



Rete dei Comunisti

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May 1st 2024, between international solidarity and class conflict

For Unione Sindacale di base (USB), too, the months from the beginning of the year to the end of April were marked by numerous events and episodes of class conflict and mobilisations of solidarity with Palestine against the occupation and genocide perpetrated by the Zionist government of Netanyahu, in which the USB structures participated together with the movement in support of the resistance of that people and against the Meloni government, in which participation in the national demonstration on 1 June in Rome represented a strong commitment.

But this was only part of the commitment and trade union work of USB, which has been severely tested by the repressive measures of the government and the judiciary.

We remember the continuous bans imposed on our transport strikes, from local public transport to rail strikes, by the minister of infrastructure, that Salvini who was unleashed to defend the right to mobility only during struggles and whom we decided to disobey more than once.

Not to mention the dozens and dozens of complaints against our logistics workers and comrades as well as the dockers of Genoa for blockades against ships loaded with dangerous weapons.

But the most shocking aspect of these months has been the exponential increase in deaths at work, which on more than one occasion have taken on the character of real massacres: from the five workers run over by a train at Brandizzi while working on the railway line, to the five who

died on 17 February when a slab collapsed at the Esselunga construction site in Florence, to the seven who died on 9 April at the Enel power plant at Suviana in Emilia, all of them employees of contracting companies.

All murders committed on the altar of profit, as USB denounced on 2 March during a conference in Florence on health and safety in the workplace attended by numerous politicians representing local institutions, labour lawyers and Emma Marrazzo, the mother of Luana d'Orazio, a young worker sucked up and mangled by a warp, the machine she was working on and which had been tampered with to increase its speed, and where the popular initiative

bill for the introduction of the crime of homicide and serious injury at work into our penal system was discussed, given that today the bosses, responsible for the thousands of victims who lose their lives in the workplace every year, always get away with it.

And even if in the end we did not manage to reach the number of signatures needed to present it to Parliament, on April 30th it was presented to the Senate by the 5 Star Movement group just the day before the demonstration, on May 1st, which saw USB marching through the streets of Florence, passing in front of the building site where the Esselunga massacre took place.

May 1st was also the date indicated by the World Trade Union Federation for large demonstrations

of internationalist solidarity with all the countries and peoples under attack by imperialism, which are indicated as enemies, rogue states and put on the index with the consequence of heavy political and financial economic sanctions by the United States, by NATO which is always joined by the United Europe in defence of blatantly racist, segregationist and fascist regimes.

But USB's programme does not end with these albeit important paths. At the heart of our initiative for the coming months is a complex platform that invests both the political side against the highly warmongering choices of Meloni's fascist government, from the increase in military spending with its sequel of cuts to social spending, to the attacks on women's rights, and social income, and the side more directly related to the



conditions of millions of workers.

A platform launched by the large assembly of delegates and delegates held on May 16th at the National Library in Rome, who in dozens of speeches identified the main points on which to build conflict: strong wage increases in basic pay for the next contractual renewals, which do not stop at that ridiculous inflation recovery system, the HICP, which does not even partially cover the erosion of the purchasing power of wages, reduction of working hours for equal wages, defence of health and safety for workers in support of the presentation of the law for the introduction of the crime of homicide and serious injuries in the workplace, strong funding for public services starting with schools, health care, now reduced to a simulacrum of the health service we knew a few decades ago, the outcome of austerity policies and cuts imposed by the European Commission and implemented by all governments in this country, from the centre left to the centre right, from the technical governments to the current one.

Strong emphasis was placed in this platform on the scourge of precarious and underpaid work, favoured by the new rules imposed by Salvini with the extension of the rules on contracts and the lengthening of the chain of subcontracting, on the rights of migrant workers and their massive exploitation in the fields and logistics warehouses, primarily the request for residence permits, the only chance for everyone to get out of clandestinity, from illegal work, from illegal labour.

In this regard, the assembly discussed the intention of the Confederal USB to launch a campaign in the autumn against contracts in the public

administration for the internalisation of services and employees, together with the denunciation of the use of the national contract Multiservices, the worst, closer to the so-called pirate contracts than CGIL-CISL-UIL that sign it together with the whole queue of autonomous unions.

Today, this contract, the symbol of underpaid labour - along with the Vigilance contract - once applied essentially in the service sector, especially cleaning, has seen its scope expand enormously: from factories to commerce to logistics and even in construction contracts, combining maximum exploitation with minimum labour costs, considering that in addition to low wages in those sectors we also record the maximum number of murders and serious injuries. Saving on labour costs and safety is in fact the preferred method of Italian bosses to withstand competition.

In addition to all that has been written so far, the demand for a minimum wage: this is a battle that can see united both young precarious workers and workers who are 'apparently stable' but continually subjected to redundancies and restructuring that diminish employment, as technology advances, and worsen their working conditions.

For a new public education in a new society

Report from the OSA and Cambiare Rotta Forum

On 18 and 19 May, the national Forum of Cambiare Rotta and OSA took place in Rome, a two-day discussion with intellectuals, academics, political and social realities on the need to imagine an all-round alternative for the world of public education in the face of the rubble of the neoliberal model of school, university and research. An appointment that, in the wake of the revival of the university movement through the academic boycott of Israel, demonstrated the ability of the youth structures of the Rete dei Comunisti to have an adequate reading of the current historical phase and a possibility of hegemony over broader sectors of society.

First the battle against the MAECI ban and then the broadening of the struggle to the demand to break all relations between the universities and the war industry brought out a transversal and heterogeneous dissent within the universities against western policies of war and support for the state of Israel. Although timid, the results obtained in the universities have allowed Cambiare Rotta to grow and consolidate its strength in the country's main universities and to gather support even from workers, teachers and researchers (an example of this is the strike called by USB Università e Ricerca and the students on 9 April), hinting at the possibility of expansion beyond the confines of the 'antagonist' world of youth and universities.

In the face of the attacks by the press, politics and university institutions on protesting students, defined as "extremists manoeuvred by anarchists" and/or as a minority of "intolerants", the

main objective of the forum was to publicly present a sort of identity card for Cambiare Rotta and OSA and to prevent repressive attacks on our youth structure through the involvement of more or less prominent personalities from the intellectual and democratic world (Tomaso Montanari, Anna Falcone, Giulio Marcon, Christian Raimo, etc.).

The emergence in the country's public debate and in the media not only of youth protagonism but, at last, of Cambiare Rotta as a communist vanguard in the student movement (as had happened two years ago with OSA during the wave of school occupations in Rome) is certainly a positive fact, we could not run the risk of being trapped in a misleading media narrative that wanted to relegate us on the one hand to the vertiginous element of the academic boycott and, on the other, to the veils of the police headquarters and the police reported in the newspapers in an uncritical and transversal manner.

The theses presented at the Forum started from the Rete dei Comunisti's analysis of the relationship between the tendency towards corporatisation and elitisation of public education in our country and in Europe, the crisis of the capitalist mode of production and the crisis of hegemony of the Euro-Atlantic bloc, a starting point that finds continuous confirmation in reality and that reinforces the approach on which we have built the mass intervention of Cambiare Rotta and OSA: for us, schools and universities are battlefields of class clash, terrains on which political, cultural and ideological conflict beco-

mes central, especially for a generation in crisis of prospects.

In our country, young people now experience in an increasingly concrete and perceptible manner the contradiction between expectations and reality, a contradiction that becomes politicised and makes a political proposal of total rupture with the existing more 'palatable'. The pandemic, the war, the social and ecological crisis are bringing out a present made of rubble with no apparent way out for an entire generation that can no longer find any possibility of material and cultural emancipation even in the normal school and academic paths, now marked by ruthless class selection and unbridgeable territorial inequalities.

The crisis of perspectives makes the places of education crucial points of development of political and social contradictions: the western capitalist system and its ideological corollaries

transmitted through schools and universities (individualism, competition, ideology of merit, superiority of western values) are winning but no longer convince the younger generations.

The challenge that opens up for Cambiare Rotta and OSA is clear: transform the places of public education from rings of transmission of an ideological, cultural and labour subordination to the dominant model into places of conflict, or rather, of possible conflict, exploiting representation as a terrain of struggle, using the battle for internal democracy in schools and universities as an element of broadening consensus around our watchwords, representing a platform of general alternative to the current model of education, as a further building block to build our credibility and strength (as well as reason).



The first of June procession in Rome

A first step in the construction of political and social opposition to the Meloni government

A procession of at least 10,000 people against the Meloni government crossed the streets and squares of the capital, starting from Piazza Vittorio and arriving at Porta Pia. It was an important first step of coagulation at a national level of a political and social opposition against the current executive, its pro-Atlanticist war policy, its economic choices in the direction of austerity, its racist tendencies and its attacks on civil rights, especially against women.

It was a moment of advanced political synthesis, made possible by a capillary territorial construction by the organisers and a remarkable logistical effort that made it possible to reach Rome from the north and south of Italy by bus, train and car. The mobilisation of June 1st also affirms an important method of doing politics in our country in a unified manner, with steps shared since the assembly of April 20th at the L'Aquila cinema in Rome, where this demonstration was officially launched with the establishment of the promotion committee. A promoter committee that made possible the 'belly-to-belly' work of the following weeks, made up of territorial assemblies, leafleting, 'attacks' and agitation and propaganda initiatives.

We are sure that the demanding work of building the class left necessarily starts from this work that combines the identification of the enemy with a work of rooting outside, and in some ways against, the constitution of the 'broad camp' in the PD-M5S traction. In fact, the demonstration showed that it is not only necessary, but also possible for the radical left to occupy a political space that is not the appendix and crutch of the

centre-left, giving prominence to all those class sectors that testify to a certain social vivacity. A vivacity that is beginning to erode the passivity and lethargy of recent years and that has as its main driving force the conflictual trade unionism of the *Unione Sindacale di Base* (USB).

Certainly, the mobilisations on the side of the Palestinian people this autumn have been an important vector for this partial reversal of the trend and a further ground for politicisation for important groups of young people who have responded positively to the call to demonstrate in Rome within an entirely 'political' framework and not just one of solidarity. A result that would have been impossible without the work of youth organisations (Cambiare Rotta and OSA) and university collectives (CAU) who were the vectors of this renewed youth protagonism within this context.

Two further considerations are in order. The first is related to the fact that it is areas such as the construction of the demonstration where a fruitful confrontation is possible between communist subjectivities and real experiences of the movement with a common goal practicable through mass work, which allows a projection on the political level that would otherwise be impossible to realise 'each for himself'. The second is related to the construction of a hypothesis of political representation of the subaltern classes, of which *Potere al Popolo* confirms itself to be the unavoidable pivot and the most advanced point, capable of affirming its own political agenda regardless of its lack of presence in the European electoral conjuncture.

As the Rete dei Comunisti, we are more than satisfied with the political result obtained thanks to the national demonstration on June 1st, on which we have worked with perseverance, determination and passion, sparing no resources and energy. A step forward that will allow us, we are certain, to take further steps in the direction of building a political and social opposition to the Meloni government.



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