

Report from discussions with comrades of LOTTA CONTINUA

- Includes
1. The current situation in Italy
 2. A clarification of points raised and questions asked by BF International sub-committee.
 3. Report of the discussions in July/August about the elections in Italy, and LC's 'support' of the CP.

1. THE CURRENT SITUATION IN ITALY

The LC comrade divided the discussion into 3 parts;

- a) An outline of the programme of the bourgeoisie during this period.
- b) The programme of the revisionists
- c) The programme of the mass organisations.

First of all, what is the economic policy of the present Government. In fact it is very similar to that of the British Government. It is to make a free passage for inflation. All promises of reforms have been postponed. There is a two stage strategy: 1. To get out of the crisis, and 2. To get the economy growing again.

This seems to be the common programme of ~~the~~ economic policy of the Western capitalist world... France, Germany, the USA. There are obviously many disagreements between them; but what is absolutely clear is that the working class must be defeated.

The attitude of the bourgeoisie is that there is a dangerous virus all over Europe which has to be stamped out. In fact we think that any strategy for Europe at this stage excludes Italy and Britain. They will be made to suffer more inflation (they will be made to pay for the fact that their working classes are fighting back too much).

The present Moro Government (Moro is the President of the Republic, equivalent to our Prime Minister) began with the defeat of the right-wing of the Christian Democrat party led Government under Fanfani ~~xxxxxx~~ (whose policies were called Fanfaschismo).

Moro's Government, although basically the same CD and Socialist Party coalition (Moro is a CD) is a more centrist Government than Fanfani's. However, the trend seems to be to isolate the executive of the Moro Gov. I.e. the CDs both support and oppose the Gov., and undermine it by continually threatening to withdraw.

The main characteristic is that it is a Social Pact Gov (although a very weak one.) It is a government for defaultion and crisis and the Social Pact policies are designed to blackmail the left. It is less and less representative of the bourgeoisie, and represents more the interests of Confindustria (Italian CBI), the TUC and the CP. It has already caused the resignation of the director of the Bank of Italy.

~~This~~ Moro's Government needs the support of the Trade unions and the CP. It involves them in Government, but gives them no authority. It gives no power to the CP. The Gov. is forced into this situation of getting external support because of:

1. It wants to force through authoritarian policies and laws onto the working class with the help of the CP. (more law and order)

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and 2. Because of the improved role of the CP in local and regional government. 5 regions and all the biggest towns (except Rome and Palermo) are now controlled by the CP since the elections in Spring '75).

This Gov. couldn't govern without a social pact. The unions are very much in favour of this social pact.

The main unions have put out statements which show their support for Moro and the Social Pact. During the recent railways dispute, the CGIL (the CP dominated Confederation of Unions) said that the railway workers must give up economic demands. However the response of the workers was that they threatened to leave the unions en masse. The head of the union said "we decide what you do". During this time, LC ~~xxx~~ simply printed some literal quotes from the speeches of some of the union leaders, particularly one from the head of CISL (the CD dominated Confederation of unions) which said "We have a clear mandate from the Government on the contract renewals which are coming in the Autumn." Even ~~for~~ printing these literal quotes, LC came under heavy fire from the unions.

LC feel that an attempt is being made to centralise the power of the unions to the Government. This is an attempt at a formal unification of all contracts between the unions and Confindustria (CBI). For example, it was not by chance that the railway unions accepted the contracts with no wage rises and no demands around unemployment (except general investment plans that accept the logic of closing factories and opening others).

LC's criticisms of AO (Avanguardia Operaia // I.S.) are that AO are ~~xxx~~ just criticising the unions, but accepting the demands all the same. They are saying that this is not a period for the growth of workers autonomy and they are not proposing any alternative demands for workers. AO is just making political propaganda against revisionism - thats all. They are not proposing material alternatives for the working class.

LC, on the other hand, says that to accept the contractx renewals just like that and the centralisation of the trade unions would be an enormous defeat for the working class. LC sees enormous potential for the overthrowing of the contracts, both within the unions and in the autonomous struggles of the working class. An example of the struggle inside the union is Alfa Romeo. (For more details see LC's French Bulletin). Alfa is part state owned, and during the summer vacation the firm decided to give some of the workers lay-off (cassa integrazione) to begin the first day back. This would have meant 94% of wages, but then no guarantee of work afterwards. It was a clever move by the bosses because no one wants to go back to work after the holidays, and they thought they could sneakily use this to lay ~~xxx~~ people off. However, the workers were cleverer, and on the first day back, more than 90% of the workers arrived for work, including everyone who had got lay-off notices. In fact this was probably a record for Alfa, where the absentee rate is usually about 20% !!! These workers turned up for work every day for a week. In effect it was

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an occupation, and hardly any work was done. In the end the bosses caved in and agree no more til next spring....

The lessons of this struggle are 1) That the attitude of the workers is different to that of the unions (who agreed to the lay-off). The workers chose the strategy of staying in the factory and producing very little. In fact the factory was almost dismantled. 2). The dialectics between workers and union on a local level mean that workers impose their action and struggle on the union.

An example of the trend to autonomous organisation is the continuing "auto-reduction" movement (reducing all your bills, fares, rents etc yourself). This is now concentrating on phone bills with people paying what they think they can afford themselves. Housing struggles are still continuing and is getting some victories, particularly in forcing local housing authorities to compulsorily purchase. There are good local examples, and in the workplace in the face of the unions strategy. 1) The railway workers, and 2) the co-ordinating committees against unemployment in Torino and Milano.

The railway workers strike

Rail workers in Italy are state employees (nationalised 1905). They are among the most underpaid of all workers. They just about survive doing overtime which is usually compulsory anyway. The attitude of the trade unions has always been that state employees cannot strike because they are responsible to the working class. The TUs say that service workers can't fight for their needs because they are servicing the 'national community'.

However, the attitude of the TUs to more middle class state employees is different. For instance, when the airline pilots were striking ~~for~~ to maintain their differential between themselves and the ground staff, the TUs said it was necessary to give them concessions and more money, even though many of them were in fact fascists. Their rationale was that if you don't give in, we'll make them into bigger fascists!!! (LC calls the struggle of these elements who are only struggling to defend their privileges 'corporative').

So the TUs say that service workers must give up economic demands of all kinds. Thus the ~~ex~~ wage demands of the rail ~~xxx~~ workers was really low, and instead the unions demanded more trains, and more investment in trains so as to have better railways for Italian workers.

(The links between the union and the workers in the railways are much looser than elsewhere.)

After the unions had tried to fob the rail workers off with their pathetic demands, 3 small unions (1 autonomous organisation in Rome, 1 autonomous union dominated by the CD and a fascist union) called for a one day strike on the day of the return from holidays at the end of the summer. The ~~xxxxx~~ strike call had a totally different effect in the North than in the south.

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And on the surface, it appeared quite chaotic. Choosing the day for striking on the first day back after the holidays was very unpopular with many workers. Also it was the day when migrant workers were travelling back to their jobs in Germany, and the bosses used the strike as an excuse to sack many of them who didn't make the journey. However the strike got massive support from ~~wx~~ railway workers in the South, but in the North the workers used the union assemblies to tear the union apart for calling such action on such a day. In fact the union in the North practically collapsed as hundreds of workers simply tore up their union cards. The right-wing tried to use this situation as proof that another Chilean situation was occurring as this was organised disruption of the economy at a mass level against the Social Pact. The Government and the CP tried to use the situation to 'regulate' the strike. There was a lot of talk of 'voluntary regulating' of all strikes. And unions should accept norms restricting strikes, which if the workers don't accept, they will be breaking union and State law.

The Government then staged a huge provocation by organising a strike breaking Army force which the unions and the CP accepted as a "service to the community". The unions themselves organised their own strike breaking force from the North to the South.

After this, the official unions (CISL, CGIL etc) made their own strike, which was followed in the North, but not in the South. LC didn't condemn or support this strike. They saw that the southern workers were refusing the union programme saying "We refuse to take orders from these crooks any more", while the northern workers were in fact using the strike in the way they wanted to.

How LC analysed the strike

For a long time, LC felt unable to grasp the fundamentals of this strike, so many aspects of it were confusing. They decided to open the whole question out in discussion in the newspaper. So, for a while, the newspaper contained debate from all sides. There were discussions with workers from the North and the South, from the unions, the CP and other groups, as well as LC workers and comrades. People said what they liked and replies were from other comrades were also printed. After this long period of debate, LC finally reached the conclusion that this strike ~~was~~ had proved the existence of an enormous potential against the Government and the unions.

1. The working class ~~was~~ needs forms of mass organisation which cannot be found among the unions (see later). In the railways, it was clear that the unions couldn't represent anything.
2. The unions are supporting their own policies at the risk of losing the working class, and losing some even to the right-wing. (Our comrade said that workers never become actual fascists, but it gives more strength to right wing leadership, in the absence of revolutionary leadership.

As far as the other rev. groups and the strike: the PdUP supported the attitude of the unions. AO had no open position on the strike and was opportunistic about it, saying that the group in Rome which did support the strike was not really part of AO. The positions of LC in having the open debate so as to leave the word to the revolutionaries in order ~~xxx~~ to allow the contradictions to emerge. The main problems were 1) Strike regulation and 2) the question of mass organisation. The railway workers had objectively, if not subjectively opened this autumn and this period and the whole question of mass struggle.

Mass Organisation

LC see this as one of the most important of problems at this stage. The paper has as yet presented no lengthy analysis of what has happened to the workers councils. '73 ~~xx~~ was totally different to the situation of today. 1) The dialectic between workers and councils is still open and relates to the question of workers democracy.

2) The unity of working class units is still there. Restructuring only began on a massive scale a few months ago.

3) The workers councils are still victories. Up until a few months ago, there had been no defeats.

Since the massive lay-off (cassa integrazione) at Fiat, there has been a wide loss of representativeness of the workers councils. The mobility of the workers has meant the destruction of the workers councils. The unions succeeded in centralising and bureaucratising the workers councils. Decisions began to be taken more and more at national level at the 'co-ordination' of workers councils. This is not true for councils all over Italy, only the biggest have become formal structures. This one stage of mass organising is finished and another started. In LC, during the time of discussing the workers councils, we used to say "The form of mass organisation itself is not important. Each historical stage ~~xxx~~ or period has its own form of mass organisation (as eg. the shop stewards movement in Britain)." However, now, the workers councils do not represent. The situation has made it impossible. Now the mass organisation must be clearer. This situation is one where the offensive against the working class is outside of the factory at the level of Government. When wages and unemployment are tied to public spending cuts, taxes etc, when working class struggle needs unity between wages and phone bills, ~~xxx~~ mass organisation must put the working class in touch with forms of popular power. In the army, with students and in the factories, and working class districts.

We must begin to provide some alternatives to the unions. At a national level there could be demands over hours and pay etc. There is a problem of the mass organisation in the factory. At the moment in LC we are reassessing the whole role of the workers councils. The Workers Commission is discussing it. We are not interested in inventing something like the CUBs of AO (similar to Rank and File of I.S. here). These are just a passage for AO, a kind of stagism, first the CUB, then AO. We are not interested in that. CUB cannot be a mass organisation. It has to be something which is open and dialectical. The old organisational structures are still functional & especially in the small factories. But in the large factories we must start from what is there now to build mass organisation. We see that in the railway

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strike an alternative was emerging. Many left-wing workers who left the union at this time wanted to build an alternative.

Then there are examples of the Co-ordinating Committees of the small factories in Milan, and of the Singer (fridges) cycle of production in Torino. In Milano, the committee ~~has~~ brings together all representatives of all factories in occupation against unemployment. What matters is that this new organisation is recognised by the union as a political and organisational force which goes against the union strategy in terms of unemployment. The slogan here is "Hands of our jobs. We want to stay where we are. We have built organisation here, and we want to stay".

In ~~Milano~~ Milano, the Co-ordinating Committee held a demonstration to the courtroom which was occupied and 2 judges held. (In Italy, when a factory closes, there is a court case.) This occupation was an expression of power of the workers who don't accept that justice is beyond classes.

On Aug. 15, there was a big demo of small factories in Milano. There is much more support together than if each small factory tries to organise on its own. For example, Singer (which has always had a left-wing group inside sympathetic to LC) was the first big factory (1,700 workers) of the smaller type of factory (usually only 300 workers). There was an occupation and a mass demo to Rome. The Co-ordinating Committee of workers and other associated factories threatened by the same unemployment (i.e. the struggle that follows the 'cycle' of production - the making of components etc) all supported the demo.

Then in Piedmont (northern region around industrial area of Torino), the CP and Agnelli (boss of Fiat) arranged a conference on unemployment. They were met with 100 workers from Singer who said "You can't discuss this without us, although we can discuss it without you."

BF asked LC if itself was the mass organisation.

Answer: NO. LC is a cadre organisation with a mass line. You can't have a mass organisation without the CP and the other revolutionary groups etc. The new mass organisation has to cover the same base as, for example, the shop stewards movement. It means in effect the conquest of the majority. And not a minority organisation. This means trying to effect at a mass level, a different outcome to the present contract renewals than what the unions want. It is hard to win. We have many fears about this new stage of struggle. The CP will have to enter Gov. even though we in LC don't want the CP in Government. But we want the instability which can create a new dialectic between the working class and the Government, so that the working class can impose its own demands or brakes on the Government.

If we win this stage of the problem of building popular power, we will accelerate the process of making the party of the revolution. LC itself is not the party of the revolution. We are a revolutionary party but not THE party. These questions are completely tied to the question of popular power and the expansion of popular power to its limits. The revolutionary party must have real roots and strength.

Points raised by the BF International Sub-committee, and LC comrade

- LC's analysis of Portugal
- The Question of an international network of revolutionary groups
- The relationship between BF and LC
- Mutual correspondence on the current situation
- BF relationship with Italian comrades in Britain.

Portugal

Main points seem to be: 1) Popular power and the Party
2) Unity of the Revolutionary Left

LC consider that the FUR (United Revolutionary Front) doesn't fully represent the revolutionary party or the potential revolutionary party, although it would be an indispensable part of that party. The reason is that it leaves out the UDP which is the biggest single revolutionary organisation, as well as the FEC and the non-dogmatic Marxist-Leninists.

LC is critical of all the organisations in Portugal, but has fraternal links with all of them at the same time. LC think that FUR made a mistake in accepting the suicidal strategy under Goncalves of support for a Government which was doomed.

The Goncalves Gov. was a centrist CP Gov. which did represent a threat to the international bourgeoisie, but which was also a brake to popular power. The AUG. 20th demonstration, showed the ~~existence~~ existence of enormous potential of popular pressure to overthrow the Gov by the left. This was shown by the fact that the Government was forced to accept demands of workers taking over Republica and Radio Renascenca. After Aug. 20th, ~~the~~ the right-wing took the offensive against the CP and this created enormous problems for the left-wing. The answer of the FUR was "Since the Government is attacked by the Right, we must defend the government. LC see this as a mistake. It was an initiative which served the revisionists initiative. And the FUR did not make a self-criticism of this position, and generally there ~~has~~ has not been a clear criticism of their mistakes.

The attitude should be not to build a front with the CP. Defend the CP from the right - yes - but at the same time clarify the reasons for the defeat of the CP at this time and claim it as a victory of the working class. And outline the ~~real~~ real position of the CP.

The Cppcon document was to the left the FUR. The Copcon document knew that the Goncalves government was doomed. And the defence of such a doomed government should not have been a central theme for the revolutionaries at this stage, otherwise the revs become doomed also.

The revolutionary left cannot be built in Front structures.. This follows the classical idea of "merging from the top". And it excludes the UDP which has built more mass support than any other group; and it is the only group to have started work among the peasants of the North. In fact, the enemy in the North has been attacking the UDP as well as the CP. In fact, in some villages where CP offices were destroyed, some of the UDP offices stayed and were not even attacked. In many of these cases the CP were seen

as foreigners who just moved in opportunistically. Many of them were petit-bourgeois elements, and were seen as a stranger-power. Many peasants felt they were just exchanging one boss for another. And it was these Petit-bourgeois elements who fled the area. The main problem of the UDP appears to be its sectarianism. However, LC is optimistic that we can look forward to the unity of the revolutionary left in Portugal. LC say that the building of the revolutionary party cannot be delayed in Portugal, but that it comes at the same time as the building of popular power, and is the vanguard of that power.

The International Network

At their national congress last January, LC decided a thesis on Internationalism (see "Documents from Lotta Continua bulletin"). This was a historic criticism of the organisations of the working class (1st, 2nd & 3rd Internationales), and contains certain agreed principles. Our comrade said that the strategy was communism, and the tactics were what has to be done between now and the seizure of power/ the dictatorship of the proletariat.

One of the main differences therefore between LC and the groups of the 3rd International (like IS) and the other Trotskyist groups is that at the moment, the problem of the seizure of power is tied to the National State. The National State is the 1st enemy. In other words, the seizure of power has to pass through the stage of National State. In tactical terms, this means that the central problem is the majority organisations of the working class, - the trade unions, parties etc. The central problem of these tactics is the conquest of the majority. This means confronting the nature and ideology of the majority of the working class. This means that the problems of revolutionaries in different nation states is different. In Britain, the major organisations of the working class are the trade unions and the Labour Party. In Italy, they are the reformist party of the CP and the unions. In the USA, the unions are different again.

If the area where the revolutionary organisation intervenes is the national state, it means that you can't have international or centralised tactics. Therefore you can't have an 'Internationale' as such. You can have international discussion of tactics though. For example, LC and BF share more views than say LC and IS, i.e. groups have better or worse relations. But that doesn't mean groups should be mutually exclusive. However, one must define which groups are revolutionary or not (ie the Frankfurt conference on Chile). The Marxist-Leninists are not revolutionary because Chinese foreign policy is State foreign policy and not revolutionary foreign policy. Any group which sacrifices revolutionary policy to State policy of any country, leads to the defeat of the working class in that country. LC is still considering this whole question and is in the process of redefining this in relation to Europe ~~xxxxxx~~ and the rest of the world.

This means that the relations between LC and other revolutionary groups is open. This means that LC is against "twin" organisations (like the IMG saying 'the representative of the 4th International in Spain, Turkey blah, blah) But LC does have fraternal/sororal links with groups, some of which are closer than others. However they do not see this as impinging on the internal policies of any group.

There can be tactical unity - ie 1) the mediterranean area; 2) western Europe. say the Portugal demos, or the campaign

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against NATO. LC refuse the sectarian view of common campaigns with "twin" groups. International solidarity must unite all that can be united.

IS is dreaming of a new International. AO wants to create satellite organisations in other countries like 'Revolution' in France (which has now split) and 'Bandeira Roja' in Spain (which has now joined the CP). LC don't want to do this, but want open relations with other groups

In other words, the international network is not a network. We can swap mailing lists and contacts in other countries if wanted. LC and BF have very much in common, but LC also have relations with IS and IMG. Equally, BF should not rely only on LC in Italy, but should approach other Italian organisations. Our comrade said, "We in LC have nothing to fear from this. We are confident that we are right".

BF and LC

~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~ LC want regular correspondence from us on the general situation in Britain. We suggested that we send all our material on the current situation, including notes from Internal Bulletin regularly. LC want everything that is sent there to also be duplicated for comrade in London. (see notes from NC)

(For details of international interventions, tour see NC minutes, or refer International sub-committee).

Relationship with Italian comrades in London

This was a very long discussion, mainly centred on the question of the Campaign against the Immigration Act. For full details see WL comrades (especially ND, SB and KT). Simply, our positions boils down to - We are not opposed to campaign. We support its aims.. BUT.. we are not prepared to lumber ourselves with more 'front' work at the present time, given the British situation on 'front' organising and our slender resources in London. And at the moment itx it seems that fronts ~~xxx~~ isolate themselves more from the working class than build class struggle.

LC maintain the right ~~xx~~ to have their own correspondents on the struggle in Britain.

For the exact details of arrangements and everything please refer to International sub-committee).

(PA, JH. I (B)).

Why LC supported the election of the CP in the regional elections, Spring 1975

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The result of the regional elections, with a massive vote for the CP, is a fantastic victory against the right-wing and the Christian Democratic Party. The elections were of tremendous political significance from the North to the South.

The crisis of the Christian Democrat party and its monopoly of power lies in the changed power relationship between the classes and in the general crisis of imperialism.

The central issue in these elections was the defeat of the CD. The lessons of Chile, enriched by the Portuguese situation, and the potential in post-Franco Spain means that every institutional change in Western capitalist societies makes a space for the

The refusal of restructuring industry and workers mobility is at the heart of the struggle today, as well as the general demand for shorter working hours, higher wages and more jobs, and their links with the coming contract struggles. The working class must control the ~~xxxxx~~ contract struggle and ~~x~~ prepare the fight against the bosses crisis. There is a daily struggle in the factories and everywhere. The working class ~~xxxx~~ hegemonised itself against the regime of the CD, ~~AND~~ The main platform of this was 'We won't pay for the Crisis' which has a real political meaning. The CD has been in power for 30 years and is an expression of capitalist power. Because we believe in the working class achieving a wider unity over ~~xxx~~ its material conditions, there was only one tactical position, and that was to support the CP.

After the elections

The main meaning of the elections was an enormous defeat for the right-wing and the CD. The CP had its greatest parliamentary success in history. We don't think this was class approval of the historical compromise, but a willingness to defeat the CD and impose a radical change on the Government. ((BF note: if anyone is not clear... This is a whole discussion on the local and regional elections in Italy during the summer. It means the CP is now the majority party in most local councils, although the central government is still a coalition government between the CD and the Socialist Party. In the past, the CP have agreed to enter coalitions with the CD (the "historical compromise"), however now, this delicate balance of forces is shifting pretty fast.))

Therefore the problem now is how to strengthen this result in the daily class struggle, that is, against the crisis and towards the working class power.

These elections indicate a defeat for the whole bourgeoisie, for Fanfani and the reactionary forces, who based their campaign on anti-communism and law and order, as well as a defeat for the "Social Democratic" bourgeoisie and its boss Agnelli (boss of Fiat) who wanted to restructure the centre-left coalition and use the unions in an anti-proletarian way, without the struggle ~~of~~ of the working class.

Internationally

this also weakened Imperialism. The USA backed the CD who represented the interests of American capitalism. Imperialism is now in a defensive position after the defeat in Indo-China and threatened by the revolutionary process in Portugal. The left is also clearer, having learned some of the lessons of Chile and the situation of a left-wing government. This means that we think it possible that Italy might undergo a violent coup by Imperialist forces because of the strategic position of Italy in the Mediterranean area.

The class struggle now

The principal battleground for the class movement is against the crisis and for the control of the "contract" struggles. Because of the polarisation on the left, there has been greater unification of the working class. The most important example of this was "Red Friday" - the 7th March - in Milan. It was the opening of the election campaign and the start of a working class revolt. Milan itself was entirely occupied with workers to stop the fascist demonstration. It meant a real mass anti-fascist militancy and

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not only a vanguard militancy. Other examples were in April and May when 7 comrades were killed in the streets by fascists, a situation created by the CD and the State machine. Here it was & really the mass movement - not only the revolutionary groups - but the workers & the CP militants who were on the streets to destroy the fascists. At the same time was the huge demonstration in Rome in support of Portugal, organised principally by LC. AO and PdUP wouldn't participate because they were putting up candidates for the election and wanted to appear 'respectable'. 80,000 people came on the demo which included soldiers organisations openly, in uniform.

To combat this, the state is restructuring at the same time as the bourgeoisie. New laws related to picketing, demos and police right to arrest more easily. There is a call for repressive legislation to make the revolutionary left weaker, to create a new situation of tensions. Police can now shoot on demos. There are new counter-insurgency forces. The police squads to act inside demos is being reorganised.

Police attacks

Given that the bosses were astonished by the election results, they have multiplied their repressive policies against the working class. In the many factory occupations like in 'Cirio' in the south and at Philco (part of Phipps electrical) the pickets were attacked by the police, and in Milan too. On the Portugal demo, many soldiers were arrested for demonstrating, and inside the factories, there are frequent attacks on militant workers like in Alfa Romeo. At Alfa Romeo in Milan, there was a meeting of Italian and Yankee bosses about restructuring. Some workers organised a demo against the meeting which the police attacked and some militants of LC were sacked for leading it.

Contradictions in the bourgeoisie. Organising in the Army

There are growing contradictions among the bourgeoisie too. The bourgeoisie is moving more and more to the right. ~~Thuxxxxx~~ The political work inside the army is a fundamental part of the last period. There are strong contradictions for the bottom and middle NCOs many of whom support 'The Democratic Organisation of Soldiers'. Militants in the Air-Force helped to organise a demo against bad pay and conditions and the repressive situation in Italy. Police in plain clothes arrested a sergeant of the air-force during this. And in barracks all over Italy, soldiers asked for the solidarity of the working class against this arrest and gave out leaflets calling for 'the unification of the working class, the airforce and the army'. There have been meetings in all the biggest towns where soldiers spoke against the manoeuvres of the army and in support of the struggle of the working class.

Before the elections, there was hardly any talk in the papers of rising prices etc. Now, the bosses talk all the time of sackings, rising prices and redundancies.

The Answers to some of our questions:

- What is the Soldiers Democratic Movement?

The SDM was set up mainly by comrades in the revolutionary groups but not in the CP. It began when comrades were conscripted. Soldiers are only allowed home once a month. If they come from the North they are posted to the South, so life is very hard. In Rome there is a huge concentration of barracks, one contains 80,000 soldiers who are treated like animals. The SDM is similar

to the MFA when it started in Portugal. Wives of soldiers have also organised themselves.

- Could you say how you criticise the CP and revisionism at the same time as supporting them for the ~~election~~ regional elections?

LC: The whole proletarian class movement is deeply rooted in the revisionist idea of work. We think that in the last few years, since '69, the most important thing was the refusal of the work ethic, and this has been the basis of autonomy. We have seen a change in the working class in the North and in the South. The thing to establish is that the working class does not support a coalition or compromise with the bourgeois parties and the right wing.

If the revolutionary movement was in a majority at the moment in the working class, then we would never say elect the CP. But this is not the case. The CP has a lot of power. So our tactical position was to support the CP but at the same time our platform was for class autonomy - the proletarian programme, the fight against the crisis... WE WON'T PAY FOR THE BOSSES CRISIS. The election slogan of LC was "Defeat the Christian Democrats", and we said that the CP is the only party at an institutional level that can do that. All our propaganda was critical of the CP. We were pushing to gain some space for the working class. We don't think a split of the CP will bring about revolutionary organisation, but a coalition between the CP and the SP might give the working class more space to get more power.

After the election, Agnelli (Fiat, who favoured the historical compromise between the CP and CD) declared that now in Italy there would be economic and political terrorism. He said that British and Yankee capital will flee and tried to blackmail the union by saying 'don't ask for too much'. To this the working class answered with occupations. In Genoa, the main slogan was "We want factories" and "Not a job to be touched", also for higher wages and no mobility in the factory! Guaranteed Income in the form of guaranteed lay-off pay was a victory, and workers got it for one year. But it was not a real victory, because for example, Fiat used it and the 3-day week to move production around. Now the workers are saying "Don't touch our job organisation inside the factory".

- What about the unemployed?

LC: There are 1½ million unemployed in whole of Italy. 100,000 in Naples. LC organises a lot with the unemployed in Naples. The working class has always been unemployed in Naples. During a recent struggle, the workers occupied the Town Hall, and one of our slogans was asking for jobs where we live.

In the Kids Cafe in Naples, one of the things is to link the community with the conditions in schools. For instance, taking over empty classrooms to use for classes, and demanding that the kids get taught there. (BF note: The cuts in Education in Italy meant that classes were taught in shifts so school hours were cut right down to 3 or 4 a day). Also that there be decent hours for classes, not shifts. In Britain, unions calling for jobs in underdeveloped regions has given the bosses a chance to impose their low wages and lousy conditions. Most of our organising around the unemployed has been the "auto-reductions" (not paying bills). The social democrats and unions policy is to restrict wages and leaves the crisis where it is. LC has made its demands on a real class basis. Our programme comes from the demands and needs of the working class itself.