

Alternativa Libertaria

ONLINE NEWS SHEET OF THE FEDERAZIONE DEI COMUNISTI ANARCHICI

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The wind from over the Alps

A wind of revolt is blowing. Blowing from France over the Alps.

There is much that divides the revolt in the suburbs of Paris from the revolt in the Val di Susa in northern Italy.

On the one hand young, desperate people with no future, armed with their anger and without a clear identity. French, according to their birth certificates, but not recognized as such by either the cops who, every day, stop them to see their papers, or by personnel managers who won't take them on because they look too Arab to be trusted even as a porter.

On the other hand, families, public officials and militants desperately trying to stop their valley being invaded by the bulldozers and the high-speed railway. Who realize that, despite all the talk of participation and local autonomy, their view is worth nothing when it comes to the market and to priorities decided in Strasbourg by those who sell themselves at home.

The instinctive violence of someone who feels they're being hunted and the determination of those who think they have a fair chance at beating the arrogance of those in power do have something in common.

The determination not to give in to the status quo, not to put up with what is thrown at us by those who for years now have thought only about profit, leaving to others the costs. Human, economic and environmental.

We haven't forgotten the hostel fires, the poor housing; we haven't forgotten the unemployment and desperation that rings Paris.

Just as we understand the rage of those who have done all that was suggested they do by bureaucracy, only to find their wishes trampled on by an outside power that decides on priorities (theirs) and the acceptability of risks (ours).

The right to manage one's own territory, to demand a say, to imagine a different world, a different life, one based on the principles of solidarity and justice: this is what links the events on both sides of the Alps.

More importantly, there is the class element of each struggle. In the case of the Parisian suburbs, it is still looking for a political outlet - those involved need to break out of the mould of the gang, created by years of misgovernment by the right and left alike. They need self-organization and autonomy to emerge so that they can achieve a grassroots-built citizenship that can repair the social fabric and ensure the re-distribution of society's wealth and equality of rights.

In the valleys of Piedmont, there is a greater awareness of the enemy nature of central and regional governments and also that the plan to facilitate the high-speed movement of the privileged few places the lives, jobs and land of the many at great risk.

It is a coalition with a much wider range of participation, established over a longer period of time and, thanks also to the involvement of a great many anarchist and libertarian militants, has gradually become a mass movement. —————>



The 2005 Budget

Are we so sure that Italy is in crisis? The latest official figures on orders and sales in industry indicate increases of, respectively, 11.1% and 12.9% in August 2005 compared to August 2004. Foreign demand is growing at a rate of over 15% while demand at home is up by 9.4% on sales and 11.4% on orders.

Yet the 2005 Budget provides for a reduction of labour costs of €1 bn for companies and the Minister of Labour and Social Policy, Maroni, has even gone so far as to forecast an extra €2 bn remaining in the hands of industry.

In the meantime, the engineering workers' contract renewal is blocked on an offer by the employers' federation of an extra €65 a month, though it is this very sector (+30.9%) which is leading the recovery.

Changing the subject for a moment, €6.5 bn would be needed to finance a wage increase for State workers, but that is also exactly how much is needed by the government in order to balance the books and bring debt to 4.3% of GDP. So, of course, it is the public sector which will see the brunt of cuts:

- * €1 bn less for the renewal of 2- and 4-year contracts and nearly 300,000 precarious workers
- * 40% less than 2003 for short-term work contracts
- * 10% less for overtime.

In other words, an all-out attack on direct wages.

As far as services are concerned, more cuts:

- * €3 bn less for local government agencies,
- * €2.5 bn less for the health service.

In other words, an all-out attack on indirect wages. Add to that the pension funds rip-off, a black hole which drains €13 bn of our deferred wages.

The Chambers of Commerce union has predicted a rise of 1.5% in GDP for 2006 and 2007 and of 1.7% for 2008: this means that Italy's workers will continue to produce wealth but that our pay will not guarantee us a decent living. Unless we launch a war to defend our wages.

The CGIL, CISL and UIL (orphans of Montezemolo's Confindustria which is now benevolently neutral towards the Berlusconi government) are limiting themselves to asking for a tax reduction on incomes as a response to the Budget, whether it be greater resources to ease the tax burden (CGIL), higher tax allowances for families (CISL) or tax-free wage increases (UIL). The general strike called for 25 November by the three unions is far from aggressive and is, more than anything else, marked by an embarrassing alliance with Minister Maroni on the closed pension funds, and therefore against the open pension funds that Berlusconi and in the insurance companies are demanding.

The long series of mobilizations which began with the engineering workers' struggles and the significant united strike by the grassroots unions on 21 October, must involve all sectors and grow into an all-out battle:

- * to put a halt to the business

Jack-in-the-box

From the press, we learn of admissions of responsibility, of plots as easy to dismantle as lego, of the fault being anarchists' (all the TV news shows) or anarcho-insurrectionalists (RAI 3 news), of "organizations" responsible for the various "Jack-in-the-box" attacks - those little surprise packages, letter bombs or suchlike.



Bologna: Jack-in-the-box for the mayor, Cofferati.

Presumed motives of those responsible (according to the minister): Yeah, we'll show that old Stalinist wanker we're not joking and put the fucking Disobbedienti in the shit at the same time.

Motives of the secret services: The State is on the Mayor's side; a shadow is thrown on the movement against the evictions; militants get worried, terror among ordinary citizens; grassroots struggles wilt; political mediation is restored.

Final result: The Bolognese movement is in the shit; Cofferati becomes a martyr; much time and energy is spent distancing oneself; anarchists involved in the movement forced to constantly show their worth and always risking exclusion.

Val di Susa: Jack-in-the-box for the high-speed railway (TAV).

Presumed motives of those responsible: To radicalize the mass protest in the Val di Susa; to give the vanguards an example; to make a dramatic gesture on behalf of the poor masses of sheep and inflame the hearts of revolutionaries; to demonstrate that the individual is always more advanced than the masses.

Motives of the secret services: Erm... this crowd are all mayors, families, normal people with no masks, even kiddies; they need a good hiding, but then there'd be an inquiry; d'you know what - why don't we put a nice harmless Jack-in-the-box on the line, no-one will get hurt, it'll ruin their movement, they'll spend more time protesting their innocence than protesting against the train!

Final result: Movement in difficulty, forced to defend itself from suspicion of terrorism, distance itself, spending more time protesting its innocence than protesting the train line; political mediation replaces grassroots struggle; the DS party takes over and incidentally regains political control of the region.

Parma: 2 Jack-in-the-boxes for the Carabinieri Special Branch.

Presumed motives of those

Printed privately
c/o Sede Associazione Culturale
Alternativa Libertaria
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.....Borders are not created by a line on a map or by mountains. It is power, wielded on behalf of economic interests, which seeks to contain and impede this visceral revolt against domination and abuse of power. Let us hope that the participation of the people (not the institutions) and the widespread solidarity that these struggles have attracted, will lay the basis for new forms of autonomy which can stand up to Capital's plans.

Rimini,rimini...

The CGIL is heading towards its congress in the midst of an economic and social situation in deep crisis, where the policies of recent years have favoured businesses, and allowed a direct attack on the rights of workers. It has chosen to encourage development at the cost of cuts in wages and public spending, lowering labour costs. Because at this stage labour and workers are only considered as a cost!

In these conditions, the CGIL is trying to give labour a central role in the economic and productive development of the country and is doing so with a 10-point document which, though it does include some novel aspects, is far from enough to defend and win rights for the working class as it remains tied to neo-partnership policies that have repeatedly failed to impress.

After 12 years of partnership, where workers have lost out on their rights and on their ability to counteract neo-liberalist policies which have led the market to become the central focus of the economy and have therefore monetized the world of labour, where profit always comes at the expense of workers' rights, work conditions and wages.

It can, however, be said that this congress, thanks to two amendments regarding bargaining policies and union democracy, and the formation of a new current, will see the emergence of a contradiction within the CGIL. On the one hand, the objective of promoting the democratic dialectic needed to ensure a pluralistic running of the union; on the other hand, the objective of creating the possibility for members, delegates and labour clubs to act more freely on a local level in grassroots, conflictual campaigns. And it is this latter approach that is favoured by anarchist and libertarian workers within the CGIL. It is vital that the struggle against partnership be continued in order to return to a more conflictual approach to bargaining, which can relaunch the workers' movement, to get back to offensive demands for wages and rights instead of today's defensive demands. It is equally vital to return the worker to a central role within the union, to increase union democracy.

However, we must point out the limits of the 10-point plan and promote our own ideas and our own methods, emphasising that Anarchist Communists too work within the CGIL, holding firm to their positions of criticism of the union which, despite a certain amount of internal debate, still maintains a favourable stance towards partnership.

Just think of the fact that none of the 10 points question the type of struggles to be undertaken.

A union which does not talk about the forms of struggle which directly involve the workers is a union which does not want to struggle, a union which is ready to go into partnership.

We anarchists and libertarians must combat the concentrating of power within the union and develop organization from below, we must promote a workers' movement which will be able to free itself from bureaucracies and return to syndicalism with a fighting spirit, with libertarian practices, with more solidarity between workers and their struggles.

We must support the unity of the workers, common platforms which go beyond union loyalties, and return to the Union of Councils, as

this is the only way we can honestly talk about union democracy - grassroots democracy - so that every member can elect and be elected, so that only those delegated by the workers themselves can represent the workers during every stage of the bargaining process.

The FdCA will continue to denounce and combat every case of a union management substituting the workers in the decision-making process. We will continue to play a part within the union organizations, encouraging workers to take back their rightful role within the unions.

FdCA Labour Commission

In theory...

For Anarchist Communists, the mass Organization (labour union) does not need to mimic their particular expectations of combativeness or opposition to capital to the point that if the union were not to meet their standards, they would not participate in the unions' struggles. They do not expect the union to be born revolutionary nor to continually carry on a fierce level of combat against the bosses. Unions are born out of a need for the proletariat to defend itself. They aim to wring as much as possible out of the bosses in order to win greater wealth for the exploited classes they represent. They try to satisfy the needs of the workers who are being continually squeezed by their adversary, the bosses. As long as the union exists, it will produce within it a managing class which more often than not acts in its own interests rather than in the interests of those it claims to represent. This is all an inevitable, naturally-occurring state of affairs and something which has yet to be avoided throughout the course of history.

From the capitalists' point of view, the unions' economic fight is not only an attempt to demand improvements in the (always unequal) division of the goods provided by the system of production, it is a permanent need to re-organize according to the fluctuations in the workers' demands. The unions therefore, linked with the phases of the class war, genetically take on the double role of answering the proletariat's interests and being one of the sources of the development of capitalism. And that is without taking into consideration the bad faith of its managing class who view their role as answering their own needs for a better life, or worse still as a trampoline for their careers in the bourgeois State's administrative ranks.

One fundamental requisite for an egalitarian revolution is that it be the work of those who wish to find within the new society the bene-

fits of the happy life they are denied under the present social system. "The emancipation of the workers will be at the hands of the workers themselves" is not simply a slogan for Anarchist Communists, as it is for Marxists - it is a profound conviction. It is the proletariat, acting on its own initiative, which will liberate not only itself but all others too, heralding the end of class society. It follows therefore that the most united and conscious proletariat possible should face the bosses in the final clash if it is to avoid falling prey to an intellectual class which might "offer" to manage society on its behalf and supposedly for its benefit. But if it is to avoid every form of substitution, be it imposed or produced in all apparent naturalness, and if it is to prevent the handing over of power in any way which might end up being permanent and damaging to the final goal of establishing a free and equal society, the proletariat itself must be able to take on immediately the management of the various phases of the revolution and the subsequent reconstruction. This is why workers' unity is indispensable. And it can only be reached through collective struggle and not through the marvellous example of exemplary struggles which the masses should watch, admire and imitate.

(from Anarchist Communists: A Question Of Class)

The 2005 Budget

of pension funds and the theft of the TFR

* for wage increases, not linked to productivity or flexibility

* for public services useful to all, and against privatizations

* for the elimination of Law 30 from all contracts and the stabilization of precarious workers

* for the growth of a workers' movement which can free itself from the union bureaucracies and organize from below, federating and radicalizing the struggles and restoring the organized workers' power to themselves.

Federazione dei Comunisti Anarchici
30 October 2005



Strasbourg. It is an operation that could not openly be performed with an attack on the movements' official organizations, but only through small terrorist actions, just as effective in throwing the newly-resurgent anarchist movement back into the shadows of history, to blacken its name, to scare off its supporters, to force it to continually protect itself from attacks on its name. Making life difficult for the anarchist movement means helping the Disobbiedienti and their ilk to become the stage-managed "opposition", in the knowledge that they are willing to play the part of political mediators and representatives as long as they get their 15 minutes of media glory every so often. It means making life difficult for anarchists who work in mass social and union activity, forcing them to distance themselves from the "nasty" anarchists and politically paralyze the movement. Sure, at present the movement, or rather its younger sectors, is dominated by devotion to literature whose approach is far from political. The black bloc, John Zerzan and the erroneous conception of the anarchist as individualist who is willing to organize temporarily by affinity. In the illusion of escaping police control, in the arrogance of criticizing organized anarchism, in the romantic dream of being enough in oneself, in the total disregard for mass, popular action. Just that - literature.

Faced with this sort of preventive counter-revolution, we need to realize that:

* class-struggle anarchism risks being backed into a corner, exhausted by having to explain ceaselessly that it is not what everyone assumes it to be, while knowing that it will be targetted by the State once the class struggles which directly attack capitalist interests show their face; we need to remain firmly anchored to the mass dimension, to continue to analyze events clearly;

* repression can be fought off with legal help, with defence committees and with a good deal of patience and solidarity but that on this point there is much to be done;

* we ourselves can prevent the criminalization of the struggles and the movements through clear analysis of the mass dimension of the movements, as spontaneity is often the precursor of traps and attacks. (The CUB grassroots union, in fact, was spot on in calling



responsible: Let this be a warning that we know you're trying to frame us with your "investigations".

Motives of the secret services: Bologna and Susa are not enough, we need a real attack at the heart of the State and some stupid carabinieri to fall for it so we can launch a witch-hunt for subversives.

Triple final result: Bologna, Susa, Parma - the latest in the terror campaign against the movements and repression of social struggles; sure, a bit too early for the election campaign, but from now until April, there'll be plenty more. We can't disappoint everyone who's waiting for the pre-election strategy of tension, can we? A 40-year-old tradition!

For some time now, not only have we analyzed and understood that the object of the policies of an increasingly security-obsessed Europe of criminalization and repression are directed at the anarchist movement, not only at anarchist militants, but also in the sense of anarchist practices and grassroots, self-managed social organization which has little or nothing to do with the institutional left or political representation delegated to the party professionals in national parliaments or in

a strike of all sectors in the Val di Susa after the FIOM had called one for its own sector, industry.)

Our synergies, alliances and political choices must be unambiguous.

A N T I P O D I

Number 5 december 2005
Europe

Available from:

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50121 Florence or fdca@fdca.it