



# Rete dei Comunisti

INTERNATIONAL BULLETIN

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January 2023



In the first international bulletin of 2023, as the Rete dei Comunisti we wanted to leave space especially for social, labor and youth struggles. For once, we decided not to open with an editorial of our own, centered as always on phase analysis, analytical aspects and trends of the moment that, globally, continentally and in Italy, we are experiencing.

Instead, we left room for the introduction of the interview with George Mavrikos, secretary general of the WFTU/FSM from 2005 to 2022, published earlier by the online magazine rebellion.org. The first article of the new year is then the presentation of the RdC pamphlet on class trade unionism, which features two speeches by prominent members of the Unione Sindacale di Base and pays tribute to the congress that our union organization has just successfully addressed, and of course also to the world union congress held in Rome last summer.

Then we could not fail to recall the general strike at the beginning of December, a milestone in the class clash we are experiencing in Italy right now, a moment of struggle that was able to raise its voice against the war economy. "Lower arms, raise wages" is the slogan that resonates throughout Europe, throughout the world; it is a historically important slogan, to be taken up everywhere, cultivated, made triumphant.

In this sense, it was important to present the point of view of Cambiare Rotta, one of the militant organizations that most of all in recent months has been speaking out against the ecological, military, social catastrophe in our country.

To close, we felt it was impossible not to give at least a general political reading of the events upsetting Peru. We chose our first communiqué, written a week after the coup, because it is for us the one that leaves the least space for the events, the facts of the protest and repression, but which highlights the primary contradictions that led to December 7, 2022. To retrace our analysis of the continent at its best, we refer to our Fall 2020 International Bulletin, downloadable as always on our website, particularly the document "The Americas between Socialism and Barbarism."

## On the right side of history

As Rete dei Comunisti we had translated in full a lengthy interview with **George Mavrikos**, former Secretary General of the WFTU/FSM from 2005 to 2022, conducted by Luis Miguel Busto Mauleón for the Iberian online magazine *rebellion.org*.

The interview had been published this summer in three different parts in the Iberian magazine, and so we published it "in installments" on our website of the same name. It was later in turn translated into English by Maria Barouti and published in the online journal *theoryandpraxis.eu*. This 21-question interview briefly traces the life of the world trade union leader, who was born in Scyros -- a small island in the Aegean -- and later moved to Athens, assuming a key role in

the history of the trade union and revolutionary movement in his country, and in the "rebirth" of the World Trade Union Federation (WFTU).

In addition to the historical reconstruction of the events of which he was a protagonist, the interview ranges over various political and trade union issues with respect to today, the analysis of the present world and the tasks incumbent on the trade union and revolutionary movement. In the pamphlet we decided to print, we kept the three-part division, taking up the different titles derived from Mavrikos' statements, and the chronological and thematic division into five parts, respectively, "From Scyros to Athens"; "From Athens to the WFTU"; "From Havana to Rome"; "Rome, the End"; and "The WFTU of

the 21st Century."

Particularly noteworthy is the "reconstruction" work carried out in very difficult years that began with the 13th Congress of the FSM/WFTU in Damascus in 1994 and the overall revival of this experience with the 15th Congress in Havana in 2005, where the USB was "welcomed" as an observer and Mavrikos was elected Secretary General after having served as deputy secretary since the 14th Congress in New Delhi in 2000. We preceded the interview with a contribution by Cinzia della Porta, of the National Executive of the Unione Sindacale di Base, who was unanimously elected to the Secretariat of the FSM/WFTU at the 18th Congress of the world trade union organization held this year in Rome, and followed it up with a speech by Guido Lutrario of the National Executive of USB - Federation of Social Workers.

Cinzia della Porta's paper frames USB's internationalist activity and its relationship with the FSM/WFTU, while Guido Lutrario's paper reflects "in the round" on the relationship between communists and union organizing.

We think this pamphlet, which can be downloaded free of charge as an e-book version from the Communist Network website, is an indispensable tool for historical education and political debate on the function of class, combative and internationalist trade unionism and the guidelines for the reconstruction of the workers' movement globally.

This publishing initiative is in continuity with the

work of inquiry, theoretical reflection and political debate that have been carried out on the "trade union question" in recent decades by the Communist Network, an activity that can be traced in the collection of materials contained in a special section of the RdC website, that of the trade union front.

An activity that has accompanied the concrete commitment in the first person of the whole organization in the construction of a confederal trade union organization organic to the FSM/WFTU which is the Unione Sindacale di Base.





# With the Peruvian people, against the US servant oligarchy!

*We propose the first of several communiqués, that of 13 December, on the situation in Peru following the coup against President Castillo.*

The mobilisations in Peru, following the coup d'état in which the Peruvian oligarchy deposed - or attempted to depose - President Pedro Castillo, show no sign of abating.

And while the social explosion has not seemed to stop since the middle of last week, the repression has given a decisive acceleration to the events, bringing the number of victims of the street clashes to eight - mostly young and very young people from 'deep Peru' - in addition to a considerable number of injuries.

Half of the deaths occurred in Andahuaylas, a remote Andean region.

General Victor Zanabria announced that 'due to the level of violence of the groups of protesters', the police will raise the level of response by resorting to the use of rubber bullets. A choice that will increase the level of conflict and distance the already slim chances of a political solution to what appears to be to all intents and purposes the beginning of a mass insurrection. According to police sources, the roadblocks characterising the popular mobilisations are paralysing traffic arteries in 13 of the country's 24 regions.

And just on Tuesday another airport was blocked, the third in less than a week, the international airport of Cusco.

Pedro, from his provisional detention, appeals to the military and the police to stop the repression against the protesters and blames the current slaughter on the 'usurper' president, who rose to office after his ousting in a coup d'état instigated by the oligarchic and pro-Western right wing.

The former teacher and trade union activist from one of the poorest regions of the Andes, who was elected president in the summer of 2021 with the progressive formation Peru Libre, declared from detention: 'I will not give up or abandon the cause of the people that brought me here'.

The progressive governments of Mexico, Colombia, Bolivia and Argentina, in a joint statement, expressed their deep concern over Castillo's detention and called for respect for the will of the people.

Let us review the convulsive events of the last week.

Last Wednesday, 7 December, the Peruvian Congress approved the motion of dismissal for President Pedro Castillo on the grounds of 'permanent moral incapacity', voted by an overwhelming majority of 101 deputies, with 10 abstentions and only 6 votes against.

A decision taken after Castillo, just hours before facing yet another motion attempting to remove him from office, had announced the temporary dissolution of Parliament, the establishment of an 'exceptional government' that would proceed by decree, promulgating a curfew.

An 'exceptional government' that was supposed to reorganise the Public Prosecutor's Office and the judiciary and lead the country towards new elections for a Constituent Assembly within nine months.

It was the third time in Castillo's 16-month presidency that the Congreso - at the urging of the oligarchic right wing that has historically ruled the country - attempted such a procedure: the first was in December last year, to no avail, the second in March this year, receiving 55 votes in favour.

After his dismissal Pedro was detained by the Policía Nacional in Lima and placed in a kind of preventive custody, to prevent him and his family from seeking asylum in the Mexico of progressive President López Obrador. An assumption later confirmed by the Mexican authorities themselves. The request was allegedly made because of unfounded judicial persecution of a political nature.

The State Attorney General's Office has filed a criminal complaint against Castillo with the Public Prosecutor's Office for the alleged crimes of 'sedition, abuse of office and serious disruption of public order'; other legal actions are filed against him.

The prosecution action also includes former ministerial cabinet chief Betssy Chávez and former Defence Minister Willy Huerta.

Vice-president Dina Boluarte, who had oppo-

sed the decision to establish a 'government of exception', assumed the role of head of state, being sworn in on Wednesday.

The new president - whom Castillo later described as a 'usurper' - immediately called for a political truce to establish a government of 'national unity' and redeem the country from 'misrule and corruption'.

Boluarte, who on Thursday had dismissed the possibility of early elections, saying he wanted to govern until 2026, soon had to change his mind as protests erupted demanding the closure of Congress, the release of Castillo and new elections.

On Monday, Boluarte said that she would call elections for April 2024, without really succeeding in calming the waters, and also declared that she would proceed expeditiously with 'profound reforms of the political system', presenting her own proposals later in the day.

Already on Friday, it was willing to consider early elections, but said it was against promoting an assembly to change the ultra-liberal Constitution approved during the dictatorship of Alberto Fujimori in 1993, whose daughter was defeated by Castillo in the 2021 presidential elections.

The forms of struggle adopted here are roadblocks, popular marches and even the occupation of Andahuaylas airport in the Apurímac region - one of the epicentres of the actual uprising - and the airport in the city of Arequipa.

The social organisations in the region announced the start of an 'indefinite paro as of this Monday, 12 December' until the insurgents' demands are met.

Boluarte declared a state of emergency for two months in the areas where the population has risen up.

In the meantime, protest actions are multiplying in this general uprising that aims to reach the capital from various parts of the country and that marks the unbridgeable distance between the population and the pro-Western oligarchy.

It is a coup d'état, the one organised by industrial groups, together with many members of the Peruvian elite and the leaders of right-wing opposition parties, that had a year-and-a-half-long gestation.

It was in fact June 2021 when a rural teacher, the son of peasants, was elected President of one of the Latin American states traditionally closest to and succumbing to the neo-liberalism of the North American 'big brother'. At the time, the size of the turnaround was well received by one of Peru's major economic powers, which had launched a call to 'throw communism out of the country', destabilising the new government in every way possible.

But it is important to remember that that electoral victory was part of the powerful continental progressive wave, which, in various forms and facets, is still transforming the face of Latin America.

The Bolivia of Arce and Morales, the Venezuela of Maduro, the Chile of the uprisings for a New

Constituent, most recently the historic victory of the Pacto Histórico in Colombia and the election of Lula in Brazil, are events that objectively change the international scenario and give new life to the progressive struggles of the entire continent. As in Peru, in the face of all these experiences, the oligarchies and sectors of society most closely linked to the US have not been idle. We could list dozens of destabilisation attempts, preparations for soft or military coups, economic attacks and diplomatic pressure that worry every government not aligned with the giant of the north.

Every unwelcome election, every movement not considered legitimate, is always followed by an attack on the interests of the working classes. From all these events, it is clear that South America is a major battleground of the world class clash, where incompatible and opposing forces and interests confront each other.

In a political campaign a few years ago, we pointed to Latin America as the weak link of imperialism, and we also stated that the general significance of the historical moment - which is reflected and inevitably defined by each individual context - led back to the field choice between socialism or barbarism. A choice that is by its very nature stark, without nuance, and the child of deep historical ruptures.

In this sense, every movement leader, every progressive president, has the need - as well as the duty - to remain faithful to the social bloc that pushed him, so to speak, 'from below' to the point of challenging the oligarchies and ruling elites, sometimes against his own will.

On this, perhaps, Pedro was unable or unable to

face the challenge to the full: the departure from Peru Libre, the constant government reshuffles, the requests for help from the Organisation of American States - one of the traditional watchdogs of US imperialism - have probably restored the confidence of the country's oligarchies, to the point of making them feel confident that they can proceed to the indictment and arrest of the president.

The harsh popular and peasant demonstrations of these days are telling us, however, that this story is not over. In Peru the clash between irreconcilable social interests continues, a clash that from time to time takes on different forms and intensity: there have been elections, there has been government management, there has been a coup d'état, now there are the squares and the prodromes of a civil war with uncertain

outcomes.

A conscious pueblo knows that those who are afraid of losing their centuries-old privileges, and their North American and European puppeteers, will not yield if they have the knife to their throat.

**Freedom for Pedro Castillo!**

**An end to repression!**

**With the Peruvian people, against the oligarchies served by the USA!**



## Dec. 3, Rome: national parade against the war economy

Lower the guns, raise the wages!

Behind this banner, the procession, promoted by Usb, Si Cobas and dozens of other anti-war and anti-wage unions, started from Piazza della Repubblica to arrive at San Giovanni. Participants, according to sources at Rome's Questura, numbered about 6,000.

The demonstrators, moved to the cry 'Meloni government government of the masters,' are workers, unemployed, but also students. Flags and banners for citizenship income and Naspi, against the war and against the government.

Among the banners at the procession that took to the streets of Rome against the war and the caravan is a banner dedicated to the anarchist Alfredo Cospito in 41bis. 'Out of Alfredo from 41bis' the inscription in white letters on a black banner.

"Unione Popolare joined the procession of grassroots unions in Rome against the policies of the Meloni government and the neoliberal powers," said spokesman Luigi de Magistris, who took part in the procession.

"Against war, for economic, environmental and social justice, against the commodification of people and savage privatization. For betrayed constitutional rights, for public health and public education, against precariousness and outsourcing, for public investment and active policies for public and private labor. Against the government's economic maneuver that hits the poor

and the middle class and does not even support the enterprise that produces creating jobs," comments the former mayor of Naples.

"Together to build social opposition and the government alternative, against the system and for the implementation of the anti-fascist Constitution," de Magistris concludes.

"It is a demonstration, in particular, of workers, from laborers to logistics, from Pa to schools, health care, transportation to services but political realities and collectives have also joined. The maneuver that does not give any prospect of development to the country and does not address the problem of the high cost of living, the wage dynamic continues to be left unchanged, the Naspi is contained and reduced and the citizenship income is cut, vouchers are reintroduced, an exaggerated form of precarization. There is a diabolical will to hit the weakest party," said Guido Lutrario of the Usb executive.

At the procession workers, laborers, collectives: "Our country is at war through the continuous sending of weapons to Ukraine, in a context of economic crisis they continue to pass the social costs on to workers and the proletarian class. While military spending increases, wages are starving. We have already protested against the Draghi government and against previous governments, including center-left governments. This government is only continuing and marking the economic policy of previous governments. Surely ours is a demonstration against the Meloni government, but it has nothing to do either with

CGIL, CISL and UIL or with the fake left that has betrayed the workers and today would like to regain its political virginity," said Eduardo Sorge, SiCobas unionist.

"Meloni government, government of the bosses" and "We will defend the workplace with struggle," these were the slogans chanted at the procession that reached St. John's. "Citizenship Income has created problems for the bosses, because some people refuse to go to work for starvation wages," the message launched by

Cobas, which with a truck opened the procession escorted by police trucks.

"Meloni is like Draghi from the economic point of view, for adherence to policies, European, for hyper Atlanticism and blind adherence to NATO. We are here to say that we do not agree with all this," explained Paolo Leonardi, of the national USB, who was present in St. John's Square. "The Citizenship Income should not be taken away, but it should be implemented and made a useful tool for citizens and workers. In fact, it



Patrizia Cortellessa photo



must be accompanied by the Minimum Social Income: 10 euros minimum," he explained. Hot topic is also the fight against precariousness always at the top of USB's list. "Much could be done with the funds that are used today to send weapons."

"In just a few weeks," denounces a USB note, "Premier Meloni and her allies have confirmed their reactionary and anti-popular nature, rejecting the introduction of a minimum wage, dismantling the citizenship income, attacking democratic rights and agibility, criminalizing immigrants and exacerbating the repression of social and labor conflict."

Meanwhile, USB is protesting the absurd permanent ban on demonstrating in Rome's Piazza del Parlamento, against which USB's lawyers have filed an urgent appeal to the Lazio Regional Administrative Court.

The latter very serious fact was the subject of a press conference in front of the Prefecture this morning. "The Questura's ban," explained lawyer Maria Rosaria Damizia, "was imposed on the basis of a directive from the Prefecture, which on April 14, at the end of the state of emergency for the pandemic, extended its ban on demonstrating in certain places on the basis of undeclared emergencies such as the Russian-Ukrainian war and the economic crisis. All this violates Article 17 of the Constitution, which prevents blanket bans on the right to demonstrate. The Tar (Regional Administrative Court) rejected the request for a suspension because the Questura di Roma offered an alternative venue for the demonstration, namely Piazza Santi Apostoli. However, ignoring the fact that not all places are equal."

"A serious decision," added lawyer Vincenzo Perticarò, "because it prevents citizens from choosing the place to demonstrate, as Article 17 testifies. "One result we have obtained," concluded lawyer Carlo Guglielmi, "The prefectural circular that deprives citizens of a constitutional right has been desecrated, with a paradoxical effect: we are in a democracy and we can demonstrate against the war, but because there is a war we cannot demonstrate."

The game before the Tar is not over. The appeal by USB's lawyers will be dealt with on the merits on December 20. "In the meantime," concluded Paola Palmieri, of the USB national council, "we will launch a campaign to highlight the ongoing violation of citizens' constitutional rights."

## No one represents us, let's build the alternative!

We are young people, students and precarious workers who took to the streets on December 3 in Rome responding to the call of confrontational unionism after the December 2 general strike day. We are the communist and student youth organization that animate the struggles inside schools, universities and in the streets of our cities.

We felt the need to promote a moment of national confront to affirm a clear concept: No one inside this parliament, whether majority or minority parties, represents our anger and our aspirations for change; we build the alternative in the struggles!

Almost three months after the September 25 general elections, the new political-institutional set-up has clearly emerged. On one side is the right-wing, Meloni-led, Fdi-driven government, which has already given a taste of what will be the crisis management tools and policies that await us in the coming years. On the other hand, the facade opposition of PD and 5 Stars, basically aligned with the majority on all basic issues, starting with unquestioning loyalty to the Euro-Atlantic bloc, a mortal mortgage on any prospect of redemption and alternative for young people, workers and the working classes. The extremely high level of abstentionism at the polls, which reached 36 percent and was the result of 30 years of neoliberal and anti-people policies carried out across the board by governments of all colors, has produced a parliament that in its entirety represents the perfect continuity of the Draghi agenda. That is, the 30-year EU agenda declined in the current phase, made its own at this round by the right and by Fratelli

d'Italia, winner of the elections and majority shareholder in the government.

Indeed, the other side of the coin of abstentionism has been the success of the only party in the previous parliament that kept - only formally - in opposition to the Draghi-supporting pile-up and passed itself off until yesterday as an anti-establishment proposal, capitalizing on the social discontent in past years intercepted by Salvini's League and especially the 5 Stars before burning all credibility at the government trials.

Already in the home stretch, however, Meloni had thrown away the mask on her anti-system vocation, reassuring in every forum and at every level all those actors that if Italy deviated in the slightest from the tracks predetermined by Brussels and Washington they had "the tools to intervene" - as Von der Leyen warned - thus the European Union, NATO, the big financial groups and all those supranational bodies that bind the country's policies, with the blessing of Mattarella and the entire Italian political class sitting in parliament.

In a scenario of an unprecedented crisis for Western capitalism, in the midst of a wartime, war economy, between inflation, carovita and attacks on wages, income and labor rights - in a scenario in which a crisis of systemic character of this model has become apparent and is being entirely dumped downwards - we find ourselves managing this crisis the most reactionary and retrogressive expression of our ruling classes, disinclined to the use of any instrument to suppress dissent and ensure social pacification, and for this reason accepted and fully integrated

into the establishment, in the knowledge that in the months ahead there will be all the potential conditions for a resurgence of social conflict in our country as well.

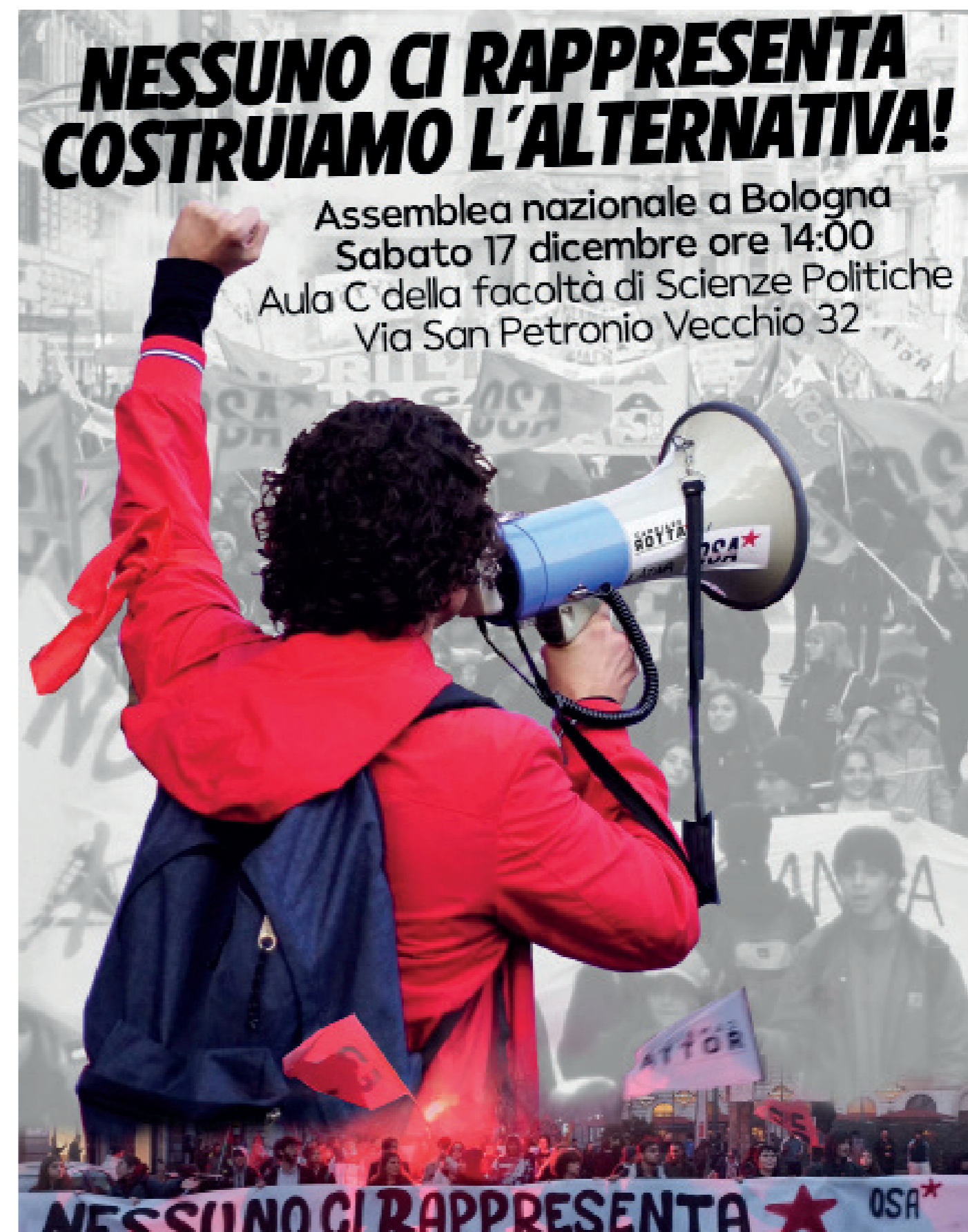
With this government - let us look at the migrant issue - the management of the crisis through the intensification of class warfare from above will also be accompanied by a further barbarization already produced overall by the West - where to give just one example the right to abortion in fact is still all to be won - giving back space to the false opposition of the left, PD and the like, on the issues of "civil rights" flaunted instrumentally, and only in words, in order to head progressive battles to cover up the worst anti-grassroots policies that they have carried out in these thirty years as much and more than the right, favoring their total clearance first and preparing the ground for discontent and social intolerance on which to proliferate.

It is on the basis of pointing out, without any ambiguity, those who are our class enemies that we are called to build the real opposition to this government, an all-out opposition to be continued to strengthen in schools, universities, neighborhoods and workplaces, to be taken to the streets in a perspective of radical rupture with the failed model represented in Italy today by the Meloni government. It is on this terrain-the same where even on the level of political representation with courage and coherence hypotheses truly breaking with the establishment are being measured and growing-that we can rekindle social conflict and point to a perspective that is "outside and against" the Euro-Atlantic dead end.

We are convinced that we are not the only ones who believe in the urgency for the younger generations to bring together the different struggles that cross the country from north to south, the

national assembly on December 17 in Bologna is meant to be a first moment of confrontation and relaunching towards a new year of struggle,

organization and project for an alternative to the misery of the present.





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