



The Italian Syndicalist Union today

Revolutionary Unionism in Italy



USI
DAM

AIT
IWA

I N T R O D U C T I O N

This pamphlet consists of the complete translation from the January '84 issue of 'Lotta di Classe' (the USI's national organ) of the motions from the USI's First (reactivation) Congress held in Ancona, in December 1983.

This pamphlet has been published firstly to better acquaint British comrades with the USI (which as the Italian Section of the International Workers Association is the DAM's sister organization in Italy). Much less is known in this country about the USI than about the Spanish CNT for instance, even though the USI is historically as important as perhaps even the Spanish CNT.

Secondly it has been published to show how a Revolutionary Unionist or Syndicalist organization works in practice. After the Fascist Era and the Second World War the USI had been more completely crushed than even Franco managed with the CNT in Spain. Numerically today's USI is nothing as big as the CNT in Spain. Its situation is much closer to that of the DAM in Britain, and though it is at a much more advanced stage than the DAM the USI's recent experiences are quite relevant to us here in Britain.

Thirdly this pamphlet has been published to show to workers who are attracted by neither the class traitors of the Labour Party and TUC nor by the various small parties of the marxist revolutionary Left that there is a class alternative. That alternative, Revolutionary Unionism, is very weak in Britain today. This pamphlet wants in a small way to contribute to its building.

Published by
the
Middlesbrough Branch
of the
Direct Action Movement
in June 1984

Red & Black Bookshop
120 Victoria Road,
Middlesbrough,
Teesside

SOME FACTS AND FIGURES ON THE CONGRESS

The Ist Congress of national reactivation of the U.S.I. was participated in by 70 workers (of whom 37 were delegates of the Union) from the following towns and cities: Ancona, Milano, Roma, Trieste, Verona, Recanati, San Benedetto del Tronto, Macerata, Fermo, Senigallia, Pesaro, Mondolfo, Fano, Teramo, Lugano, Sarno, Lecce, Torino.

Also present were comrades from overseas representing the following organizations: the AIT Secretariat, the Spanish CNT, French CNT, French Anarchist Federation and Radio Libertaire of Paris.

Greetings were sent to the Congress from: the editors of 'Solidaridad Obrera' of Barcelona and 'A Batalha' of Lisbon, Umberto Marzocchi, O.R.A. Relations Commission, Libertarian Communist Federation of Liguria, the C.C.A. of Fano, and from comrades in Bordeaux, Limoges, Carrara, Arezzo and Velletri. Comrades C. Bianchi and G. Careri (Ancona), M. Verzegnassi (Trieste), M. Albano (Milano) and G. Mancuso (Sarno) were nominated for the chair and secretariat of the Congress.

Reports on the outgoing offices and sectors of the USI were given by C. Bianchi (for the National Secretariat), M. Careri (for the editors of 'Lotta di Classe' and the International Relations Commission), M. Verzegnassi (for the Executive Committee), S. De Felice and F. Ribes (for the health workers sector) and G. Careri (for the postal workers sector).

Written contributions on the various items which composed the agenda were presented by comrades of the Lazio USI, Marche USI, Trieste USI, Milano USI and by comrades De Felice of Ancona and Gian Luigi Bellei of Lugano.

About 35 comrades participated in the discussion of single items during the 7 congressional sittings, adding many elements that filled out the work of the contributions presented.

Three commissions were formed to synthesize the debate and the points that emerged into final motions.

The first commission (on point 2 of the agenda) was formed of comrades P. Ciommi (San Benedetto del Tronto), Maria Caressa (Trieste) and M. Albano.

The second commission (on points 3 and 4 of the agenda) was formed of comrades Francesco Ribes (Recanati), M. Cardone (Roma) and M. Verzegnassi.

The third commission (on points 5, 6, 7 and 8 of the agenda) was formed of comrades Roberto Marinelli (Trieste), Rossano Burzacca (Roma) and Gianfranco Careri.

The motions, after further debate, were approved (with a few modifications expressed by the Congress participants).

In the final congressional sitting the new organs and national officials of the Italian Syndicalist Union were nominated.

-Congress Organizing Committee-
(Ancona USI)

A N I M P O R T A N T S T A G E I N T H E B U I L D I N G O F T H E C L A S S A L T E R N A T I V E

The National General Congress of the U.S.I.-A.I.T. was held in Ancona on December 8,9,10,11 in the Sala Convegni of the Ente Fiera.

Without doubt it was an important step in the building in Italy also of the organized revolutionary syndicalist alternative. Important battles await the U.S.I. in the coming months: the defence of the scala mobile (1); opposition to the new Cost of Labour accord (2); the renewal of the call for wage equalization and the fight against health and safety risks, unemployment and the cost of living; the demand for complete liberty of organization, action and representation for all those working class forces (like the U.S.I.) that are opposed to the class collaboration and corporate opportunism of the Confederal (i.e. official) and so-called autonomous unions.

The Congress has met these challenges by preparing its forces (its militants, its union sections, its Local Unions) for the class struggle in which we shall be committed from today on.

Let us look at what emerged from the Congress, without indulging in useless flag-waving (which would be damaging and out of place given the objectively small dimensions of our organization), but also without undervaluing the combativeness, level of debate and potential for action which the U.S.I. today embodies.

I. Firstly the U.S.I. has shown itself to exist as an organization - very minoritarian certainly, but there nonetheless. And in the context of syndicalism and of the struggles in the process of degeneration or hegenomized by the political party and trade union bureaucracies, it has shown itself to be an ALTERNATIVE ORGANIZATION with its own structures, a profound debate, and real day-to-day activity on the outside. In itself it is already a positive result (in today's situation).

2. The U.S.I. Congress undertook an intense and concrete debate which involved sections, Local Unions and individual members.

This debate is clear testimony to the determination to collectively build a strategy of analysis and activity capable of standing up to the million and one problems that the struggle and the changed social, economic and union realities of today confront us with. These questions were tackled during the four working days of the Congress and in the final resolutions (which are the synthesis of work that been underway uninterrupted for several years).

3. The U.S.I. emerges from the Congress fully formed, with a REVOLUTIONARY SYNDICALIST and SELF-MANAGEMENT line which puts forward our organization as the only real class alternative on this terrain in Italy today. Our union (today small) has the potential to nurture a focus for working class opposition with federalist and assemblyist characteristics.

The road ahead is a long one and the obstacles to be overcome are many, but the basis on which to advance exists and is growing stronger: The Italian Syndicalist Union and the International Workers Association (of which the U.S.I. is a part) have embarked on this road, in the knowledge that other than the rekindling of a class movement capable of lighting new ways, there exist no alternatives for the defence of proletarian interests and emancipation from exploitation.

U.S.I. National Secretariat

notes

- (1) scala mobile - index-linking of wages to rising cost of living. Already unsatisfactory, it is being further emasculated by the official unions and government.
- (2) an agreement reached on 22.I.83 between the reformist unions and the government to anchor labour costs to the projected inflation rate. But a higher than projected inflation rate has resulted in a cut in real wages.

THE FRENCH C.N.T. AT THE U.S.I. CONGRESS

During the last Congress of the French C.N.T. it emerged that the C.N.T. has for too long developed syndicalist theory at the expense of practice.

Today the C.N.T. orientates towards a praxis in accordance with the methods of union struggle, refuting overly intransigent ideological positions. A few basic principles are sufficient to define revolutionary syndicalism: the sovereign general assembly, delegates controlled by the union, direct action and federalism.

To develop ideology at the expense of practice means depriving ourselves of numerous effective forms of union struggle.

The revolutionary syndicate must be able to use both methods of struggle authorized by the system and those outside the system, both legal means and otherwise.

The C.N.T. is a union and not a specific organization.

As a union it already accepts a compromise with the existing socio-economic system.

At its Paris Congress last May the C.N.T. pronounced itself for the tactical use of the factory or work place union section, and of delegates and union representatives within the Works Committees, because these can be submitted to union control.

The C.N.T. pronounced itself for the boycotting of the Works Committee elections, against the exploitation of workers in insecure employment and for a campaign aimed at apprentice workers.

The French C.N.T. has experienced a growth period these last two or three years. It is multiplying its union sections: Post and telecommunications in Paris, Transport in Arles, Seamen and fishermen in Sète, Health, metal industry and entertainments in Bordeaux. It is growing also due to the discrediting of the left-wing unions paralyzed by their submission to the government.

But above all the C.N.T. is reaping the fruits of patient and persevering union work. Two examples illustrate this well: in Bordeaux the activity of the comrades unleashed a flood, with the outbreak of many struggles in different sectors. The struggles ended to our advantage and a hospital porters branch previously affiliated to the C.G.T. (I) joined the C.N.T.

In Sète, seamen and fishermen disillusioned in the C.G.T. have created a union which is now the only fishermen's union in Sète. This situation might spread to other ports on the French Mediterranean.

The C.N.T. is growing in a workers' milieu which is ignorant of or badly versed in libertarian ideas.

Ideological commitment was preceded by union commitment. Now the majority of the C.N.T.'s new members are assimilating libertarian ideas in the course of day-to-day struggles.

We are obliged to take note of this new circumstance for revolutionary syndicalism. Its growth is dependant on these conditions.

Jean-Louis Bosce

(French C.N.T. delegate U.S.I. Congress)

note

(I) C.G.T. - Left reformist union confederation. Communist Party led.

The C.N.T.-F is the French section of the International Workers Association.

INTRODUCTORY REPORT

National Congress of Reactivation

Ancona, 8,9,10,11 December 1983

Speech of outgoing National Secretary

Comrade workers.

I think it indispensable, in opening this Congress and in order to clarify the particular essence of our Organization, to give a brief historical outline which frames the USI and shows its difference from today's numerous union formations: the reformist unions of the triple confederation; the corporate so-called autonomous unions born of the inevitable backlash against thirty years imposition of political hegemony in the union field, of blindness to the fundamental lessons of revolutionary and class unionism, of errors of judgement and arbitrary decisions that should lie with the workers themselves. Obviously I shall try to do this in a limited and concise way.

What was the Italian Syndicalist Union?

The historical origins and roots of the USI are tied up with the birth of the organized Workers' Movement and with the evolution of the class struggle, continuing in the original federalist and libertarian steps of the Ist workers' International of 1864.

The Revolutionary Syndicalism of our Union was forged in the dramatic workers' and peasants' struggles of the start of the century, opposing itself decisively to the unionism of the then C.G.L. (I), which was founded in 1906 and was already considered reformist, characterized then as it still is by continuous compromises not in the real interests of the working class and which leaned to the electoral and class collaborationist politics of the political parties - the leaderships of which directed and still direct the reformist union as a transmission belt.

Revolutionary Syndicalism was instead from its beginning a genuine expression of the struggles and self-organization of the working class - federalist and assemblyist, without hierarchy and bureaucracy in the direct dealings between workers and bosses. Against the power of the bosses which imposed and still imposes their hegemony, there was opposed and there must be opposed once again the power of the workers united by alike interests and by the same cause of social justice.

Many unions and leagues left the C.G.L., becoming autonomous and giving to the big 1908 strike a revolutionary syndicalist character. After having given rise to a "Direct Action" organizational committee, these free syndicates met in Modena in November 1912 and finally constituted the Italian Syndicalist Union with about 100,000 members.

In 1914 the USI took an active part in popular uprising of "Red Week" closely tied to the rail workers' union and those camere del lavoro (2) like that in Ancona in which, though belonging to no confederation, the libertarian and revolutionary element predominated.

The C.G.L. did its best to abort the general strike which had spread across the country, and thus favoured the boss class and government reaction which followed. At the outbreak of the war, in 1914 and before Italy's entry, the USI conducted a tenacious antimilitarist and internationalist struggle, expelling from its midst by an overwhelming majority the interventionist fringe led by the Secretary De Ambris, whose intention was to put the USI on the interventionist terrain onto which the republicans and most of the socialists had descended. The USI remained solid in its antimilitarist stance and the Secretariat was moved from Parma to Bologna and was entrusted to Armando Borghi.

Up to 1918 the USI was outlawed because of its internationalism which led it to oppose the massacre of workers wanted by governments and bosses in the First World War.

It remained clandestine and organized workers' resistance even in these difficult years. Many militants were persecuted and imprisoned.

After the war the USI's working class strength rapidly grew. The 1919 Congress in Parma gathered the delegates of over 300,000 members and discussed the necessity of supporting the creation of those structures, such as factory councils, which make easier initiatives of a revolutionary and class character. -But the Congress also warned the workers against any reformist deviation of these structures.

The 1919 Congress ended with an immense demonstration at which Giuseppe Di Vittorio and Armando Borghi were official orators.

In the following two years the USI grew to a membership of 500,000, and it was in the forefront of struggles against the rising cost of living, in the defence of the councilist praxis and in the occupation of the factories.

On the occasion of the latter also the leaders of the C.G.L. (I), faced with the extent of the agitation and its revolutionary and self-managed content, did their utmost to bring it to a halt and to channel every success towards reformist ends. It was an error for which the whole Italian people would pay dearly. Fear of the possible revolution led the monarchy and the bosses to finance the latent reactionary forces, which under the benevolent eyes of so-called politicians of law and order were organized into repressive squads and into the fascism that would give Italy institutionalized violence, prison, exile and war.

The USI refused to affiliate to the International of reformist trade unions, just as it refused to affiliate to the so-called "red" trade union International controlled by the Soviet Union. This authentic autonomy was relayed to Lenin himself by Armando Borghi when he was summoned to Moscow.

In 1922, in Berlin, the USI and the other free and revolutionary unions of the world founded the A.I.T. - the International Workers' Association - of which it is still a part today as the Italian Section.

During the period of ever present fascist violence, the USI fought hard at the side of the workers in defence of the rights of associative life. It had its halls burnt down and destroyed by the combined attacks of fascists and monarchist police and military forces which took the Italian people back to the massacres of 1898 in the Lunigiana, Milan, Sicily. Its best militants were arrested, shot or forced into exile. Some camere del lavoro (2) resisted for a long time, as at Piombino, Genova etc. Armed workers repulsed the fascists in more than one attack and inflicted heavy losses; but in the end even these bastions of the proletariat were crushed by the violence now become State, legality, system.

In 1925 the USI held its last meeting on Italian soil in Genova, which recognised the impossibility of continuing to exist in Italy as an organized working class force, but it went on working amongst the exiles for a few years. Its militants would be present in all the battles for liberty: from 1936 to 1939 they would be in Spain amongst the antifascist volunteers fighting at the side of the sister Spanish CNT (also belonging to the AIT), and finally they would be present in the partisan resistance in Italy from '43 to '45.

In 1945 the parties that formed the Government of National Unity created in practice a "unitary union", whose existence was legitimized in the Constitution itself in articles 30 and 40. Such a unity was immediately considered aleatory and without prospects by the syndicalists of the USI (many of whom were returning from exile with extreme difficulty), since it wasn't the result of an analysis arising from debate amongst those concerned, the workers, but from tacit agreements between the leadership of the political forces then together in government: the P.C.I. (Italian Communist Party), P.S.I. (Italian Socialist Party) and D.C. (Christian Democrats). Infact the political break up amongst these parties was immediately followed by union break up. Despite this, since an obviously reactionary manoeuvre was being hatched, the syndicalists of the USI at a libertarian congress in Livorno in 1949 accepted the proposal to delay reactivating the revolutionary union. There was still a tenuous hope that

the Workers' Movement, stiffened by the struggles ahead and the syndicalists' own qualified presence in the majoritarian organization (the C.G.I.L.) as well as its own experience of the times, would rediscover its class spirit. It was therefore thought that it would be damaging to add another destabilizing element to a situation where there could still be clarification and a change to give the union its real strength.

With the end of this sham unity various unions controlled by the political parties formed: the C.G.I.L. (3), the C.I.S.L. (4), the U.I.L. (5), and later the corporate fascist union, the C.I.S.N.A.L.; and there began the era of strikes and related organized scabbing. The struggle for the conquest of political power amongst the parties was automatically transferred to the workers, with the inevitable results: abandonment of class issues, and sectional struggles which benefit the stronger sectors at the expense of the weaker. The bosses' concept of "merit" was established in place of rights and, with the advent of the system's inevitable economic crisis, there took place the corporate sectionalization of the entire Workers' Movement, which today more than ever is searching for its true identity.

A handful of old USI militants, for the most part Ligurians and Tuscans, made an attempt to reactivate the Organization... But in the fifties and sixties its success was limited to one or two areas, owing to the difficulty (which still exists today) of getting an understanding for a greater aggregation with all libertarian forces. Meanwhile the need for a real force to oppose to the confederal and corporate unionism which was slowly developing under the patronage of the boss class and which seeks to divide the workers was becoming more and more evident. Despite these difficulties the comrades actively participated in the struggles for the reduction of working hours, in defence of health and safety in the factories, and against the intensive exploitation of labour through the bosses' demands for overtime while unemployment was rising, in Genova, Carrara, Piombino.

In 1969, in the course of the struggles begun with the "hot autumn", the USI reappeared in the north of Italy in the rank and file committees which were being formed at A.T.M. in Milan and at Ansaldo in Genova. A few issues of our Organization's organ 'Lotta di Classe' were published.

After this there followed some years of reflection, but the need to propose the rebuilding and development of a class movement by way of a self-managed and self-management organizational structure has led workers of various political extraction to work for the USI's reactivation since 1977.

International Revolutionary

Syndicalism, represented by the AIT and of which the USI is a part once more, wishes to be a point of reference against the boss class, not only theoretical but of real resistance and working class solidarity for all the working class... so it may attain the indispensable unity to be able to concretely oppose the project in progress for its total ruin.

The outgoing Secretary

-Carlo Bianchi-

notes

- (1) C.G.L. - Confederazione Generale del Lavoro (General Confederation of Labour).
- (2) Camera del Lavoro - sort of revolutionary Trades Council, similar to Bourse du Travail of the early French workers' movement.
- (3) C.G.I.L. - Communist Party led union confederation.
- (4) C.I.S.L. - controlled by the Christian Democrats.
- (5) U.I.L. - controlled by the Republicans and Social Democrats.

POINT 2

GENERAL SITUATION IN ITALY

The present restructuring of Capital arises out of its need to re-establish its control over the workers and society in general, which was lessened after the struggles of '68.

This restoration of power is today being effected through the introduction of new technology, such as the use of computerization, robots etc., which allows Capital to do without the labour of many workers in the productive cycle. This permits increased profits and the translation of salaries into investment.

All this also allows Capital to reduce the power of the working class in the productive system. Parallel to this small and medium sized firms are being swallowed up, so as to put production under the command of a few large, multinational companies.

This has taken place in Italy and is taking place through the hard line taken by the big employers on the cost of labour and in particular on the scala mobile and contractual negotiations in general (I). This has led to confrontation with the workers and a great loss of working hours which, while it suited the big companies in the process of restructuring, nevertheless damaged the productivity of those small and medium firms which must safeguard their markets. Also, the policy of high interest rates which transfers profits to the property financiers of the multinationals, while it penalises the small and medium firms who can only procure finance in the market at high costs, favours the accumulation of capital by the multinationals.

The need to restructure is also being satisfied through decentralization of production, whether motivated by economic reasons or the necessity of eliminating antagonism in the big enterprises. Under economic pretexts, with decentralization of production the big companies get: reduction of the cost of

social services (crèches, canteens, health and safety standards etc.) and a reduction of unit product costs; putting them in a strong position in labour contract negotiations.

Another aspect of the restructuring is that it is in part financed by the State, with the aim of lessening the risk of large scale revolt which would be provoked by a possible massive immediate growth in unemployment. This is done through the fiscalization of social taxation (exemption of the companies from social contributions to the State), through the C.I.G. (Cassa Integrazione Guadagni) (2), and through large scale financing with easy term loans below the inflation rate, as well as with the creation of special funds such as that for technological innovations.

With the disorientation of the working class, which is the technological result of this restructuring, Capital attains its main objective, which is to restore its own power in society and control of the production of goods and services.

Unemployment, the black economy; the division between workers employed in stable sectors and workers employed in sectors in the process of ~~restructuring~~ dismantlement; the economic recognition of the "profession" status of a whole strata of workers (and executives and technicians) in productive and tertiary sectors restructured by means of computerization and automation; all are elements which mean we can no longer talk of a homogenous working class which is identified by a proletarian condition. The possibility of augmenting their income (with two jobs, overtime, C.I.G. and work on the side etc.), enables many workers to enter into the mechanism of capital accumulation (the second car or home, shares etc.), and this favours the penetration of bourgeois values into social strata that aren't bourgeois and which we define as an intermediary class.

The breadth and fluidity of this new class, no longer worker and not yet bourgeois, requires that we address ourselves to it,--as long as it can choose whether to ally itself or

oppose itself to the working class in the construction of a qualitatively better society without exploitation. However there still exist today a large number of workers who owing to the inadequacy of their economic position and because of social emargination are potentially carriers of radical social transformation.

This social component is our most important point of reference. It is still found in the factories, where it manages to survive immune from phenomena of corporatism or higher earnings (two jobs, bonuses, unbridled overtime working etc.), but it's also identifiable in the emerging unemployment, in home and part-time working, in child and old age labour, as well as in the spread of the black economy.

All this constitutes the outlines of the new social misery, destined to progressively worsen alongside the crisis of the welfare State. Since however the State sees social peace guaranteed just the same because these ranks of workers don't possess real bargaining power, it is the task of our Organization to strengthen and unify this body of workers through its coordination structures.

MOTION ON EMIGRATION

Beside the phenomenon of rapid transformation in the composition of the working class, we are also witnessing, in our country, the return of a good percentage of workers who had emigrated abroad.

These workers are often condemned to this condition of seasonal or long-term migrant labour because they lack professional qualifications or due to the impossibility of installing themselves in stable occupations which, due to the circumstances of certain Italian regions, still hardly exist there.

The return of these workers, provoked by the economic stagnation raging ~~Europe~~ in European countries, introduces another element of tension into the Italian labour market by adding to the ranks of workers destined for casual, underpaid work, with forms of super-exploitation which shape and condition the development of social life.

Along with this another major problem is caused by the immigration (for most part clandestine) of ~~unqualified~~ unskilled workers from Third World countries. These are destined for lowly jobs that are conditioned by the immigrants' illegal status and they're thus subject to the constant threat of the sack or wage cuts.

No union confederation has taken up the cause of these ranks of unprotected workers with the elaboration of a strategy aimed at them, while the political parties have rushed to cash in on the natural grievances by offering various forms of assistance within the realms of the welfare State, thus adding another element of social deterioration.

The USI intends to organize and defend these workers and their interests, by building internationalist working class solidarity with the workers of all nationalities and with the A.I.T., against the multinationals' policies of super-exploitation.

notes

- (1) see notes at the bottom of page 2.
- (2) Cassa Integrazione Guadagni - literally means Earnings Integration Fund. Under this a worker can be laid off temporarily (as suits the company's needs) and is paid a percentage of his or her normal wages.

POINT 3

THE MAIN SECTORS IN

THE U.S.I.'S INTERVENTION

Along with the decisions taken by the USI's reactivation Congress regarding the USI's intervention in the various spheres of production, it was noted that in the current economic crisis agriculture is assuming the function of a safety valve, given the tendency of emigration from the country to return to its place of origin. (1)

For this reason intervention in the agricultural sector is notably difficult, especially for a Revolutionary Syndicalist organization, given that the traditional unionisable figure - that is the agricultural worker - is tending to disappear or as in the South remain in the form of a seasonal worker, while the possibilities of linking up those who work their own land (small holders, tenant farmers etc.) are few.

In the co-operative sector of agricultural production there are major possibilities for the organization of the dependants of these structures (which are on the increase); through the opening up of a debate that attempts to recuperate the value of the self-managed co-operative as a form of collective work that respects the ability and needs of each member.

In the face of the productive restructuring which industry is conducting, consolidating political choices anchored to traditional models of consumption, it is necessary to carefully weigh the phenomena and tensions induced in the world of work by the adoption of new technology and by the birth of new needs. Industry is the sector hardest hit by the restructuring which is still in an initial phase and therefore the labour made redundant will continue to increase. Under this process the old industries are being dismantled and transferred to the "third world", according to the logic of an international division of labour that assigns the industrialized countries the most technologically advanced and strategically important industries that require large investment and little labour. More specifically the attack in this sector manifests itself in: a rigidity on labour contracts, with which the boss class wants to take back control of production and the labour force; ~~an~~ attack ~~on~~ the wage indexation machinery (2); increase work levels and productivity; establish job mobility as an organizational method; use overtime and the Cassa Integrazione (3) as a way of using up stock and capacity without saddling themselves with labour costs; divide the working class by linking professional status to salaries; indiscriminately punish absenteeism and reduce stoppages through a savage recuperation of productivity at the expense of already poor conditions in the factories.

The USI's activity must express itself in the denunciation of the culture of the crisis. Making it clear that this is provoked by the multinational boss class, supported by States, in order to re-establish its power and social control over the workers. Indicating the responsibility that the political parties must bear for this through having in the class war acted in defence of the institutions rather than the immediate and historical interests of the workers.

As regards the productive artisans, these have been relegated to lowly position on the margins of subsistence; this pressure has led to the emargination of some artisans whose enterprises and income have contracted and has pushed them into an increasingly proletarianized condition in a state of potential alliance with the wage workers. Thus the formation of artisan councils to oppose to the subordination to government commissions is the way to get union coupling with this important productive sector whose time appears to be marked by capitalist development. Given this general tendency which gives rise to unfavourable conditions, it is difficult to work for a class union because of the small scale and dispersion of the enterprises.

As to the public services, even though the Italian State (like other principal European countries) allocates 50% of the Gross National Product to services, and this quota is going to increase in the course of years, we can certainly say that the benefit acquiring to the users doesn't correspond to this level of spending, while other services, because they are socially useless, serve only the functioning of the present social system.

Even in the service industries the restructuring tendencies already operating in other industrial sectors are manifesting themselves, owing to the increasing demand for the use of social services from the users.

The capitalist State responds to the increasing need with demanning, de-skilling, mobility, new work practices and increased individual exploitation, and lastly wage freezes.

The USI instead holds that there exist the objective conditions to dedicate the maximum importance to this

sector which can be a rich arena for experimentation with revolutionary practice, be it in the use of new forms of struggle or in the self-management ~~of~~ of the services by the workers and users, let alone in the employment prospect that this sector can offer.

notes

- (1) As well as the massive emigration of Italians overseas in search of work, there has been emigration inside Italy of Southerners to the richer North and of peasants to the big cities.
- (2) i.e. the Scala Mobile.
- (3) see note 2 on page 8.

POINT 4

UNION ACTIVITY

AND LABOUR CONTRACTS

The Cost of Labour accord of the 22.I.83 which will in the near future be put forward for ratification, represented an opportunist regression in the action of the reformist unions. These allowed themselves to be blinded by the boss class's pretext of anchoring the cost of labour to the projected inflation level, thereby accepting reductions in real wage levels in exchange for a recognition of political influence. This course in fact involves a progressive lessening of workers' buying power, since the real inflation level is running much higher than predicted.

The method for realising this concession was centralization at the highest hierarchical levels of the reformist unions of labour contract negotiations, in this way taking away from the union rank and file let alone individual sector unions any real say.

Thus the historical aims for which the workers have always fought the bosses's government were ditched: reduction of working hours without loss of pay, reduction of production speeds (which have instead increased), health and safety standards, control on investment, the struggle against redundancies and against job mobility.

For these and other reasons the USI sees that the methods of struggle of union tradition like the strike, self-reduction of hours and speeds, are in large part unusable and have lost their efficacy in work place conflicts, not least because of the introduction of new techniques into the production processes which have robbed the worker of the knowledge of the entire productive cycle.

Given that a return to superceded work practices is improbable, the USI believes a great bringing up to date effort is necessary, for a reappropriation of worker consciousness and for the re-discovery of forms of struggle intentionally abandoned by reformist unionism such as: the rigid application of rules and practices, slow down of production speeds where this is still possible, non-programmed assemblies with the impromptu suspension of production of goods or services, as well as the use of various forms of civil disobedience. This with the aim of hammering home through workers struggles the necessity of welding together production and service workers and the great mass of unemployed and under-employed.

In this vein the USI demands the rebuilding of the grass roots work place structures (factory councils, shop and department delegates) which form and work autonomously, with their own union and legal recognition, and are thus independent of the company union structures.

The USI presents itself therefore as a union organization which identifies its own activity in the demands advanced by work place grass roots structures which aren't manipulated by the existing unions. It doesn't oppose its own union organization to the combative anti-capitalist action which the workers' movement expresses. In this way it wishes to build a strategy of intervention that must be the common property of the entire working class, of which the USI considers itself an integral part.

The USI having chosen the path of an intervention tied to the rejection of "professional unionism" and being an organized expression of workers

puts itself forward as the re-organizational nucleus of the UNION OF THE WORKERS as opposed to the UNION FOR THE WORKERS: a fighting structure as opposed to a service structure.

Along with its own organizational and strategic policy decisions, the USI believes it must pursue its activities in accordance with the following objectives:

1. reduction of working hours without loss of pay (35 hour week), with the aim of both improving the quality of workers' life and creating new jobs.

2. the taking back of the right of negotiation on the compensative wage increases today automatically regulated by laws and ordinances. This with the aim of handing back to the workers the capacity to negotiate the recuperation of said compensations to levels judged to be equal to the real inflation level.

3. rejection of the vicious inter-work place mobility imposed by the needs of the retrenchment, whether it be in the factories or in the services. This is functional to the new capitalist organization of work and is contrary to the interests of the class. It should only be acceptable where voluntary and asked for by the worker.

4. safeguarding of health and safety standards in the work place and a fight against health hazards in the factories and environment. To be realized by the elimination of risk factors and the replanning of sites. The reduction of working hours in dangerous work and the consequent increase in the labour force. Large monetary compensation where the risk factors remain unavoidable and the establishment of contacts with health and scientific establishments which together with workers must analyse the causes of health hazards and the characteristics of the materials used in the productive process.

5. firm and decisive rejection of the use of the C.I.G. (Cassa Integrazione Guadagni), now seen as a prelude to redundancies, the costs of which have been shifted from the employers to the INPS and are thus paid for by workers' contributions. (I)

6. riappropriation of full contract negotiating rights by the national sector unions, the function of which will be to obtain improvements in wages and conditions whose entity will be the minimum basis on which to undertake integrated work place agreements: the function of the latter is to better conditions both according to the needs of a particular productive unit and as the pilot contract for a national contract.

The USI opposes itself to the present prevalent tendency to ~~seek~~ seek compatibility between occupational levels and the market forces through ~~XXXX~~ ~~XXXXXX~~ "participation", that is the coinvolvement of workers (faced with policies of private and State capitalism) in the production of goods and services, with the involvement of the reformist union at higher management levels. The USI instead reaffirms the validity of the "self-management of work and the product of ones labour" choice, and it resolves to ally itself to all initiatives that arise and work in this direction with a conception of production in relation to its real social value.

note

(I) INPS - Istituzione Nazionale Provvidenza Sociale- the Italian DHSS equivalent.

POINT 5

STRUCTURES & ORGANS OF THE U.S.I.

The Italian Syndicalist Union is structured through Sector Syndicates and Local Unions which are co-ordinated on a local, provincial, regional and national level.

The initial work place structure is the USI WORK PLACE SECTION. Several work place sections, nuclei and single comrades in the same sector (i.e. industry) linking up amongst themselves form SECTOR COORDINATIONS which, having attained a certain consistency become SECTOR SYNDICATES.

Coordinations and Syndicates have their own national executive body (the secretariat of the Coordination or Sector Syndicate).

On a local level work place sections, nuclei, individuals, neighbourhood associations, rank and file committees etc. existing in one locality form a LOCAL UNION, and these federated amongst themselves constitute a REGIONAL FEDERATION.

GENERAL CONGRESS OF THE UNION

The General Congress of the USI is biennial or can be called extraordinarily in cases of extreme necessity.

The General Congress can modify the Statutes; elect the National Secretariat, national General Secretary and Executive Committee; express the general strategy of the Organization in relation to the times; fix general, common objectives upon which to act.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The Executive Committee requires within it: a National Funds secretary, an international relations secretary, a press secretary (responsible for editing the national organ of the USI), and an organizer. The members of the Executive Committee are elected from one Local Union, except the press and international relations secretaries.

The duties of the Executive Committee are: to maintain contacts with the Local Unions; print the National Internal Bulletin of the USI and distribute it to all the Local Unions; look after the administrative book-keeping; handle contacts with the AIT and the other sections of the International.

The Executive Committee participates in the editorship of the paper 'Lotta di Classe', through the press secretary along with the National Secretary.

The Executive Committee calls the Delegate Committee.

GENERAL SECRETARIAT

The General Secretary's duties are limited to representing the Organization's unity and on the occasion of Congresses.

The Secretary may send out circulars as he sees necessary to members: The Secretary is the responsible director of 'Lotta di Classe' and together with the Executive Committee sees to the Union's internal and external coordination.

DELEGATE COMMITTEE

The Delegate Committee is a structure composed of delegates from all the Local Unions and the existing sectors (as well as representatives of the Executive Committee and the Secretariat).

The Delegate Committee can be convoked for aspects of the Union's life which require the widest possible consultation of the local and sector structures.

The Delegate Committee can also be convoked for extraordinary matters, and in cases of danger or threats to the Union itself.

The Delegate Committee is a consultation structure and may only deliberate on matters which require urgent or immediate action, on matters external to the Union which endanger the existence of the Union and the right of association. The deliberations must later be ratified by the local bodies. The Delegate Committee is called on the request of the majority of the Executive Committee and the Secretariat or on the request of one third of the Union's membership.

POINT 6

PRESS AND PROPAGANDA

'Lotta di Classe' is confirmed as the USI's national organ.

The paper is the property of the USI and thus legally of its Secretary who in his capacity is also its Director, with at his or her side a Vice Director in accordance with the press law.

The paper is defined as the Union's instrument of communication and struggle, open to debate.

Being the organ of the USI the paper (through its editors) must reflect the decisions, debate and the consequent congressional strategic and tactical choices of the USI.

In this the editors are directly responsible to Congress. It follows that the editors can exercise their discretion in the choice of material to be published. Priority should be given to articles that reflect the Union's revolutionary syndicalist line, matters of general and immediate interest, the activities of the Union's sectors, sections and members. But space (even a fixed column) should be given to matters which are not strictly tied to demands and not exclusively tied to the world of work, but which are useful for the growth of comprehensive debate, of the struggle against exploitation and of the Organization itself.

Layout and the articles themselves (heavy and light) must be adapted to make the paper and the articles easier to understand and of wider currency.

Broadly, the following organization of the paper is accepted:

- space for the sectors and sections and the Organization's activities;
- international relations, contacts and news;
- space and fixed columns open to the outside on union, social and environmental themes;
- debate, union and class history.

The USI Congress notes the financial and political difficulties that have plagued the two previous editorial collectives of 'Lotta di Classe' and which today create problems for the strengthening of the paper and thus proposes this temporary solution:

-An Editorial Collective is formed, the comrade chosen on the USI's national executive structure to deal with the press being responsible to Congress.

The Editorial Collective will for the moment produce a few issues without a specified regularity (the first of which will be dedicated to the mot-

ions and decisions of the USI's Ist Congress) which will come out experimentally and when the Organization has need of them.

The Editorial Collective will in the meantime see to the setting up of a group of comrades to deal with the economic basis of the future periodical relaunch of the paper. It will see to internal and external collaboration and finally it will develop contacts with the USI local structures which, with the development of local instruments of propaganda, will be the basis for the formation of future LOCAL EDITORIAL OFFICES OF 'LOTTA DI CLASSE'. These will guarantee input into the paper, so that when regular publication is recommenced it is really felt by all comrades to be the COLLECTIVE PATRIMONY OF THE WHOLE UNION.

On the matter of the relaunching of the paper the Congress approves the proposal to give a mandate to the Editorial Collective of 'Lotta di Classe' to invite all members to contribute to the appearance of the paper with a precise financial undertaking, the quantity of which members will decide themselves. This invitation can also be made to well-disposed comrades of the libertarian movement.

Specific resolutions and meetings

Specific meetings can be called, according to the needs of the Organization or single sectors, on matters that reflect themes of debate within the organization and which can lead to a collective qualitative growth of the Organization and its sectors.

POINT 7

DUES

The USI decides that the cost of national dues is 15.000 lira, which is divided thus: 10.000 lira to National Funds and 5.000 to the Local Union. The 15.000 lira of isolated comrades who cannot be in contact with any Local Union go totally to National Funds.

Work place and sector structures see to their own finances.

(note: 2.500 lira = about £1.00)

POINT 8

STATUTES OF THE USI

The Congress of the U.S.I. (Ancona, December '83 reaffirms the basic validity of the 1950 Statutes and of the 1950 "Principles of the USI" (modified after suggestions ratified by the USI National Congress of 1956 in Bologna), with a few modifications relative to Article I and Article 18 of the Statutes and (following the decisions of the 1983 Congress on the structures and organs of the USI) Articles 5,6,7,8,9, 10,11,12,13,14, and 15 of the Statutes and Points 2,12,14,15 and 16 of the "Principles of the USI" are modified.

The new Statutes and Principles of the Union are as follows:

STATUTES

Art. 1 - The Italian Syndicalist Union, suppressed in 1922 and refounded in 1950, is reactivated by the National Congress of Ancona (December 1983) in defence of the class interests of the Italian proletariat.

The USI belonging to the historical and contemporary tradition of REVOLUTIONARY SYNDICALISM, proposes itself as the class alternative and mass organization of all the exploited and proletarians (waged, pensioners, lumpens and unemployed) of both sexes and every nationality resident in Italy.

The internal union structure of the USI is based on ASSEMBLYISM and on SELF-MANAGEMENT, both as an internal praxis and in the struggles which the Union undertakes, as well as the basis for the society which it intends to build. A society based on the complete emancipation of the workers and on the elimination of all forms of exploitation and oppression of man by man.

Art. 2 - The organic structure and the functioning of the USI is based on the libertarian, federalist system, contrary to all bureaucratic and corporate centralization.

Art. 3 - The union activity which the USI embodies and champions is the class war; each time the necessity pre-

sents itself, in the face of social and economic problems with which the destiny of our class is intertwined, the USI assumes full responsibility for union activity approved by a free assembly of members.

Art. 4 - No member can seek to introduce into the unions of the USI the party politics he or she professes or to enslave them to a masters' or religious caste. Any member who stands as a political candidate or for political office automatically ceases to belong to the USI.

Art. 5 - The USI is composed of leagues, sector Coordinations and Syndicates, Local Unions, Provincial and Regional Federations which accept these Statutes, and whose activities will be carried out by their own members freely elected by Assembly.

Art. 6 - Local Unions are the area structures of the USI composed of work place sections, nuclei, individuals, neighbourhood organizations, rank and file committees etc. existing in a certain locality.

Several Local Unions federated amongst themselves constitute Regional Federations of the USI.

These local and regional structures nominate a secretariat to carry out various duties dictated by associative organization.

Art. 7 - The COORDINATIONS and NATIONAL SECTOR SYNDICATES are composed of all the categories of production and exchange. Each ~~network~~ COORDINATION and NATIONAL SYNDICATE is autonomous in its functioning:

- a. it sees to specific and detailed propaganda amongst the workers;
- b. generally encourages the growth of movements in its patch which have a national character and assists those of a local character.

A Sector Coordination is composed of several union sections, nuclei and individual comrades of a certain sector linked amongst themselves.

Having attained a certain strength the Coordination becomes a National Sector Syndicate. Coordinations and Syndicates have their own executive bodies (sector secretariat) and nominate a delegate to the USI Delegate Committee.

Art. 8 - The deliberational structures of the USI are: The CONGRESS and, in exceptional cases, the DELEGATE COMMITTEE. The latter can only deliberate on matters that require urgent or immediate action, on external matters which endanger the existence of the Union and the right of association. Such decisions must then be ratified by the local structures.

The General Congress is called on a biennial basis, or extraordinarily in cases of extreme necessity.

Time and place of the Congress are fixed after consultation by the Delegate Committee, at least three months before the date of the Congress. The Secretariat and the Executive Committee are obliged to relay reports and the balance to the member sections at least 30 days prior to Congress.

Art. 9 - Congress is empowered to: a. review, modify or renew the Statutes of the USI when it necessary; b. express the Organization's general strategy in relation to the moment; c. fix the common, general objectives for which to aim; d. elect the national General Secretariat and the members of the Executive Committee.

Art. 10 - The DELEGATE COMMITTEE is a structure composed of delegates from all the Local Unions and existing sectors, as well as representatives of the Executive Committee and Secretariat. The Delegate Committee is a consultative structure and may only deliberate in the cases and according to the conditions set out in Art. 8 of these Statutes.

Art. 11 - The Delegate Committee is called on matters of the life of the Union which require the broadest possible consultation of the local and sector structures and in the case of danger to or repression of the Union.

The Delegate Committee is convoked upon the request of the majority of the Executive Committee and the Secretariat or upon the request of a third of the USI's membership.

Art. 12 - The Executive Organ of the USI is the EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, composed of members elected by Congress who basically reside in the same area. The duties of the Executive Committee are to: a. maintain contact with the Local Unions; b. print the ~~xxxxxxx~~ ~~xxx~~ National Internal Bulletin and di-

tribute it to all the Local Unions; c. to look after the administration; d. handle relations with the AIT and with the sections of the International; e. participate (through the member responsible for the press) in the editorship of the USI's national organ; f. convoke the Delegate Committee.

Art. 13 - The Executive Committee requires inside it members responsible for: a. national funds; b. international relations; c. the press; d. organization; e. the production and distribution of the Internal Bulletin.

Art. 14 - The Secretariat is composed of a National General Secretary elected by Congress.

Art. 15 - The General Secretary of the USI has duties solely with regard to representation of the Organization's unity and on the occasion of Congresses. The Secretary can send circulars to members, he is the director of Union's national paper, and together with the Executive Committee sees to the internal and external coordination of the Union.

Art. 16 - The form of dues and union contributions are decided by Congress.

Art. 17 - In order to develop the USI the organizations and members are to support as much as possible the official organ ('Lotta di Classe').

Art. 18 - All positions in the USI are designated by free assemblies of members.

PRINCIPLES OF THE U.S.I.

(First part)

1. The U.S.I., belonging to the A.I.T. (International Workers Association), is constituted.

2. The USI is a national organization of all the wage-earners, pensioners, exploited and unemployed of both sexes and all nationalities resident in Italy, who set themselves the aim of attaining by their own efforts the emancipation of humanity and liberation from economic, political and moral domination.

3. The USI's aim is the substitution of the present authoritarian, capitalist society by the federalist and rational organization of production and distribution; human solidarity in place on strife amongst humans.

4. While it strives for the socialization of the means of production and exchange, abolition of the State and dogmas, -the USI endeavours to realise for the workers all those immediate material and moral improvements (such as shortening of working hours, increased buying power, respect and good conditions at work etc.) which its own strength in time and place permits.

5. The USI is autonomous. It isn't subject to the control of any political party or specific, philosophical, religious etc. movement, and it refuses to follow anybody in non-agreed actions; it rejects any permanent political alliance.

It pledges itself only to limited and well-defined alliances; therefore any member who stands as a political candidate or for public office automatically ceases to belong to the USI.

6. The USI combats the wages hierarchy as a factor of disunity amongst the workers; it doesn't recognise the value scale because besides being an artificial creation, this can only exist in a society based on the antagonism of interests.

7. The organic structure and the functioning of the USI are of the federalist type; contrary to every bureaucratic and corporatist centralism.

8. In the case of an influx of heterogeneous elements giving rise to a majority vote with a deviationary scope from the original character of the USI, the latter is automatically disbanded and it is agreed reconstituted separately in accordance with the principles and spirit of these Statutes and with exclusive right to all the social capital.

9. If a local or sector section should dissolve, its social capital is transferred to the USI, and should the USI dissolve, its social capital is transferred to the AIT.

10. These Statutes may only be modified by National Congress, and only as long as this doesn't represent a departure from the spirit of the USI's principles.

(Second part)

II. Those entrusted with the organizational offices for the functioning of the USI, freely elected by the members, carry out their mandate by executing assembly decisions.

12. The offices of the USI (section, sector, local, provincial, regional, national) are executive; while the section, sector, local and regional assemblies are sovereign.

At a national level the National Congress (and in the cases stipulated in these Statutes the Delegate Committee) is sovereign.

13. All commissions and delegates are executive organs of the assembly which nominates them and carry out only those duties for which they are mandated.

14. The members of the Executive Committee are elected directly by the members through the Congress, and the members may replace them any time they see necessary.

15. The Executive Committee participates in the editorship of the USI national paper (through the member responsible for the press).

16. The USI's National Congress, which takes place every two years, is organized by the Executive Committee in an executive function of the deliberations of local, section and sector assemblies.

17. The National Congress can also be convened extraordinarily any time upon demand by the majority of the members, and in accordance with the arrangements of point 16.

18. The USI draws its finances from membership dues.

19. The USI's social capital serves exclusively for union activity.

POINT 9

ELECTION OF THE OFFICES OF THE USI

We summerise below the motion on Point 9 of the Agenda. The Congress elected the following new officers to the national offices of the Italian Syndicalist Union.

National General Secretariat

The National Secretary of the USI is Gianfranco Careri (of the Ancona USI).

Executive Committee

-responsible for National Funds: Trieste USI.

-responsible for the printing of the National Internal Bulletin: Trieste USI.

-responsible for organization: a comrade of San Benedetto del Tronto USI.

-responsible for international relations commission: a Rome USI comrade.

-responsible for the national paper, 'Lotta di Classe': two Rome USI comrades.

PRESS STATEMENT

The Congress of the Italian Syndicalist Union protests at the unprovoked intimidatory actions of the police and carabinieri on various delegates participating in the Congress, with the stopping of people outside the Congress venue for no particular reason.

Such a form of as we see it irrational pressure isn't worthy of a country which calls itself democratic, because it is directed against a free Union operating in the full light of day for aims of which it can be proud. This is happening while civilized Italy protests against the physical and psychological violence of the police in Poland and that of the dictatorial South American regimes.

- the Congress Chair