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 manoevrings

newspaper of the international communist party

July - August 2019 Issue 14 | 25¢ 25p

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-Prosperity 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 ϵ 47 billion, followed by Germany with ϵ 22 billion, Italy with ϵ 15 billion, and France with ϵ 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 explaination 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 devoloped. 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 of 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 CGdL 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 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

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.

continued on next page

United Class Union Front

The process of unifying the struggles of the working class must take place on two levels. The first, more elementary, is to strike together, in time and space: making the day of strike coincide and physically uniting the demonstrations, where numerical strength is powerful. The second level, which can only be established on the first level, is for the workers' movement to express demands that unite the whole class and justify and make necessary the unification of the struggles: wage increases for all categories, higher and lower paid; generalized reduction of working time for the same salary; full pay for dismissed workers; reduction of the retirement age and return to the wage system; social services (school, health care, transportation) free of charge for the

The more a general class movement grows and affirms itself, the less oppressive the condition of the worker in the single factory

It is important to underline that a general struggle of the working class for these objectives, while still preserving the form of a trade union movement, is already in itself a great political fact, which sees the two enemy classes of this society lined up in front of each other. In order to achieve this unification of the workers struggles, an organization is obviously necessary. Even if there were a spontaneous movement of groups of workers in this direction, which we certainly hope for and which will certainly happen, this movement will have to express its proper organization to defend itself, to connect and to be able to grow.

Base Unionism

The situation in which the working class finds itself acting today is even more serious than that of a lack of such an instrument, because the battlefield, the network in thousands of workplaces, is controlled by the regime union structure whose conduct throughout the post-war period, and in particular over this forty-year span of long crisis, was primarily aimed at preventing this unification.

On the other hand, base unionism has so

far proved inadequate for this task, partly because of objective unfavorable conditions but, in our opinion, also because of errors in union policy, one of the most important of which is the unity of action.

For example, the generally correct

criticism of the conduct of the regime's trade union principles by base unionists was followed, in the vast majority of cases, by an indication that they should not participate in, or even boycott, the mobilizations promoted by them. This attitude certainly has its raison d'être: the confederal trade unions often commit a variety of atrocities in the workplace; the reaction of the delegates of the base unions is often to refuse to go on strike and to take to the streets alongside such traitors, with whom they clash on a daily basis. This direction, therefore, if it emanates from the leaders, is shared by a substantial part of the militants of the base unions.

However, if such conduct can be explained, superficiality must not be ignored: this is not a matter of fighting alongside the structure of the delegates and officials of the collaborationist unions, but with the workers they mobilize.

Not participating in the strikes called by the regime confederations is counterproductive for various reasons:

1. First of all, the base unions with this conduct appear to the mass of workers, still controlled by regime unionism, as deserters in the field of a battle: we are here and you are not

2. The most combative workers, who belong to the base union organizations, isolated in its action, strikes and demonstrations, abandons the rest of the mass to the control and influence of the regime's unionism;

3. With a practice that has been refined and consolidated by long experience, when mobilizing workers, the regime's trade unionism is always careful not to order actions that are neither too weak, that appear to be its failure, nor too strong, that risk losing control of them. By depriving these strikes and demonstrations of the presence of the most combative workers, organized in the base unions, with their contribution of enthusiasm, energy, criticism and direction, it is easier for regime unionism to control its own mobilizations.

These considerations have a general value but it is always necessary to consider each mobilization on its own merits. Where, for example, there are companies or groups in which the regime unions have already been emptied and defeated by the base unions, the attitude may obviously differ. This is the case for example, of important logistics companies where SI Cobas is the dominant force and the Italian trade unions are reduced to the condition of an extreme minority or even absent. On the contrary, among metalworkers, for example, the control of FIOM-CGIL is still robust and the

organization of base unionism is very weak.

Nor should there be any illusions about the resilience of the regime's trade unionism, which still controls the majority of workers: if recent years have been characterized by a lack of mobilization by the CGIL, this does not exclude that in the future it might change, flaunting a new activism, setting up false mobilizations, as it certainly is able to do, think of what Landini of FIOM did after the Pomigliano agreement in June 2010 (see "FIOM's Façade of Opposition Backs the Corporatism of the CGIL"), an illusion for which a not inconsiderable part of base unionism also fell.

Our Party advocates to fight within the base unions for the affirmation of the opposite direction, consistent with the unity of action of the workers, of participation in strikes promoted by regime unionism, if they are likely to mobilize a substantial part of that fraction of the working class, and to intervene in the demonstrations organized by them with their parts, clearly visible and distinguishable, widely spreading among the striking workers their claims and their methods of action.

Opposing Conceptions on the Nature of Strikes

There are two fundamentally opposed concepts of the nature of the strike and the process of growth and development of the workers' movement here. First, that of unity of action, and second, that adhered to by the majority of the leaders of the base unions, which is to aim for separate strikes. The first of these is based on the real needs of the working class and on the need to defend them; the second places the factor of "conscience," of the understanding of social rejection by the workers, at the center and motor of this process. In the workers' and trade union movement, first of all, the workers

would come to a gradual, widespread and individual awareness of the reality of their social condition, and only then would they have the instruments of judgment, the rational motives and the ideal convictions to organize themselves adequately in combative trade unions and to

take part in the struggle.

In our view, the process takes place inversely to this, in which consciousness is the ultimate result, and always partial, not the starting point. First, instinctively, one enters into battle together, and immediately understands that numbers are the first factor of strength. then, with long experience, the masses come to understand it. And one can evaluate the orientations of the various political parties and groups on the basis of experience.

It should be noted here that the base

unions themselves were not born through a process of gradual awareness by the workers, but under the pressure of strong mobilizations of certain occupations. The realistic conception of the strike and of the development of the workers' movement does not put the head but the heart and belly of the workers at its engine

Secondly, it seems to us that four decades of the practice of separate strikes by base unionism has clearly demonstrated its ineffectiveness. These mobilizations, especially ones not restricted to a particular trade or occupation, are always in the extreme minority reduced to harmless demonstrations of opinion, never real proof of strength to bend the boss, which the majority of the working class does not even notice or, in the best of cases, considers a futile agitation of an extremist minority.

It is important to make a distinction between those who act in the workers' movement. At the base is the mass of workers. Part of this mass is framed within the trade union organization. This in turn distinguishes the bulk of the membership from the militants the delegates, the territorial leaders, and finally

the national leaders.

In general, in a healthy union, as one scales this pyramid, so does the degree of awareness of the problems associated with union struggle. If only because a worker decides to become more involved in the work of the to become more involved in the work of the union, for example by becoming a delegate, because they really have a passion for this struggle and, in carrying out this activity, over time and with experience acquires a growing

Judging the union rank and file according to the same criteria as its leaders, considering both equally traitors to the working class, is therefore a serious mistake, useful only to justify the refusal to strike with them. This obviously does not mean ignoring the existence everywhere of individual opportunist workers or

Strikes are a living social phenomenon with predominantly irrational characters. They have often been compared to a fire: a strike needs certain conditions to ignite, fuel, oxygen, temperature, ignition; once it is lit, the more it extends, the more difficult it is to extinguish it; on the other hand, once it is extinguished, having consumed part of the fuel, for a certain period it becomes more difficult to light it again. It is not by chance that in the recent past, when the leaders of the regime unions were sent to the factories to break up and quell the strikes, they were called firemen. And significantly a whole series of agreements between employers and regime unions aimed at preventing real strikes introduce so-called cooling procedures that already confess their intentions in the name and show how the employers and the false trade unions sold to them are very clear about the true nature of the strike.

The strike is the primordial and elementary constituent of the class struggle Elementary because it is the first way in which a group of proletarians collectively opposes, almost always unconsciously at the beginning, the oppression of capitalism. Primordial because in a real strike, even the smallest, all those factors, primarily of an emotional nature, which are destined to grow and mature throughout the development of the class struggle up to its final outcome in recognizing its party, the communist party, and which are able to continue the struggle towards the seizure of political power, must be recognized in embryonic form. The revolution is experienced as one great strike by the mass of the workers, viewed from below. A real strike is a small revolution. The

workers are involved in a completely different and new situation. They are freed from the oppression of work, with the elementary and simple availability of time to meet and think. The new collective situation frees up energies that ignite the need to deepen the problems of a trade-union nature, which fascinate them, and the willingness to test the strength of their class It is in the focus of the struggle that the conditions for a more general understanding of the problems that afflict the class are created. And the more the fire grows and extends. through a process of unification of the workers' struggles, the more the conditions are created so that the conviction can be spread that it is possible and useful to address the question of the condition of the wage earner not only at the union level but also at the political level. looking at the various parties and social guidelines of which each proposes its own general solution to the history of the struggle between the classes

All this hardly happens cold, in the absence of struggle, during the two hours of assembly in which workers find themselves listening to the endless sermons of two, three or four different unions, on complex problems, and often deliberately made more complicated, tired from work and aware of having to return to do it after a short break. So for the mass of workers, unlike the small minority of trade union activists, action really comes first and understanding comes later...

Confusing roles and subjects addressing and looking at the mass of employees as if they had the same false beliefs and prejudices as the leaders of their union, can only lead to serious mistakes and inability to intervene against them

The question arises, therefore, as to what conditions are necessary to set real strikes in motion. In our opinion, since this is an elementary phenomenon, these are not complex in nature, although it is not at all easy to predict the right conditions to try to trigger it. We can reduce them to two: the presence of a real malaise in the workers, of a measure taken by the boss which is felt as a bite tearing into the flesh of their daily existence; and the fact that the workers see, feel that they have at their side an adequate number of worker comrades willing to fight. Since it is not the right of trade union activists to intervene on the first factor, if not to understand the mood and morale of workers, it is on the second that action is necessary.

The orientation of the unity of action of the workers operates in this direction: to fight within the base unions for their participation, with their own demands, in the strikes promoted by the regime's trade unionism, with the aim of

creating the most favorable conditions for these mobilizations to reach a degree of strength that would overwhelm the control of the concerted trade unions over their members. Striking together with the regime's trade unions does not mean, as most base union leaders claim, to be confused with them and to favor them: the differences will be explained by the militants of the base unions to the workers in the strike. On the contrary, it was the most appropriate conduct to wear out these unions subservient to capital.

the Communist Party

Because, and here we close this part of the report, for the mass of workers embracing class report, for the mass of workers embracing class unionism and its demands is not a choice, but a problem of strength! It is when they feel strong that they understand that they actually have the opportunity to fight for more ambitious goals and more interesticant parts of the Actual to the control of the c and more intransigent methods. As long as the claims, albeit sacrosanct and classist, are based on extremely minority mobilizations, the mass of the waged class is forced to turn to trade unionism, which appears to be stronger, more comfortable, and more patronizing. An opportunist behavior, of course, but that of an oppressed class until it finds the strength to face openly the enemy social force that oppresses it.

United Class Union Front

Therefore, on the part of base unionism, joining the strikes promoted by trade unionism does not mean striking with the structures of those unions but with the workers they mobilize. It is a question of following the direction of the unity of action of the workers, which we believe is the most appropriate way to combat that unionism, not of seeking a common front between the base unions and the patriotic unions. Such a united trade union front would be in clear contradiction with the definitive nature of the CGIL regime and the consequent tactical direction we have taken since the late 1970s to rebuild the class union outside and against it.

The watchword of the United Class Union Front is closely linked to that of the Workers' Unity of Action but it does not coincide with it. it moves in parallel and it is in its function. In order to clarify this orientation, it is useful to explain the character of the Appeal for a unitary strike of all the base and class unionism that we

have mentioned by introducing this relationship.

The Appeal was entitled "For a United Class Union Front:" the specification "class" also indicates that an agreement on the level of action was considered possible only within base unionism and with left-wing opposition groups and currents within the CGIL, but excluding that

The Appeal was addressed not only to "all workers" to join and support the strike, but also to "members and militants" of all base unions to pressure their leaders to overcome divisions and call for a unitary strike, and "members and militants of the left-wing opposition currents in the CGIL" to support such a strike regardless of what the CGIL leadership would do. It was not, therefore, an appeal to the leaders of the trade unions, as mistakenly understood by some initially, but to the base of these unions.

This is in the knowledge that over a period

This is in the knowledge that over a period of now four decades these leaders have not failed to achieve an organizational unity of base unionism but not even a unity in terms of action, indeed, instead of reducing divisions they seem to become increasingly serious, as demonstrated by the proclamation of yet another two general strikes separated by 15 days.

We are convinced that the complete and

organic unity of action of base unionism will only be possible to the detriment of at least a majority of its current leaders. So the appeal, far from accrediting them, was an act of confrontation with them.

The unity of action of base and combative unionism will be the premise of the realization of a United Trade Union Front that will be "class" also because, being able to be accomplished and realized only through a struggle against the current leaders, will allow for an embrace of a trade union policy that is really such.

This objective will allow the creation of a trade union pole—harbinger of a single great Class Union—with such a mass as to generate an adequate attraction to contrast that, still today

overhanging, of the regime unionism.

This does not mean that it is certain that the formation of the future Class Union will necessarily take place through the organizational merger of the current base unions. It is possible that some or all of these organizations v prove up to this task, and will give in to the bourgeois political regime's framing as already happened at the CGIL, or vice versa, and will be swept away by it, and that new bodies of workers' struggle will arise and meet this

This possibility does not contradict the triale union guidelines set out here and the work that the Party does for their affirmation in the workers' and trade union movement, since this task obviously can only be carried out in organizations that currently exist, not in those that have yet to come.

It is important to clarify the relationship between the two tactical directions in the trade union field that we have outlined so far.

The objective of the United Class Trade Union Front is an objective that we consider indispensable in order to achieve the most complete realization of the unity of action of the workers. Our Party does not exclude the need, and its task, to address the proletarian masses directly, indicating the need to unify the struggles and proposing, in addition to the unity of action, also unifying objectives. This would strengthen the battle conducted for the same purpose within the trade unions. But we must not delude ourselves that the unification of the struggles of the working class can be achieved circumventing the task of the battle within the trade unions for the right course of action.

Trade unions are the fundamental and living subjects of the workers' movement.

Ignoring their role and abdicating the battle within them can only lead to the general dispersion of forces. This is true not only in a historical condition such as the present one, in which the working class's weakness is manifested, but it will also have value in situations in which the workers will return to fight hard gaining a much higher degree of vareness of their exploited class condition than

Our Party can affirm this on the basis of a great experience of a struggle that is now more than secular, since we consider ourselves faithful continuers of a political current that has had the historical occasion and the merit of fulfilling a leading role in the period in which the advance of the revolutionary proletariat, in the years from the October Revolution to 1923, was at its peak. This current is the Italian Communist Left,

which originated around 1912 within the Italian Socialist Party (PSI), was formalized in 1919 as the Communist Abstentionist Fraction and in January 1921 led the split founding of the Communist Party of Italy. The Left held the leadership until 1923 and the majority of members until 1926, when, at the Congress of Lyon, the centrist current prevailed, an extension of Stalin's counter-revolution in the Russian Party and in the Third International, with its henchmen in the Italian Party (Togliatti).

Since the months following its foundation, the Communist Party of Italy has been engaged in the battle for the United Trade Union Front among the class organizations of the time. The Communist Trade Union Committee sent a lette to the CGdL, the Railway Union (SFI) and USI proposing "the establishment of a united proletarian front in trade union territory and the national general strike in defense of the working class" to face "the development of the capitalist

Even in those years in which the Italian and European proletariat expressed the greatest vigor, bringing the whole of Europe to the brink of the proletarian revolution, the divisions between trade unions played a role of obstacle and damage to the workers' movement, and the Party considered it its inescapable task to fight within them for the widest possible unity of action. At the same time, it did not fail to address the workers directly.

The reformist leaders of the CGdL called

the communist proposal "demagogic and reckless". The Railway Union and USI, while declaring themselves in favor of the united front. did not take into consideration the invitation of the communists. The Party's tactic was to circumvent these defeatist and embarrassing positions with an appeal addressed directly to the proletariat. The report of the PCd'I to the IV Congress of the Communist International reads as follows: "The question was brought by the Communists directly among the masses in which they found the greatest sympathies; at the same time the CGdL was asked to discuss our proposal in a national Congress".

On September 7 and 8, 1921, a national conference was held in Milan called by the

Communists, which brought together a hundred delegates representing more than 500,000 workers from all over Italy, belonging to the CGdL and the Railway Union. The final document stated: "The Communists set as their main trade union objective the achievement of unity of all economic organizations of the Italian

The campaign for the united front began to bear fruit. The Board of Directors of the CGdL was forced to convene the National Council which was held in Verona in the early days of November 1921. The agenda was for the united front and the national general strike. It can still be read in the above mentioned report. "Against such a proposal almost all the trade union bureaucrats of the CGdL took sides.... Numerous trade union organizations, although not directed by communists, accepted the communist proposal.... Despite all the obstacles and all the impediments, the pressure of the masses pushes inexorably towards the united front.... The history of the reception given to our proposal in August 1921 can be summed up in a few words: obstructionism on the part of the union leaders, ever-increasing sympathy on the part of the masses" ("Report of the Executive Committee of the PCd'I to the Comintern on the Tactics of the Party and the Question of the

Trade Union Struggle and Political Struggle

It is not a question, in the current situation of repeating the same tactical approach proposed in those years of maximum advancement of the revolutionary proletariat, of making a mechanical and forced transposition of the practical conduct of the Party, such as to make it

As we revolutionary communists believe we can recognize in the smallest strike those elements of proletarian rebellion against the oppression of capitalism destined to grow and mature in the entire course of development of the class struggle, so our doctrine allows us to identify the processes even in their embryonic formation. In the limited trade union activity that the present conditions allow us, we see those fundamental characteristics that have appeared clear and distinct in the experience of the great battles of the past and that we know will reappear in those to come: - the opposition of the reformist and

opportunist trade union leaders;

the seemingly inexplicable attempt by political groups, such as anarchists, to speak out in favor of the united trade union front: - the enthusiastic welcome of the

proletarian mass, even of the workers who adhere to parties adverse to ours;

- the adhesion of trade union structures.

territorial and of category, even if not directed from the fraction of the Party, to the communist trade union direction. After explaining the function of the two lines of action in the trade union field and the reasons why we consider them to be correct in that field, it is a matter of explaining how they fit into the political struggle for communism.

The relationship between Party and union is an ever-present problem in the union movement which only revolutionary Marxism

correctly frames.
Our school foresees the growth of the Party in a determined relationship with the rekindling of the class struggle, but excludes the possibility of being able to lead the working cted towards the revol conquest of political power, on the basis of an increase in the number of members through the sole activity of propaganda and proselytism.

These are fundamental and necessary tasks, but not sufficient.

If we stick to Marx's thesis that in every age the dominant ideology is that of the ruling class, the Party will remain a minority of the class, and for a long time even after the conquest of power. The force that will catapult this resolutions with a property to the boad of the this revolutionary minority to the head of the working class is that of the social war, of the working class against the bourgeois classes, in particular the trade union struggle. It is in this field that the practical directives of the Party will be followed by the workers, even by the non-communist ones, because during the course of the struggle they will have proved to be the most appropriate to their needs.

In this, the genuinely communist Party does not need to exploit the workers' and trade union movement because the best development of this creates the most favorable conditions for the achievement of its political aims. Exactly as the Manifesto of the Communist Party states, 'Communists have no interests separate and apart from those of the proletariat as a whole.

The Party therefore does not seek a forced 'politicization" of the union. It translates the theoretical theses that distinguish it from all

other parties into the right practical direction of

action. For example, in the trade union environment, it does not propose watchwords such as "Capitalism cannot be reformed, it must be overthrown" but "Fight against capitalist exploitation to the bitter end," aware that in the course of the development of the class struggle the second formula will in fact coincide with the first. Or, it does not include anti-religious propaganda in trade union communiqués, but explains the need for workers' solidarity above all religious beliefs.

For example, one of the theses of the congress document of the Second Congress of the USB states that it would be necessary to "accept the challenge of politicizing the clash" (see "The Second National Congress of the USB"). Earlier this was SI Cobas leadership has often repeated that in the absence, in its opinion, of the revolutionary communist Party,

Respect for the function and nature of the union does not mean devaluation of the function of the Party.

Party comrades who are workers and militants in trade unions should not hide their opinions and carry out propaganda and proselytism even within the union. But the fundamental function of the communist union fraction in the union is not to make it, little by little, become a half Party, which stands side by side and shoulders the first: this objective, which is considered obvious and necessary and pursued by all other political forces, comes to deny the union or damage its healthy development. Instead, the primary work of the communist union fraction is carried out in respect of the nature and function of the union, different from those of the Party, in their defense and in fighting for the affirmation of the directions of action that favor its maximum strengthening.

The affirmation of a completely consistent classist orientation in trade unions and in the class is the result of the struggle of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie, of which the struggle between its various currents is a reflection within the trade union movement, and the continuous and coherent trade union orientation emanating from the correct revolutionary policy of the Marxist Communist Party. Therefore, it can only be successful in the presence of the Communist Party. Without this, the trade union movement, led by other political parties and currents, can only occasionally and partially use the right method of struggle, but it is destined to betray or show its inadequacy with the deepening of the social crisis. In the individual battles, the communist trade union policy, demonstrating its adequacy and correspondence to the needs of the workers struggle in its growth, will find the adhesion of workers who are not part of the Party and also of those of other political organizations. We have also had a small confirmation of this in the battle conducted in recent months in support of the unitary strike of base unionism. The same appeal was drafted not only by comrades of the Party, even if it fully answered our address

even if it fully answered our address.

The political parties acting in the field of the workers' movement opposed to the communist movement may occasionally find themselves sharing some of the communist union directives but, at best, they oscillate around the right course of action and only at moments coincide with it, and are destined sooner or later to have to try to bend, as it is said to manipulate, the trade union movement to its own political aims, revealing these not to be in harmony with them.

The opposition towards unitary strikes by some of the base unions' leadership has already shown a contradiction between the political aims of the opportunist political groups which direct those unions and the needs of the workers' movement. Besides, its a fact that among parties that call themselves proletarian and revolutionary, those who have given effective support to unitary strikes can be counted on one hand. This despite that everyone says they agree with unity of action and some of their militant workers have expressed themselves in favor of

In this oscillatory movement of the parties around the correct line of classist union policy, the contradiction with their workers' base, with their union fractions, which will increasingly tend not to follow the direction of their political organizations but the communist one, is

It is in this way that the union will carry out that function of transmission belt between the minority of revolutionary Marxists organized

in the Party and the mass of the proletarian class. In this process, the guidelines of the united class union front and of the unity of action of the workers play a fundamental role because they are those that can lead the entire working class to move and clash with the entire bourgeois class and its regime. As Marx explained, when the trade union movement came to mobilize the entire working class for its interests, it was

already a political movement.

The affirmation of the classist trade union policy, emanating from the communist fraction, and its sharing by a large proletarian base, leads to the mutual strengthening of the workers'

movement and the Communist Party.

The general mobilization of the proletariat, determined by the advancement of the world economic crisis, comes on revolutionary ground as capitalism becomes less and less able to feed its wage-earning slaves. Taking advantage of the objective conditions of fragility of capitalism and its regime on the world scale, the general strike, finally directed by the only Communist Party, overflows into insurrection to seize power, the first step towards the emancipation of the working class and to

This communist tactic on the ground of trade unions is counterbalanced, in addition to the rigorous distinction and theoretical and programmatic definition, by the rejection of all fronts on the political ground. Our Party does not pursue intermediate objectives to the revolutionary conquest of power and rejects all the political alchemies inevitably connected to these immediatisms that opportunism always proposes in the fake prospect of bringing the revolution closer

It is from the combination of these two

seemingly opposite tactical attitudes—maximum unity of action of the proletariat in the field of immediate claims, maximum independence and definition with respect to all the other parties that we believe that the highest efficient revolutionary power of our class will develop.

The Communist Party

Printed and Produced by Associazione La Sinistra Comunista - Casella Postale 1157 - 50121 Firenze - Italy I.C.P. Editions – c/o 96 Bold Street – Liverpool L1 4HY – United Kingdom C.L. Publishers – c/o 523 S.E. Morrison St. – Portland, OR 97214 – U.S.A.

international-communist-party.org icparty@interncommparty.org