of geopolitics but a way to place the initiative of the communists in the perspectives and also, as far as we are concerned, in the specific national situation.

Some signs have already come from a resumption of G7 activism with the recent summit held in June in Cornwall where some previously less obvious strategic choices emerged. Basically, in the face of global competition and the role of China, the growing and diversified ambitions of the allies, and the withdrawal from Afghanistan that had already been foreseen (but certainly not as foreseen

as the debacle the world is witnessing), the US but also the EU are taking note of the change in the strategic balance.

They probably consider the loss of direct imperialist control over a large part of Asia and are reorganising the Atlantic area by recompacting NATO, which until a few years ago seemed to be on the way out.

Of course, exact forecasts on this are premature and we can only try to understand the trends, but the idea of consolidating the Atlantic area around the US and the EU, also strengthening its positions in Africa and Latin America, is a hypothesis that was already apparent from the proposal made during the G7 meeting in June, namely that of building a "Western Silk Road". Of course, the negative result of the G7 on the withdrawal from Kabul should also be considered, but this summit was held in a condition that was clearly unmanageable for NATO forces.

The hypothesis of holding on to the imperialist "citadel" of the Atlantic alliance is all to be verified, but it is the logically most realistic one insofar as relations with China "in primis" but also with Russia are undergoing a very strong attrition.

Significant was the statement of the spokeswoman of the Chinese foreign ministry who said that "wherever the American army goes it leaves turmoil and division, chaos, broken families and devastation".

If this is the perspective on which the Western powers are working, two questions of a strategic nature will arise, but which have to do with our direct political action as communists in Italy.

The first concerns the role of Latin America within this Atlantic reorganisation. It should be remembered that the attempt to make that continent more functional to the economy of North America was already made in the 1990s, first with the constitution of NAFTA, as an economic trade area, and then with the enlargement to the rest of the continent with the FTAA.

That prospect foundered because China 'entered' the market with labour costs and state support for Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) that were more convincing for multinationals than what Latin American countries could offer. It is no coincidence that it was precisely in this situation of relative importance for the USA of the Latin American countries that the Bolivarian political experiments were affirmed, starting with Venezuela, and the ALBA was set up as an alternative economic area.

In the prospective change of the Atlantic area's newfound centrality, the attention that the US and the EU will pay to those countries will also change. The anti-Cuban campaign we have been witnessing for months, the continuous

interference, even with coups, in the policies of countries claiming their economic independence from the robberies of multinationals, are not only the product of anti-communist ideology but of the need to regain control of an area that is moving towards alternative social perspectives. This need concerns North America but also the EU, which systematically associates itself with the US on these campaigns.

The second concerns the relationship between the US and the EU. If it is true that the aim is to strengthen the Atlantic axis, this cannot leave the relationship as it was before, because today it is the US that needs to strengthen its alliance with the EU; Britain alone is not enough. But ***the EU is no longer willing to play a subordinate and not an "equal" role with the US.***

The European imperialist pole has been "forged" over years of continuous crises, and these have always had a reinforcing effect on Brussels, so that the only relationship that can be acceptable today is an equal one. On the other hand, it is the function of the United States that is in crisis, since it is now being demonstrated that it is not capable of supporting the fate of the world on its own.

Furthermore, the EU, unlike the US, has the possibility of using the "two ovens", so that if the US does not accept a change in relations, the alternative of economic relations with China is already on the table. And it is precisely this contradiction that both China and Russia are working on. This option is clearly visible in the declarations of the EU and the main European states, which differ from those of the US and Great Britain.

Naturally, the conditions that will be determined, the concrete choices that will be made, and the further changes in the relations of force between the powers will count for a great deal in the hypothesized scenarios. However, what needs to be understood now is the process that will be set in motion by the present upheavals, but which will take on forms that are difficult to predict in the coming years.

As the Rete dei Comunisti, we believe that the spaces to fight for a political and social alternative will increase. In any case, two areas of political and ideological battle that we have been following for some time are confirmed: that of internationalism, in particular towards the experiences of 21st century socialism that are developing in Latin America, and that of the rupture of the European Union understood as an imperialist pole, which paradoxically finds stronger reasons for the construction of a competitive political and economic area in the crisis in the USA.

25 August 2021

AFGHANISTAN:

GLI SCENARI DOPO LA SCONFITTA DELL'OCCIDENTE

**TORINO
MILANO
BOLOGNA
PISA
SIENA
ROMA
NAPOLI**

**RICOSTRUIRE LA STORIA
DI UN PAESE CONTRO
LA MENZOGNA DELLA
GUERRA PER LA DEMOCRAZIA
PER IL RILANCIO
DELLA LOTTA
INTERNAZIONALISTA
CONTRO NATO ED
UNIONE EUROPEA**



**CAMBIARE
ROTTA** ★
ORGANIZZAZIONE GIOVANILE COMUNISTA





In these elections we have raised contradictions that leave their mark

Interview with Marta Collot, national spokesperson of Potere al Popolo

Interview with Marta Collot, candidate for mayor of Potere al Popolo in Bologna.

We are now at the close of this campaign for the municipal elections in Bologna. What is your assessment of the Potere al Popolo election campaign?

Definitely positive! Apart from how many votes will come in, I think **we have managed to represent in these elections the voices of those who have no voice** in this city.

There is still a lot of work to be done, but we can be satisfied because in a competition that was asleep because of the obvious victory of the PD, we have raised contradictions that have obviously left their mark. Let me give two

examples. At Salvini's rally in the San Donato working-class neighbourhood, our counter-demonstration gave a voice to residents who were tired of exploitation, and this voice was covered by all the media. In the central Piazza Verdi, our assembly on the needs of young people, held with the comrades of Cambiare Rotta, received a response from the League itself, which organised a counter-initiative literally overnight.

With which social sectors was the dialogue on the Public City proposal easier and with which more difficult?

Perhaps the most natural dialogue is with young people. Even though many of them do not live in Bologna, the problems of rent and job insecurity add up to the problems faced by young people, which makes it necessary for us to communicate directly, regardless of the possibility of voting. The most difficult one is with the suburbs abandoned by official politics. It happens that we are greeted with the classic: 'You are brave to show up just for the elections', but we can be consistent in our break with the PD world

In your city, what does it mean to put forward the alternative vision of a Public City? With what material interests does it come into open conflict?

It is precisely that PD world that has always governed Bologna and formed a closed system. It is not only the PD, but also the gangs of bosses disguised as cooperatives, the complicit unions, and the foundations.

A few days ago I had a meeting with the Alliance of Italian Cooperatives, which was proposing its programme document to us. You can imagine their faces when I said that the aim is to internalise all those public services on which the 'cooperatives' base their business.

We registered the usual complaints about the fact that there was no 'single' left-wing list for the municipal elections. Why was this not possible?

We have always avoided stirring up public controversy, but we believe that the difference in terms of the intensity of the campaign, social referents, and street attitude has all been seen. We don't like the presence of more than one 'communist' list, but we know that a 'unitary' list that fails to act because it is always engaged in internal diatribes is certainly worse.

After the elections comes a general strike, that of 11 October. How have these two dates interacted in your political action?

The construction of the general strike was a strand of our campaign. Practically every day we beat commuter stations and workplaces.

Carrying out this piece of the campaign is not just a question of political will, the fragmentation of work means that it is not just a matter of limiting ourselves to the proverbial "factory gates" (which have to be done, and no one thinks they can save themselves the trouble of getting up to go on the first shift!) but also of finding canteens and restaurants that gather workers together for lunch.

As in the electoral field, the centre-left has created a desert of distrust in the trade union field. ***The break with trade union complicity is an element on which to build credibility.***

In your opinion, what does this electoral experience leave in terms of the social sedimentation of Potere al Popolo in your territory?

The assembly of Potere al Popolo comes out of this election campaign with more comrades active in more neighbourhoods. Where we were already present, we have strengthened our presence and links with the realities of the territory. In other areas, such as San Donato, which was at the centre of the usual security campaign, we were present as individuals, we managed to organise political initiatives and also acted as a megaphone for the concerns of a part of that neighbourhood.

We come out of this campaign with more dialogue with the working classes of Bologna. And with the awareness that from the day after the elections there will be a lot of work to do.



Ecological transition, nuclear fission and false ideology

Organizzazione giovanile comunista Cambiare Rotta

We reorder our statements and positions regarding the installation of nuclear fission power plants in Italy which, in recent weeks, have reignited and then fuelled the controversy.

Cingolani, Minister of Ecological Transition in the Draghi government, said at an event of Italia Viva that radical chic environmentalists are worse than the climate catastrophe because they do not understand that today there are new technologies to produce clean energy through nuclear fission and without who knows what radioactive waste.

The first reactions came from the parties: while the PD simply calls it a wrong controversy and the M5S timidly expresses its opposition by asking for a meeting with Cingolani (on the other hand, after the abandonment of many causes such as No Tav, is very little credible on the front of the environmental

fight), the League for its part supports the project and even proposes the construction of a power plant in Lombardy.

As an organization that considers ***anti-capitalist environmentalism a strategic plan of struggle and investigation***, we couldn't help but place these openings within a certainly broader framework that we have long since begun to analyze and that concerns the entire maneuver of ecological transition sponsored by the European Union and carried by the government on a national scale.

Of the criticisms of the re-proposal of nuclear power that we have published and represented in the streets in recent weeks, we would like to underline the criticism of the attitude of a minister who, placed (as he says) in front of a catastrophe towards which "we are shooting", cannot propose a credible plan of action and therefore feeds his rhetoric with visions that still have nothing concrete.

By his own admission (following the criticism) he specified in fact that "Today we could not do anything nuclear, because we have a referendum that says no to the old technologies and the new ones at the moment there are not yet". So what is the point of raising this issue? We simply note that these are not spurious statements, but that they precede a series of events in preparation for the PreCop26 climate conference, two of which are devoted entirely to publicizing nuclear power as an alternative to fossil fuels.

The fact is that these clarifications do not settle the matter since:

- the greenwashing propaganda of many transition actors
(governmental and non-governmental) within the scientific community and among young people does not stop;

- We have not yet come to terms with our nuclear past: the waste produced 30 years ago is still waiting to be permanently disposed of (and this is not just our problem)

In short, this is an area in which we have every interest in maintaining a high level of attention, not with a view to cultivating the tradition of the "Left of No", but rather because it is a subject that forces us to ask ourselves political

questions, which include but go beyond the calculation on cutting emissions and instead directly concern the model of development that we intend to support if we want humanity not to succumb.

For us, looking at science as communists means first of all asking ourselves what are the priorities that guide progress, who benefits from it and at what price. It means recognizing that science is not neutral:

that is, that while its results are universally valid, the direction of research is indicated by interests established by the relations of force within society (which, at this moment, are all against us). This is why moments of in-depth analysis of the scientific reasons for rejecting nuclear fission would be meaningless without a broader critique of the "ecological scam" that is the re-proposition in green sauce of the capitalist mode of production, which has proven to be incompatible with the physical limits of this planet; and it is for this reason that, however much scientific curiosity the progress in nuclear fusion may arouse in us, we must recognize that (despite the clickbait headlines about ENI's new magnet) it is a prospect far from materializing and the course must be reversed now, not in 20 or 30 years.

The squares in which we will and have participated (from the FFF on 24/09 to the protest at PreCop26 on 2/10) together with the initiative we organized in Bologna and the next debate that will be held at the Politecnico di Milano will be moments in which to build a counter-narrative and concrete practices of struggle against the transition proposed by the government, made on the one hand of vague proposals and on the other of very concrete actions aimed at repressing historical environmental struggles (such as NoTav and NoTap) in order to pursue the strengthening of the European pole and pander to the interests of energy multinationals.





Affecting through conflict and the creation of real power relations

Interview with Sasha Colautti, USB - Private Sector

As Rete dei Comunisti, we interviewed Sasha Colautti of the Unione Sindacale di Base - Private Sector in view of the general strike on 11 October to take stock of the various steps the union has taken in recent months.

Question - On Saturday 8 May in Genoa, the USB set up the Maritime-Port Workers' Coordination, an important step that sees the union now present in all segments of the logistics chain, becoming a pole of attraction for more and more combative workers in the sector. The newly-formed Coordination was immediately successful in tackling two issues in particular, which it was able to tackle head-on by promoting strikes and initiatives. It promoted a 24-hour strike on safety - on 14 June - after the umpteenth death of a port worker (in this case

in Salerno), and called for a boycott of the transport of weapons of war in ports during the Zionist offensive on Gaza.

In your speech in Genoa on 8 May, you strongly emphasised the need to break the monopoly of representation of the CGIL, CISL and UIL, which, together with 'corporate fascism', acts as a combination to annihilate the more generous thrusts of workers who demand wages, rights and guarantees, and puts a straitjacket on the development of confrontational unionism.

What steps forward do you think have been taken in recent months on this issue at the trade union level?

Sasha Colautti - USB continues its strong numerical growth in the private sector, numbers that are in contrast to the decline in those of CGIL, CISL and UIL, organisations that appear to be increasingly in difficulty in terms of representing workers in the flesh.

CGIL, CISL and UIL have chosen a model of representation that is completely self-referential, not based on workers' consent, but hinged on the employers' recognition that is bestowed from time to time after the signing of a union agreement: 'You only represent if you sign (bad) agreements'

This model, as we have all seen - starting with the further de-structuring of the contractual model in 2009 and then with the subsequent 'Marchionne agreement' on the Fiat CCSL - has led to a systematic emptying out of national bargaining due to the fact that today national bargaining is mortally embraced with the recognition given by the counterparty through representation understood as 'presence at the tables' and the recognition of the opportunities (hence trade union permits) due to the signatories of these contracts. A model which, among other things, makes these organisations survive economically: the national contracts are now linked in a double way in the management of welfare, pension funds and obviously the 'contractual quotas'. **So the organisations that sign national contracts know that this signature is also linked to very important - and for them necessary - economic revenues.**

USB has chosen to counterbalance the framework I have outlined above with a model of representation that starts with the workers, which aims to have an impact through conflict and the creation of real power relations. A model far removed from self-referentiality and from being called to the tables 'just because you are a signatory to a contract'.

We are living in a phase in which our choices on the strategic plan are allowing us to be present in the companies and sit on the most important negotiating tables only thanks to our real representation, the weight of the members and the struggles that we are able to put in place.

The entry of USB in the ports of Genoa, Livorno and Trieste is an important factor because it is not an element of extemporaneousness, but is part of a precise choice that USB has made at the level of general conflict and initiative confederal and private. A choice then sealed by the assembly of 19 June in Bologna

Question - In fact, on 19 June an important and well attended assembly of workers and delegates of the Unione Sindacale di Base was held in Bologna: "From the assembly line to the value chain" which strongly reaffirmed the centrality of the class question, the need for conflict within a union hypothesis organised at the confederal level, and the fact that within the organised labour movement "the game of democracy in this country is played" as Guido Lutrario, of the Federation of Social Work and exponent of the National Executive, said.

It must be remembered that it was an assembly held the day after the strike called by all the grassroots unions in logistics and which saw a Si.Cobas militant - Adil Belakhdin - killed during a picket in front of the Lidl logistics centre in Biandrate.

You opened the initiative, rightly defining it as having a 'congressional flavour'. What were the issues that emerged at that meeting which, in your opinion, came to the fore in the months that followed and what impact did they have on the debate within the union?

Sasha Colautti - Yes, it's true, I defined that appointment as having a 'congressional flavour' and it's true precisely because of what I was saying in response to the previous question: because of the pandemic we were forced to postpone the congress. However, our growth in numbers, both in terms of members and new delegates, led to an internal debate which, during the pandemic, resulted in many moments of public debate through initiatives, including online initiatives, which were very well attended. In those months it became clearer that the analysis of the importance of the so-called 'value chain'

as a strategic objective of our struggle was finally matured in practice. A weak point to be hit in the framework of the current capital restructuring process.

The pandemic has made the 'production-transport-distribution' value chain even more fragmented, and production cycles now become the object of further attacks, including relocations. However, there is also a process of 'regionalisation' of the supply-chain, which can become a sensitive target of trade union struggles in factories, logistics and even in the retail sector.

Recognising this element as a key factor for our trade union-political choices from my point of view also opens up a discussion on the trade union model that we have in mind, which is why I believe that the 'workers' assembly in Bologna outlined a congressional line.

Today the term 'confederal union' has taken on a negative connotation because we come from twenty years in which the so-called 'confederal' unions have distorted its true meaning. CGIL, CISL and UIL are completely disengaged from the very idea of confederality, because they have become the primary proponents of a clear division between categories, workplaces and workers.

Question: This summer, an agreement was reached between the 'social partners' (government, Confindustria and CGIL, CISL and UIL) that unblocked the possibility of dismissal from 1 July, not prolonging one of the measures that had allowed the pandemic crisis not to immediately become a social catastrophe for a large number of employees. The agreement, from which only a few sectors were excluded (textiles, footwear, fashion), did not in fact bind companies in any way, 'recommending' (this is the term used) to the bosses to make them do 13 weeks of redundancy fund, paid by the state - that is, the community - before firing them.

From that day on, a real social butchery began. Can you give us a brief outline of the phase that began after one of the worst trade union agreements of all time?

Sasha Colautti - ***It really is the worst trade union agreement of all time.*** The reality is that it is not even an agreement, but a resounding "supination", not at all unexpected to tell the truth, in the face of the demands of Bonomi's Confindustria and the government.

It is an agreement that does not place any constraints or limits, nor does it contain any obligations for companies. In fact, the text contains an 'invitation, a recommendation' to use 13 weeks of redundancy pay before dismissing. Such a thing has never been seen or heard of before, and the great thing is that Landini and co. They sold it as a great result, the fruit of an incredible effort.

A surreal thing, made even more surreal by the immediate opening of heavy company restructuring, with the announcement of hundreds of redundancies in many important industrial realities, one above all GKN, but we can also talk about Giannetti wheels, Timken, ABB, Fedex. These immediate situations were immediately followed by Stellantis, which announced that it had 12,000 too many workers, and finally Alitalia, whose serious crisis situation we all know about today.

Among these, the GKN dispute was the one that succeeded most in drawing attention to the choices made by these multinationals, which, without looking anyone in the face and after taking millions of euros in state subsidies, lay off hundreds of workers, bringing the economy of an entire territory to its knees.

Some have been quick to criticise 'the method used' (the case of dismissal by email is now famous), but the point is not the method, but the fact itself.

Let's start by saying that releasing redundancies in the midst of a still open pandemic emergency was not a brilliant move. And this, as far as industry is concerned, is compounded by the fact that most sectors (Automotive and Steel) are undergoing major transformations due to ecological reconversion.

In such a phase it was quite obvious that companies would immediately seize the opportunity to open a phase of heavy and uncontrolled restructuring. The absence of the state on the strategic industrial choices is evident and where they have been almost and exclusively in support of the company's choices.

Question: On 11 October there will be a general strike called by all the grassroots unions. One of the initiatives that the USB is proposing to the workers of companies fighting against restructuring, factory closures and redundancies is a demonstration in front of the Ministry of Economic Development - MISE - in Rome, where more than a hundred 'crisis tables' are open and seem to have no solution. Can you describe how it is taking shape and how it relates to the question of requisitioning and nationalisation strongly posed by USB as a

hypothesis of employment defence, within important disputes such as those of Alitalia or ILVA workers?

Sasha Colautti - The crisis tables at the Ministry of Economic Development, if we also include the verification tables and sectoral crises, today concern almost one hundred thousand workers. The decision to launch an appeal for a demonstration under the MISE of the companies in crisis responds precisely to the need to put work back at the centre, unifying the struggles.

The greatest fault of the confederal trade union and the CGIL in particular is that of managing these disputes as individual entities, as if they were not part of the same logic.

I mention GKN again because it seems to me the most emblematic case of this pattern:

A dispute that even in the media took on such an important characterisation, was managed without ever wanting to determine a framework of broader strategic initiative. This happened despite the fact that the 'GKN Factory Collective', hegemonised by the FIOM, had asked its union organisation and promoted the need for a general strike on several occasions. This signal was never taken, not even by the CGIL blue suits.

Is it possible to kiss Draghi's feet, unblock the redundancies... and at the same time 'rise up' with the GKN workers?

The answer is clearly no.

These are the ambiguities that in our opinion must disappear from all struggles, ambiguities that concern the strategic function of the union, which must express itself clearly in opposition to the policies of this government.

Yesterday I read that the GKN Collective has joined the general strike called by USB together with other grassroots organisations, which obviously makes us happy. The invitation to be present under the Ministry is clearly addressed to them as well.

The demonstration in front of the ministry is intended to emphasise the need for the state to return to being "director" of its own industrial choices. Personally, I am not in love with formulas, but I base myself on the experience of the tables

on which we are sitting, where the so-called "state intervention" is limited to guaranteeing the entry of capital into companies that are essentially nationalised only on paper, an excellent example of this is the former Ilva, now Acciaierie D'Italia: the state is the majority shareholder, but who determines industrial policies is Arcelor Mittal.

The role we are thinking of is that of guiding ecological industrial reconversion, determining a model of economic development that responds to citizens and workers, committed to guaranteeing employment levels and income. A model that also addresses the issue of reducing working hours for the same wage, precisely in order to guarantee employment.

The state must be the one to make and guide investment choices in strategically important sectors. Companies that must be defended first and foremost against hostile takeovers of public interests.

On the 11th we will be at the MISE to reconfirm these claims, which we, as USB, have been bringing to the tables with the government for months.

Question: The Recovery Fund approved by the Draghi government on the strict instructions of the European Union seems to involve a gigantic restructuring of the manufacturing sector using ecological transition and digitalisation as vectors. What employment consequences are likely to result from such choices, considering that there has been no adaptation of social cushioning instruments?

Sasha Colautti - In connection with the previous question, in which I basically said what we think, this allows me to say what the Draghi government is doing.

The disbursement of PNRR funds is subordinated to compliance with a multitude of constraints. Constraints that are in fact a political manifesto aimed at devastating the welfare state and guaranteeing a model that determines economic policies "outside the choices of the state".

Every penny of the NRP is aimed at guaranteeing an economic model centred on privatisation, cutting social spending and, of course, determining industrial policies to ensure greater flexibility, exploitation and lower labour costs.

Think of the multi-party attack on the welfare state, against citizenship income and the guaranteed minimum wage (also opposed by CGIL, CISL and UIL), right up to the proposed reform of social security, with differentiated universalism, as envisaged by the government.

Alitalia, on the other hand, represents the face of the unscrupulous attack on labour, in which it is the government that is the "master", cutting thousands of jobs and de-facto applying the "Marchionne model" to the newborn ITA company, which will only hire part of the workers under dramatically worse conditions.

The applause reserved for Draghi, the standing ovation at the Confindustria assembly, is not by chance. Through the Alitalia dispute, this government is dictating the political line to the employers in this country. We will therefore be in all the Italian squares on the 11th, in Rome under the ministries, to say enough to the government of the bosses and its accomplices.



1 October: one million workers on strike, 100,000 participants in the demonstrations held throughout Italy. This is the quantitative balance sheet of the national general strike in all public and private sectors proclaimed by USB and all the other unions of basic and conflictual unionism against the Draghi government, faithful executor of the wishes of Confindustria and the EU.



The day saw marches and pickets in 40 cities, with crowded demonstrations in Rome, Turin, Milan, Genoa, Trieste, Bologna, Florence, Catania and Naples.



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