

Alternativa Libertaria

ONLINE NEWS SHEET OF THE FEDERAZIONE DEI COMUNISTI ANARCHICI

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These strikes are useful

In these days of the first-past-the-post parliamentary system, general strikes no longer strike fear into the heart of the system or wipe out governments as they did in the good old days of PR. And there have certainly been enough strikes, general and not, since the Berlusconi government has been in power. All of them have been defensive strikes, attempts to prevent or halt the spread of such cancers as the Biagi labour law, pension reform, job security (including Article 18) and education reform. Not to mention the last 4 Budgets. But despite the thousands of hours' worth of strikes and the hundreds of thousands of striking workers, the Berlusconi cancer has already wreaked its damage on the living conditions of workers. General strikes begin to have an air of ritual about them and the political and union elites have begun treating them as consensus-seeking opportunities. So are these strikes useless? Anything but! The general strikes, in which the workers have so generously participated whether they were called by the major unions of the grassroots unions, have been and will continue to be useful for creating the conditions to defeat the government coalition's neo-liberal policies in the workplace and on the streets even before reaching the polling booths. They also serve as a warning to the Olive Tree coalition not to be tempted into taking a similar neo-liberal direction.

This is why we welcome the general strike on 30th November (called by Cgil-Cisl-Uil) and the one on 3rd December (called by CUB and USI-AIT) despite the difference in platforms and the awful practice of different dates. These labour struggles are yet another indication of the difference between the interests of the working class who are victims of the government's laws and policies and the governing class which has produced them. We are on this side, you are on that side. But there is unfortunately no shortage of bridge-builders: you can find them in the Olive Tree coalition and in the ranks of the major unions and they speak with forked tongue. Unclear too is the position of the industrialists' federation, Confindustria, which is speculating on these general strikes to further weaken the government's position.

But the mass of workers waiting for a renewal of their national labour contracts is enormous and the examples of autonomy last winter from transport and industrial workers are proof of the fact that the age of partnership has had to give way to a greater role for the workers themselves in the struggles for the renewal of contracts. Public sector employees mobilized, teachers went on strike, transport and industrial workers mobilized, all aware that at stake were not only wages and jobs but also dignity and the defence of class interests.

The strikes in various sectors are further evidence of the irreconcilable nature of the interests of workers and neo-liberal policies in the public and private sectors. In a situation where the direct and indirect wages of contracted workers are used to feed the financial markets and support tax reductions for the power caste which supports Berlusconi, the inter-classism of the Cisl and Uil and the post-reformism of the Cgil are beginning to sprout leaks, and the only option remaining to the workers is to take the initiative and organise themselves for the defence of their class interests autonomously in the hope that the grassroots unions waste no time deciding which of them is to get the upper hand.

Given the situation, libertarian and anarchist union activists have the difficult task of seeking to coordinate their forces so that the struggle will be united and rooted from below in the workplace and in the community. This is the time to spread a new class consciousness, a new desire for a social revival, a demand for direct democracy in the unions, and an active role in wage and labour bargaining.

FdCA Labour Commission



Every different work situation determines the choice of one organizational form of labour over another - not just our revolutionary desires. The nature of the strengths involved increase the possibilities of combative syndicalism with libertarian hallmarks, not the simple fact that we are

Labour Platform

1. For union and political freedoms: freedom to strike; freedom of assembly; freedom to organize in a union and freedom of expression in the workplace; full freedom of action for all unions;
2. For employment and against precariousness of employment and any de-structuring of the labour market; against new forms of day-work and against temporary employment agencies: abolition of Law No.30/2003; pay parity for job parity;
3. For a basic European minimum wage; defence and promotion of indirect wages and social services; defence and promotion of deferred wages with self-determination for workers regarding retirement conditions and a re-valuation of severance pay based on the current cost of living;
4. For the integration of migrant workers into the contractual system of employment in host countries, with full rights and pay parity;
5. Against discrimination in rights and social guarantees, in forms of labour and work contracts, on the basis of the production and socio-cultural characteristics of any community; against the re-introduction of wage limits;
6. For access to social services by anyone who needs them; against the privatization of social services including education, health care, transport, energy, telecommunications, etc.;
7. Against emargination from the world of labour;
8. For pay parity between the sexes;
9. For internationalist support for the struggles of workers in other countries and other economic areas;
10. For free (both in cost and in spirit), public, secular education for all;
11. For the right to enjoy the environment and health, which are neither negotiable nor for sale, for a better quality of life;
12. Against the repression of labour struggles, for constant counter-information, for the promotion of organization and the strengthening of defence organizations such as resistance funds, observatories on repression, solidarity alliances for comrades affected by disciplinary measures, legal aid networks; . For the re-launching of Council Syndicalism where all are electors and all are eligible; blank vote; revocability; department representatives on a mandate given by the assembly; bargaining delegates elected by workers at every stage of the discussions.

[From the labour motion passed during the 6th FdCA Congress, Cremona 2004]

CONFLICTUAL SYNDICALISM WITH A LIBERTARIAN HALLMARK autonomy from party-controlled workers' unity through the definition of a general platform of conflictual syndicalism wherever and however; unity of objectives and methods of struggle;

revolutionary strength, to be achieved through libertarian form of organizations, be they internal, confederal, in coalitions or cartels; this must be the case both when drawing up the general platform and during bargaining.

Dies IRE



The tax reform will be complete with the introduction of IRE in place of IRPEF. The final aim of IRE is for only 2 tax rates: 23% up to €10,000 and 33% over that. This will replace the current 5 rates where the minimum rate

of 23% applies up to €15,000 and the maximum rate of 45% applies to incomes over €70,000.

But the muddled proposals of recent days foresee a transitional period with 3 tax rates.

In any event, though we do not yet know the exact terms of the expected transformation of tax "detrazioni" (deductions) into tax "deduzioni" (deductions!) in order to bring greater benefits to those on lower incomes (for now they are just principles), we can say that though we "appreciate" the advantages that the introduction of IRE will bring to the middle classes among others, this system will become in effect a form of state financing for those who are already rich - "better, because they will become even more incorruptible!"

Those with incomes of over €100,000 will enjoy a fixed annual benefit due to lower taxation. The first €100,000 will be taxed €13,712 (that's 37.35% less than now) and for every further €10,000 declared the tax amounts to €1,200, 12% less than at present. So someone who declares an income of €500,000 will save no less than €61,712 under the IRE system!

It is easy to imagine a nett revival in the market for sports cars, "serious" jewellery and yachts and sure, why not, less tax evasion!

We'll see them declaring more tax in the future - they'll be paying the same as ever anyway!

As for those with lower incomes...

Bari

A N T I P O D I

Being at the antipodes can mean being upside down in the other hemisphere with respect to the dominant society; but in a round world defining just who is upside down depends on how you look at reality.

Looking at it from another point of view, being at the antipodes means having your feet firmly planted in the reality you want with respect to the world which is upside down, having lost the ability to reason properly.

Let's start looking at reality from this point of view - it might be useful along our path to the economic and social reality that we want.



Number 3 out soon
Wars

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Syndacalists in Italy

And so the management of Trenitalia decided after all not to show up at the first hearing in the trial which they themselves brought against the train conductor from Genoa, Fabrizio Acanfora. The trial was brought to establish the legitimacy of the disciplinary proceedings against the railwayman by the company (10 days' suspension) for having written a letter to the "Il Secolo XIX" newspaper in the summer of 2003 in which he expressed his solidarity with train users who are the victims of continuous bad service and defending the work and the professionalism of train staff. The management of Trenitalia

Syndacalists in Irak

Dear friends

Dear freedom-loving labour activists

The Federation of Workers' Councils and Unions in Iraq (FWCUI) has decided to hold a conference for workers of the southern parts of Iraq in Basra on November 25th, 2004.

More than 25 trade unions and labour organizations from various sectors such as Southern Oil Company Trade Union, Power Distribution Company, River Transportation, harbour workers, construction workers, Gas Company workers and many others... will participate in this conference. The goal behind the conference is to organize and unite the workers of the southern region of Iraq which include Basra, Imara, Nassiriya, Najaf, and Samawa) and to unite their struggle. This conference is held also to form a united leadership for workers in southern parts of Iraq. The conference will discuss the following issues:

1. A draft for labour law put forward on the basis of current international standards.
2. Methods by which workers can intervene in the political situations in Iraq and how to put an end to the current instability, insecurity and how to establish a secular and non-ethnocentric government, where the rights of all residents of Iraq are protected and they are treated equally regardless of their gender, religion, nationality, and ethnicity and in compliance with the Geneva convention on human rights.
3. Other miscellaneous issues in regard to workers' situations in Iraq.
4. The final part will be on discussing and endorsing a number of resolutions crucial for the working-class struggle in Iraq and also on elections to form a united leadership to lead the struggle of workers in the days ahead.

This conference will take two days and will cost approximately \$15,000. These expenses will be to ensure accommodation, transportation, and to provide security and thwart any terrorist attacks which might target the conference. The FWCUI is, as everyone may know, an independent union with no support from any government. It relies totally on its membership fees to run its numerous activities. It is worth mentioning that the interim Iraqi government backed by the American troops has adopted the notorious resolution No.16 which violates both ILO Articles 98 and 87 in regard to freedom of workers to establish trade unions and has imposed a yellow trade union on workers as the only legal and official representative of the labour movement in Iraq without any elections. This union is a pro-government union and therefore receives a huge amount of financial support without any accountability or legal representation for the workers. We have protested this oppressive step and have filed a complaint with the ILO and many



had previously refused to appear before the Genoa Labour Office in an attempt to arbitrate, preferring instead to take a legal route against this worker. So what are we to think of a management which forces one of its employees to undergo the costs of legal expenses and accommodation (not to mention forcing him to use his holiday time in order to come to the court in Rome) and then refuse to turn up? Once again we see the pure arrogance of the management.

The railway workers, on the other hand, gave yet another splendid display of solidarity this morning: Fabrizio Acanfora was supported in Rome by a large number of railway workers from Acqui Terme, Ancona, Bari, Bologna, Florence, Genoa, Palermo and Rome.

The trial was remanded to a date to be decided.

Railway Workers in Struggle network

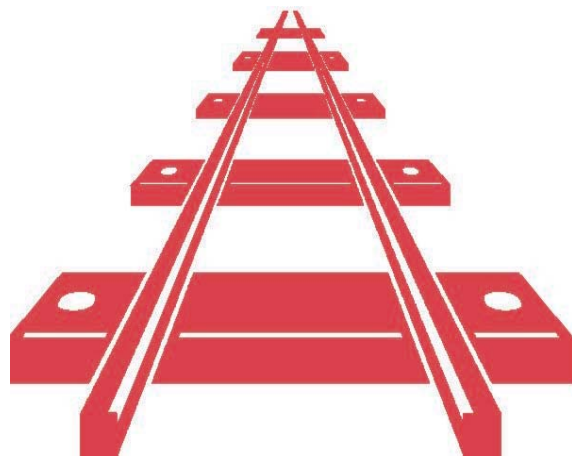
The campaign for solidarity with our comrade Fabrizio goes on!

TO ADD YOUR NAME TO THE APPEAL
fabriziounodinoi@fdca.it

The Federation of Syndicates SUD-Rail (France) offers its support to comrade Fabrizio Acanfora. Even beyond the border the bosses and governments are using similar methods with similar aims: to keep the workers quiet! The right of expression is everyone's right. The defence of the public railway system is everyone's business!

In solidarity,

Christian Mahieux, federal secretary, for the Federation of Syndicates SUD-Rail (France)..



Against the criminalization of dissent we need the utmost vigilance and solidarity. It might be worthwhile digging up again that old (?) saying, "kill them with laughter", but when the lives of comrades are at stake there's not much to laugh about, even when the repression passes from the ridiculous to the grotesque.

The hunt against anarchists is nothing new, we are used to it by now - but the fragmentation of the movement only helps this authoritarian policy.

The repression is not interested in clubs, parties or organizations - it is aimed indifferently albeit pointlessly at all of us, all those who refuse to surrender and whose hopes and rage remain strong.

other trade unions and labour organizations around the world. Therefore, your moral and financial support is the only way to make this conference succeed, which will be a step forward for the entire Iraqi society and it will probably eventually be able to save it from ethnic and religious wars which are now claiming the lives of tens of innocent civilians on a daily basis. This conference will also be a step to reintegrate the struggle of workers in Iraq in the struggle of their colleagues around the world after an unwanted discontinuation of more than 35 years.

We call on all individuals and organizations worldwide to participate in this conference as observers and we will guarantee your safety, security, and transportation. We will also arrange meetings for you with the workers and their leaders in Basra, Baghdad, Nasyiriya, Kirkuk, and other Iraqi cities.

Aso Jabbar, Representative Abroad of the Federation of Workers Councils and Unions in Iraq-FWCUI and on behalf of Falah Alwan, President of FWCUI, October 2nd 2004.



Cagliari and Sardinia in the vice of police and judicial repression which oppresses those most active in the social movements and seeks to block their development.

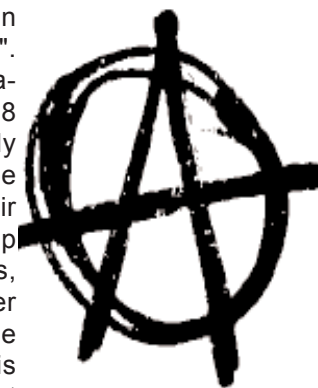
The State condemns us again. It must be twenty years since we witnessed the last political trial on the island. Now, this trial. Ordered by the police and carried out to the letter by the judicial branch of state-capitalist domination. Luisa, Massimo and Matteo, militants in the anarchist movement since long after the "years of lead", have been given sentences of 6 and a half months suspended (and a provisional fine of €1,500), 10 months suspended and 8 months suspended.

Why? Because during a hunt for demonstrators with police charges and beatings, they were unable to escape the clutches and the beatings of the men in blue and their local chiefs following a sit-in of citizens in support of M. Leonardi on 22nd October last. During the farcical trial, a supportive public had plenty of opportunity to laugh bitterly at the prosecution's many inconsistencies and contradictions in the documents they presented. After the sentences were handed down, the sarcasm gave way to a realization that this was all a huge mistake, or perhaps a "coordinated operation" on the part of the police and the magistracy. After all, as the national vice police chief Procaccini declared to the

local press, talking about anarchists in Sardinia, "we will hit them all... hard!". That this character, who was nominated by De Gennaro (of Genoa G8 fame), is up to the job, is unfortunately no longer under any doubt. Maybe those sentenced should have left their comrade alone to be beaten to a pulp or even killed by the police batons, given that he discovered later after neurosurgery that he had been on the brink for a while. But not everyone is able to ignore an old friend who is out flat, in need of help against a bunch of professional thugs who are intent on "bringing" him to order. This, like trying to fend off blows, normally has counter-productive effects which are impossible to avoid.

The worst thing is that this declaration of war, to return for a moment to the political considerations above, is part and parcel of a strategy of repression which has been directed at the island's anarchists (and not only them) resulting in identity checks, searches, the closure of the "Fraria" documentation centre, beating and even torture, unconnected in any way with events on the streets. It is a situation which is best described as a vice grip designed to break up any nascent form of social movement and punish all those initiatives who have had members sentenced, together with other collectives, groups and individuals who are directly involved and who openly fight against neo-fascism in the institutions and on the streets, against militarism and war, against nazi-psychiatry (see the dossier on Ritalin contained in the book by Luisa S. and Chiara G. - "Il desiderio, il controllo, l'eresia") and the poisoning of the environment. Add to this the solidarity with the struggles of the railway workers, the Teulada fishermen and those who work to keep alive the historical memory of anarchism and for the anti-commercial and libertarian festive socialization.

One thing is clear: solidarity is a weapon with which we can defend the freedom of targeted individuals and with them our struggles and our freedoms!



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