

the Communist Party

WHAT DISTINGUISHES OUR PARTY – The line running from Marx to Lenin to the foundation of the Third International and the birth of the Communist Party of Italy in Leghorn (Livorno) 1921, and from there to the struggle of the Italian Communist Left against the degeneration in Moscow and to the rejection of popular fronts and coalition of resistance groups – The tough work of restoring the revolutionary doctrine and the party organ, in contact with the working class, outside the realm of personal politics and electoralist manoeuvres

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The Colonizers Colonized The New Silk Road

Political and financial tensions are the obligatory scenario of the "great game" of the inter-imperialist clash to which, in the final cycle of this era, the declining and ascendant powers are historically forced.

It was in autumn 2013 that the Chinese President Xi, during a state trip to Indonesia and Kazakhstan, proposed an initiative of commercial and political partnership, "One Belt One Road", a huge infrastructure project that would integrate roads and railways, transport of energy products and technological connections, flanking the seaways to the land, a project then executed and finally renamed the "Belt and Road Initiative" (BRI). It is a project of fundamental importance, which aims to create an immense political and commercial bloc from Asia to Europe.

In the Far East, the plan is the new edition of the Co-Prosperty Sphere, the Japanese Empire's attempt to connect the Indian Ocean states, the Philippines, and Southeast Asia in an economic and political network, in order to free itself from the grasp which dying British imperialism, and even more so the newly ascendant and formidable imperialism of the United States, had on the region. How that project ended is the history of the first half of the last century. The iconic image of the atomic mushroom is the symbol that marked the failure of the Rising Sun's bid for imperialist domination.

But today's Chinese plan, with a power much greater than that of Japan in the 1940s, has a broader and deeper objective: together with the control of African resources, it aims to penetrate Europe and settle permanently in the Mediterranean, close to and undermining the old colonial powers.

The BRI in fact has five routes (six, if one includes the Arctic naval route): three land and two sea routes. Currently, both in terms of volume and value, the majority of trade passes through maritime ports of call: around 80%.

To sustain the massive investments required by the BRI, the Chinese government has created a financial structure, with the assistance of unknown foreign shareholders, with investments of at least \$1,700 billion.

In its outlines, this financial and geopolitical plan could resemble the Marshall Plan of the post-world War II period, but it completely differs in the historical moment: the state of capitalism and the world political framework. We will not discuss here the relative dimensions of the economic, financial and political strength of the US then and China now. This comparison apart, there is a fundamental difference in the two phases, which presupposes a process opposite to that which has allowed the half century and more of "peace" in the European Western capitalist ambit. At that time, it was a question of restarting the economic cycle after the second imperialist war, of maintaining the division of the world between the two victorious imperialisms. The present one develops in the senescent and final phase of a more than seventy year cycle of accumulation and does not mark a condition of armed peace between imperial monsters such as the era of "peaceful coexistence," but the opening of a cycle of confrontation, in which an old imperialism is challenged by a new world power, but under the constraint of the general crisis of capitalism.

For the United States, the imperative is to curb the rise of any power that challenges its hegemony over the world in commercial, financial, and ultimately military terms. That dominance seemed to stabilize again after the disintegration of the USSR and the weakness of Russia, which has barely recovered in recent years from a serious crisis and is found to be an imperialist power of lower rank, and after the proven inability of the European Union to really constitute an effective political force—too many divergent interests between states, too many lacerations of a declining economic fabric, too many tensions on the single currency.

For China, on the other hand, the BRI is also based on the historical need to oppose first world imperialism. Technologically, China is now on the same level as the United States; militarily, the development has been enormous in terms of ground forces and the gap has narrowed. With regard to the navies, there still some distance. So the threat of war, though it still seems to be far off, is not negligible.

It is not possible in the current context to foresee the outcome of such a clash within the dynamics of the catastrophic crisis of global overproduction. But we can read indications of the results of the trade war brought by the US with the imposition of custom duties and other non-tariff barriers, and the consequent reduction of trade.

These are episodes in this current historical phase of war by other means, in which the United States is resisting China's commercial expansionism which is forced to make its intervention less aggressive, but certainly not to end it.

We recall the sanctions against Russia, which also dealt a severe blow to exports from European countries, the war waged against the German car industry, the attempted blockade of Nord Stream 2, and finally the opposition to the spread of 5G, promoted by the Chinese giant Huawei, which threatens American dominance in that strategic sector. We are certainly not disturbed by these interferences in and offenses against the non-existent "free market," nor are we in favor of one or other of the European states that have suffered as a result, nor are we critical of the dominant imperialism in favor of an impotent and anti-historical national or, worse still, European claim. Each of the events mentioned, taken in isolation, would be a more or less serious episode of a trade dispute; altogether they mark a process that starts a trade war first, then a political one, with the potential for it to develop into actual military conflict.

On the other hand, many European states have already concluded important trade agreements with China. Chinese investments in Europe in the period 2000-2018 sees the United Kingdom in first place with €47 billion, followed by Germany with €22 billion, Italy with €15 billion, and France with €14 billion.

We are not indifferent to all this. Even if nothing interests us about the economic fate of the state monsters and the mode of production that animates and sustains them, that we oppose with all our strength, we must carefully read and understand the jolts and convulsions that agitate the bourgeois world because they will mark the future for proletarians around the world.

Unite Working Class Struggles with an United Class Union Front

Meetings held by the ICP in Turin, Genoa, Bologna, Florence, Rome - October-November 2016

The following is an explanation of the ICP's work in Italian unions which was presented to militant workers there. Obviously, this strategy cannot be replicated "as is" in the English speaking world, but we take inspiration for our activity in it.

We have cut our reports of class actions for this issue of "The Communist Party". But our upcoming issues will have many reports of our activity in the class struggle, all showing the following position placed into action.

Our Party organized a series of meetings in Italy - Bologna, Florence, Rome, Genoa and Turin - around the theme of an United Class Union Front. The theme was set because the issue resurfaced and is affecting the small, yet not negligible, part of the Italian trade union movement labeled "base" or "rank and file" unionism as well as the left-wing opposition within the CGIL. Last July, base unions called two separate and competing general strikes in the Fall. Two strikes, one on October 27 and the other, November 10 developed. The ICP is against this division. We advocate unitary general strikes of all base and class unionism and our comrades have participated with militants from all the different trade union organizations - the USB, CUB, Cobas Confederation as well as the "Il sindacato è un'altra cosa" ["The union is something else"] - an internal left opposition within the CGIL. We drafted an Appeal entitled "For a United Class Union Front, For Working Class-wide action, in Defense of the Freedom to Strike."

Our party has returned to agitate within the class and the trade union movement in Italy with the slogan advocating for the "United Class Union Front." Closely linked to it is "unity of workers action". The Party has shown by doing - through its method and its tradition - and its union fraction, its fellow workers and militants in trade union organizations, which have acted in a disciplined manner according to the trade union policy of the party.

The "United Class Union Front." and the "Unity of Workers Action" are two pillars of the tactics of revolutionary communism, of that set of rules of action that the party, through all its historical experience and on the basis of its theory and its program, has selected as suitable and necessary to pursue its political purpose, Communism.

Tactics are as crucial to the Communist Party as political theory and program, being the link between the latter and practical action. The characteristic thesis of our current is that what the party does determines what the party is, the good tactic makes the good party, and of course the opposite is also true: bad tactics make a bad party. Tactics cannot be an area in which it is permissible to give vent to the most daring alchemy, framed according to the motto, the end justifies the means, but these must be in harmony with that. Our party is therefore distinguished by trying to define in advance the set of tactical rules that it intends to use in a given situation. This was one of the valuable lessons of the worst of the defeats of the communist movement, the degeneration of the Russian party and the Third International.

The report wanted to show how the two lines of action mentioned above are correct, both at the level of the trade union and that of the political objectives of the party, and how the first fully fits into the second.

The Current Situation

Our comrade gave a preliminary brief overview of the world economic situation, and of the working class and trade union movement in Italy.

Here we just repeat how on the economic level capitalism continues to sink into its world crisis (read the report on the "Course of World Capitalism" published in previous issues).

The condition of the working class in the West has followed a course similar to that of the crisis: the improvement in the norms of employment and life, which began in the early sixties, made through hard labor.

The trade union movement in Italy is dominated by the great traditional trade union confederations, CGIL, CISL and UIL, which for decades have abandoned and denied, even in terms of proclamations, the principles and methods of class struggle, and embraced an openly collaborative trade unionism. These trade unions still retain control of most of the unionized wage class, albeit under slow wear and tear. By contrast there is a smaller and more varied group of so-called "base" trade union organizations which, with not insignificant distinctions from each other, declare themselves supporters of class struggle,

of "combative" and "anti-contradictory" trade unionism.

The Party's Conduct towards Trade Unions in Italy after the War

Our party has defined the CGIL as a regime union since the reconstitution from "above" of this trade union in 1944 with the Rome Pact, by the major parties making up the CLN (Comitato di Liberazione Nazionale, consisting of Christian Democracy, Italian Communist Party, Socialist Party). The new trade union organization was reborn by placing at its core the principle which the interests of the working class are subordinate to those of the Nation. For revolutionary Marxism, the Nation and its State, whether called Country or Homeland, are nothing more than the bourgeoisie organized to defend capitalism. This subordination was also highlighted in its new name, with the addition of the national "I" to that of the original CGIL from 1906 to 1927, which had instead been a "red" and class union, albeit with reformist leadership.

This new submission of the CGIL to the bourgeois regime was consistent with the ideology of the party that dominated it, the Stalinist Italian Communist Party, with its theory of "progressive democracy" according to which with the fall of Fascism—which we claimed to be only external and apparent—a regime of "new democracy" had been established, open to the working class and capable of gradually modifying and improving capitalism, until it became socialism without revolutionary traumas.

It is clear that this theory denies the foundations of revolutionary Marxism according to which capitalism is not reformable and democracy is a form of government of the bourgeois regime, the most consonant with its preservation ("The best shell of capitalism", as Lenin defines it), complementary and not opposed to its totalitarian rule. In fact, it was nothing more than the re-proposition of the social-democratic opportunism of the Second International, against which Lenin and the original Communist Party of Italy had so proudly fought.

The historical course demonstrated the failure of that theory. Four decades of screwing up the economic crisis, slowly but inexorably, have shown that post-fascist capitalism is by no means better than before. The improvements achieved by the working class after the Second World War were not the result of a different nature of capitalism or of its allegedly new fully democratic regime, but of workers' struggles, in a phase of powerful growth in the accumulation of rent and profit. Once the deception of two generations of proletarians had been carried out, and under the weight of such historical denials, the false communist party finally disintegrated, the vast majority of which openly denied all its theoretical arsenal, which had already been shamefully passed off as Marxism.

In the immediate post-war period, our reconstituted party considered, however, two possible perspectives for the rebirth of the class union as being necessary as well as inevitable: either through the reconquest of that union to a class line or its rebirth outside and against it.

Since a real communist party always had to give an immediate practical direction to the incessant struggle of the workers, after the war this was to join the CGIL and fight to bring it back to class positions. This was because within it militated the most combative part of the working class. In the decades of economic growth, while often clashing with the structure of the CGIL, which since then had begun the work of eradicating the principles and methods of class struggle, the Party managed to use the CGIL to conduct tough battles and achieve significant achievements.

The situation changed with the opening of the crisis cycle of capitalism in the first half of the seventies. In line with the principle of subordination of the interests of the working class to those of the country, the CGIL then became the ambassador among the workers of the need for sacrifices in the name of the alleged higher national interest. This happened, in a very definite and clear way, with the turning point in February 1978.

From then on, small but substantial groups of workers found the need to organize themselves outside the CGIL, not as an ideological choice but because they were confronted not only by the boss but also by the union itself, which compared to the previous decades was proving increasingly useless for the purpose of the defensive struggle of the

working class.

On the basis of this direction spontaneously taken by the workers' movement, on the basis of the analysis of the party of the overall course of the degeneration of the CGIL towards positions of ever more open class collaborationism, and finally on the basis of thirty years of experience of the internal struggle of our workers' groups, we considered that there was no longer any possibility to reconquer the CGIL to a class direction, and that it was definitively a regime union that could not be recovered to the class struggle. We therefore moved on to show workers the way towards the reconstruction of the class union outside and against it (see Outside and Against the Existing Trade Unions).

The correctness of the new direction of trade union tactics—not new, but anticipated dissolution of an expected alternative from the immediate post-war period—was confirmed by the subsequent course of the workers' movement which subsequently saw the formation of the base unions, in a process characterized by advances and retreats but which does not cease to feed, confirming that it is the product of a material need.

The Necessary Unification of Workers' Struggles

In the space of four decades, while the CGIL has not yet had the opportunity to return quite so openly to calling for workers to sacrifice themselves to save the country as in 1978, it has constantly prevented the real organization of the class for the defensive struggle against the capitalist crisis. In other words, it behaved like the general staff of an army that kept it immobile in the face of the enemy offensive.

Our party is therefore faced with the problem of how the workers can defend themselves in the face of the crisis of capitalism. In this regard, the direction of union action that we consider fundamental is that of the unification of struggles, of the overcoming of company and category boundaries.

The struggle limited to a single enterprise or workplace must necessarily come to terms with the company. In a period of economic growth, high company profits offer wider margins to the workers' claims and also battles conducted within a single job, a single company, a single category can allow improvements.

But even then, the Party was in favor of a union action that would unify the struggles at the highest level in order to avoid indifference among workers to the fate of the rest of the class, the corporate spirit, and corporatism. It seems that today they are severely afflicted and that they are the product of decades of trade unionism of the CGIL, CISL and UIL regimes.

But it is in a period of economic crisis that orientation towards unification of workers' struggles becomes vital. Increasingly fierce competition between companies, bankruptcies or so-called restructurings limit company's abilities to the point of reducing to zero the margins of claim for a trade union action that is closed in the single company. Or those margins make it negative: you can make the workers accept wage cuts, layoffs, and other deterioration of working conditions to prevent the company from closing. Trade unionism closed within the confines of a factory in crisis becomes turned from the defense of the workers to the defense of the company. In thousands of disputes, which inexorably follow the same lines and which in almost all cases leads to defeat, workers are convinced that there is a certain commonality of interests between the worker and the company, that the life of the slave depends on the welfare of the master. The supreme bourgeois dogma is supported: either capitalism or death.

As long as the horizon does not go beyond the boundaries of the factory, workers are condemned to remain deprived of the possibility of unifying their struggles and objectives, when instead the satisfaction of workers' needs may occur not in comparison with the individual master but with the entire capitalist class—industrialists, financiers, landowners—and with its political regime. This allows trade union action to move within wider margins than those dictated by the narrow economic compatibility of the individual company and to develop on the basis of a much greater force.

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