For a new movement against neo-liberalism

For the libertarian alternative

Federazione dei Comunisti Anarchici

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1. The coming decade

A harsh reaction has been unleashed by States around the world against the cycle of social, labour and political struggles which have been carried on by the movements of opposition to neo-liberalism since the late 20th century, with a consequent general worsening of living conditions for millions of proletarians who are increasingly being enslaved by capitalist exploitation.

Several tendencies would seem to characterize the coming decade:

- a tendency for finance to continue acting as the motor of the economy,
- a tendency for the workforce to be re-organized into more intensive units of exploitation,
- a tendency towards the concentration of sector monopolies which destroy social wealth and labour,
- a tendency towards a neuronal structure made up of productive poles surrounded by depressed areas,
- a tendency towards the use of militarism and nationalism to feed a state of war that destroys any hope of a large part of the population and the exploited classes to improve their lot and win back their autonomy.

In fact, with the various financial scandals having died down, there appears to be a revival of finance capitalism once again, and with it monetary policies designed to smother any economic recovery and the birth of a cycle of expansion, through a series of interest rates rises, credit clampdowns and social dumping.

Therefore, in view of the counterproductive effects of precarity on production and competitivity, we are apparently witnessing:

- a re-composition of the workforce into subordinate and highly flexibilized forms, in order to strengthen supply and competition in macro-economic areas (EU enlargement, the relaunch of Mercosur and ASEAN, the WTO crisis, etc.), and also
- a concentration of production into monopolies on an international basis (motor industry, telecommunications, agro-chemical/pharmaceuticals, etc.),

which encourage a neuronal network of sites and related corridors of capital and raw materials on which public and private investments can coagulate, thereby impoverishing the large areas in between.

Since the last decade of the 20th century, with the birth of a state of endemic war generated by the USA for control over the system of imperialist dependencies, there is increasing use of militarism and nationalism (and all its religious and ethnic varieties) in order to use the control/de-stabilization of the area from the Middle East to Central Asia and to destroy the autonomy of the exploited classes by forcing them to side with a particular State, religion or elite to whom they entrust their present and future destiny of exploitation.

Given this situation, it is necessary to re-launch a large international movement against neoliberalism, against precarity, exclusion and alienation, together with the movement against the war and for peace. Because

- the total independence from all political and economic institutions must be clear (no State, government or market has any interest in fighting neo-liberalism);
- peace must be demanded, because it is the breeding ground of civil society and allows the development of struggles for the emancipation of the downtrodden classes;
- we must work to rebuild the autonomy and the role of the exploited classes, the defence and reconstruction of their free and independent organizations, as a condition and indispensable factor in the struggles against neo-liberalism and war in every country7 of the world.

2. The proletarian internationalism of the popular struggles

The FdCA will therefore support, promote and assist every initiative aimed at re-building a large international movement

- against neo-liberalism, denouncing the crimes of exploitation and bringing solidarity to proletarian organizations and local movements fighting against local or foreign bourgeois aggression;
- against war, demanding ceasefires, demilitarization and disarming by every State and ethnic or religious elite, who are united in their contempt for the lives of proletarians;

a great international movement whose heart and whose base lie in the grassroots social, labour, cultural, political and anti-militarist organizations, and also in its ability to federalize the struggles that develop, on a national and international level.

To that end, the FdCA

- favours the horizontal creation of networks, coalitions and forums inspired by the practice of self-organization, self-management and direct action, which represent the collective capacity for acting against the contradictions and violence of neo-liberalism;
- intends to contribute to the development of the class-struggle anarchist movement, by supporting its political networks and its capacity for social insertion in the struggles and fronts of struggle in support of popular power, for the spreading of the anarchist communist project.

3. Italy's new historic compromise

In Italy, the electoral victory of the centre-left coalition has seen one political class of reactionaries and adventurers who support a social programme of class selection being substituted by another political class made up of rationalizers and technocrats, whole-hearted proponents of the virtues of liberalism and of the need for all working social classes to share in the task of re-launching the country's capitalism.

The anti-Berlusconi opposition movement was rewarded with the electoral defeat of his "House of Liberties" coalition [1], but not with its political death or with any real discontinuing

of neo-liberal policies. The admittedly feeble (and above all ill-advised) hope that there might be a new phase of improvement, both in the expansion of rights and in the living conditions of the subordinate classes, does not seem to have any future, given the current policies of the centre-left. This is why we are witnessing a form of semi-paralysis within the movements, which are uncertain as to what strategy to follow (again as a result of the Berlusconi factor blocking any chance of conflict with the Prodi government) and impeded by the fact that one particular political class — the "revolutionary intellighentzia" of yesterday's movements — is now sadly and inevitably bogged down by parliamentary compatibility.

The 5-year basis of the Union's programme [2] is also the cause of a sort of wait-and-see attitude that could seriously interfere with the social, labour and cultural movements' ability to mobilize from the grassroots, something that they did so well at the time of their opposition to the House of Liberties government.

3.1 The danger of opposing common interests

We need to keep our eyes open and avoid being tricked by the duplicity of certain plans for the next 5 years being worked on by the government, the employers' federation and the Bank of Italy, such as:

- the cancellation of parts of Law 30 [3], but with an extension of and for the good of flexibility;
- a reduction of the fiscal wedge [4] for employers, but with a de-contractualization of labour intensity and additional wages;
- an increase in demand, but with pay remaining at the same levels and the encouraging of competition by means of liberalizations;
- the right to retirement but accompanied by a rise in retirement age and pension funds for all;
- a certain amount of financing to regional authorities, but greater privatization and citizens' contributions to social expenses, even by means of fiscal subsidiarity;
- no to war and a withdrawal from Iraq, but a confirmation of military deployment in peace-keeping forces;
- reduction or stabilization of public debt, but at the cost of wage freezes in the public sector;
- an open-door policy and rights for migrants, but only if controlled and sponsored;
- greater attention to environmental compatibility, but with increased tariffs.

The attitude is one of feigning improvement and will draw the post-partnership unions and a left whose vision is still clouded by anti-Berlusconism into a suicidal partnership. In order to counter this, it is necessary to re-launch a campaign of mobilizations, led by a new movement of opposition. This movement must learn how to remain entirely independent of the governing coalition by recognizing and rejecting the policies of the centre-left government as being "normal" inter-class policies which promote capitalist exploitation and the legitimacy of the legislature.

4. A new opposition movement in Italy

The FdCA will support, promote and assist all initiatives that seek to work towards the construction of an opposition movement that

- establishes its total independence and autonomy from electoralism and the market, that seeks the extension of rights, from the right to housing to the right to an income, from healthcare to a clean environment, whose vision is of a radical, possible alternative;
- counters both politically and culturally on as wide a scale as possible, any re-emergence of the xenophobic and identity-obsessed right, promoting the values of anti-fascism and anti-racism as a vital basis for building a society of free equals;
- promotes and fosters an anti-militarist ethos in the struggle against wars and Italian missions abroad;
- can federate the various social and labour struggles, political and cultural struggles, making the most of the subjective capacities of the opposition to the Union's neo-liberalism expressed by the more combative labour organizations and the free and independent self-organized grassroots organizations.

4.1 For the growth of a combative labour movement

One of the strong points of this movement is to develop and extend the mobilizations of both EU and migrant workers:

- through grassroots struggles, from the workplace to the wider community, against precarity and social impoverishment;
- through the strengthening and spread of labour organizations in every workplace, relaunching the practice of worker participation and union democracy;
- with the building of increasingly powerful grassroots initiatives which can foster class unity between workers, by addressing the problem of the divisions caused by the multiplicity of contracts and rights;
- mobilizations whose autonomy is expressed in demands which break free from the demands of the unions' partnership duties, which bring an end to de-unionizing and collective bargaining, which reject legislation damaging to union rights, with greater development of combative syndicalism characterized by libertarian practices.

4.2 The global struggle against globalization

Closely linked to labour struggles is the growth and spread of anti-capitalist, anti-authoritarian, secular and internationalist movements and mobilizations in order to fight:

- the exploitation and marketization of people and resources, which EU directives have served to worsen;

- the enslavement of women and men in undeclared and unprotected jobs;
- sexist discrimination and patriarchy;
- rampant militarism and military expenditure;
- the privatization of services and separatist subsidiarity on ethnic, religious or other bases.

4.3 The new generation of anti-fascists

A decisive element in the new movement of opposition and struggle is the development and spread of a new general ethos of anti-authoritarianism and anti-fascism that

- fights against the criminalization of anti-fascism (by the use of expedients like preventive custody or charges of devastation and moral complicity) and against every sort of revisionism, not by taking refuge in the facile temptation of a military response, but by dedicating ourselves to re-creating a cultural fabric able to isolate any re-emergence of neo-fascism and its corollaries of racism and sexism;
- fights against the xenophobia, sexism and racism that the far right's propaganda uses in order to take root in the weakest layers of society and foment hate and violence day after day against anyone who is seen to be different;
- counteracts the rise within society and the legal processes of arrogant and repressive political attitudes against the freedom of thought and the autonomy of the social struggles.

4.4 Anti-racism

The presence of foreign workers is now well established but these workers must not be allowed to become the scapegoat for social tensions and the contradictions of this society.

It is necessary to:

- fight in order to guarantee respect for the inviolable rights of each individual, against the criminal category of the "clandestine" and the blackmail of the work permit system;
- continue to work towards re-building the unity of the worker class and the exploited of whatever religion or origin;
- encourage self-organization among migrants, to demand their rights;
- create the necessary conditions to overcome the limits imposed by various cultures and communities.

4.5 The new feminist generation

Decades after the end of the mass feminist struggles, which led in part to a regression into a form of elitist, institutional feminism, a patriarchal offensive has been launched on an economic, cultural, religious, social and legislative scale.

A renaissance of feminist culture and politics is required at every level of social life if we are to keep, share and widen our opportunities and our individual and collective self-determination.

We consider the following sectors to be strategic for feminist struggles:

- the world of labour and union battles, in order to fight precarity, disparity and wage discrimination, the unfair division of labour between men and women and every form of discrimination against gays, lesbians, bisexuals, transgenders or queers;
- the area of public healthcare and bioethical rights, in order to fight all policies and ideas (religious or otherwise) that seek to limit individual choice and self-determination of one's body in areas ranging from reproduction and access to fertility treatment technologies to biological wills and the choice to end one's life;
- an end to all forms of violence which women are victim to within their family life and relations.

4.6 A horizontal movement, with no central committees

But the success of any new opposition movement lies in being able to federate the struggles and the actors in the social, labour and political movements, in order to build and spread the social opposition on as wide and as radical a level as possible, on a horizontal basis; for the spread of a self-managed social alternative from below.

This is what the FdCA is working towards and will continue to work towards.

5. Short-term prospects

In the short term, the FdCA intends to contribute to the struggles

- for the redistribution of social wealth, against the budget policies for the period 2007–2011 and the related cuts in social spending;
- for the protection and enlarging of global union rights, against any pacts for flexibility or wage moderation in the workplace and during bargaining;
- for the public management of material and social resources, against privatization and the marketization of social services and goods both at a national and local level, from social insurance to healthcare, from energy to water, from transport to culture, from communications to education;
- in opposition to the war and to militarism in all its forms (military expenditure, peace missions, armed banks, etc.);
- for the social and cultural isolation of racism, patriarchy and the emergence of neo-fascism;
- for the natural right to criticise and protest, against the repression of labour and social struggles.

6. The libertarian alternative on the horizon

The FdCA therefore intends to devote its political action to

- the right to a social alternative and to experiment;
- an end to all forms of patriarchy;
- an increase in the opportunity for people to participate and organize themselves, against social exclusion and the repression of struggles;
- expanding the various forms of social protection (wages, rights, services, etc.);
- the quality of life, our habitat, our consumption, solidarity;
- the building of a leftist ethos within society which can become stronger with experience, using means that are for us appropriate for the ends;
- the development of networks, coalitions, alliances, multiple and pluralist poles and political campaigns which can help spread libertarian ideas and the self-managed anarchist communist social project.

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