

"WE ARE BOTH
THE SUBJECT AND
THE OBJECT OF
THE REVOLUTION"

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED MAY 2021



BY THE

KITES EDITORIAL COMMITTEE

AN INTERVIEW WITH ITALY'S CARC PARTY

PART 1 OF **ON GRANITE CONVICTION:
REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNISM IN ITALY TODAY**

EDITORIAL INTRODUCTION

In early May 2021, the *kites* Editorial Committee conducted this interview with comrade Marco Pappalardo and other cadres of the CARC Party based out of Milan, Italy. The CARC Party was established as a party in 2004, however it emerged as a communist organization in the early '90s out of the prison solidarity movement that arose in the previous decade in resistance to the mass repression and the thousands of arrests of members and supporters of the Red Brigades and other fighting communist organizations of the 1970s. A distinguishing feature of the CARC Party is that it is one of two fraternal communist parties in Italy—the other being the (new) Italian Communist Party, ((n)PCI)— that uphold Marxism-Leninism-Maoism and follow compatible strategies, with each playing their own distinct role in the revolutionary process. Whereas the (n)PCI is a clandestine party that promotes and carries out protracted revolutionary people's war,¹ the CARC is an open party fighting to form the "People's Bloc Government" (PBG). A PBG is conceptualized as a kind of government that will allow the popular masses to face the worsening of capitalist crises, and each of the two organizations see its formation as an important task in the first phase of the protracted revolutionary people's war. That is to say the CARC Party and the (n)PCI see the PBG is a tactical measure within the overarching strategy of protracted revolutionary people's war, particularly within its first, defensive phase. In sharp contrast to the dogmatism of what *kites* has been calling the "church of PPW [protracted people's war] universalism," what impresses us is that the caravan of the (n)PCI has articulated the content of a revolutionary strategy on the basis of a comprehensive and concrete analysis of

1 As Kenny Lake notes in "On Infantile Internet Disorders and Real Questions of Revolutionary Strategy: A Response to the 'Debate' over the Universality of Protracted People's War," available in *kites* #1, the (n)PCI's use of the term "protracted revolutionary people's war" does not generally refer to "the initiation of military actions or the creation of base areas, but rather an accumulation of revolutionary forces that increasingly exerts its force against bourgeois power and demonstrates to the broader masses a way out of bourgeois rule." For more, see the following footnote.

Italian conditions (which can be found in the *Manifesto Program of the (n)PCI*), and it has spent the 17 years since its founding as a party carrying out the actual work of the first phase of protracted revolutionary people's war.²

In the interest of learning everything we can from seasoned and still-in-the-struggle communist revolutionaries—especially those in other imperialist countries, and even more especially those with a strong connection to and summation of the generations of revolutionary struggle that precede them—we in *kites* are in equal parts proud and humbled to present this interview with the CARC Party, an organization whose strategy and practice for bringing about a proletarian revolution in their imperialist country has achieved a level of clarity and development of thought that revolutionaries in other imperialist countries should expect and demand of their organizations. This interview is the first in a two-part series that we're calling *On Granite Conviction: Revolutionary Communism in Italy Today*. Along with the forthcoming second part—an interview with Umberto Corti of the Central Committee of the (n)PCI—these interviews provide a sweeping overview of the movement of communist revolutionaries in Italy who are organizing to establish the PBG, overthrow “the Papal Republic,” and, through the protracted revolutionary people's war, establish socialism and remove It-

2 As the (n)PCI write in Section 3.3 of the *Manifesto Program of the (new) Italian Communist Party*, “The essence of the Protracted Revolutionary People's War consists of constituting the communist party as centre of the new popular power of the working class; in the growing mobilization and aggregation of all the revolutionary forces around the communist party; in the elevation of the level of the revolutionary forces; in their utilization according to a plan for developing a succession of initiatives that put the class conflict at the centre of country political life so [as] to recruit new forces, to weaken [the] imperialist bourgeoisie's power and to strengthen the new power, in succeeding to construct the armed forces of the revolution, in directing them in the war against [the] bourgeoisie, until turning the relations of force upside down, eliminat[ing] the State of [the] imperialist bourgeoisie and establishing the State of proletaria[n] dictatorship” (80-81). So, the protracted revolutionary people's war is a process starting from the constitution of the Party. An English translation of the *Manifesto Program* can be found at [www.nuovopci.it/eile/en/mp-npci-en/MP_ing_\(n\)PCI_WEB.pdf](http://www.nuovopci.it/eile/en/mp-npci-en/MP_ing_(n)PCI_WEB.pdf)

ally from its position as an oppressor country within the overall capitalist-imperialist system. The final translation and edits to the contents of this interview from their Italian original have been reviewed and approved by the CARC Party. The footnotes in this interview have been written by the CARC Party, while pictures and captions are the work of *kites* editors.

INTERVIEW WITH THE CARC PARTY

1. *kites*: Comrade, as far as names of communist organizations go, the name of your party, *Il Partito dei Comitati di Appoggio alla Resistenza per il Comunismo* (the Party of Committees to Support Resistance—for Communism), is rather unorthodox. Can you tell us about the meaning behind the name? And also, how long has the CARC Party existed, and what kind of party is it?

CARC Party: First of all, on behalf of the entire CARC Party (P. CARC in Italian), we thank the comrades of *kites* for this interview. We consider it important to develop international relations with comrades of other imperialist countries. The exhaustion of the first wave of world proletarian revolution (1917–1976) renders the task of creating revolution in an imperialist country a top priority.

In particular, the struggle to liberate us from the US imperialist groups³ and their nefarious designs as well as the struggle to rid the world of the cancer of the Vatican are tasks not only of our respective national communist movements but also momentous objectives for the entire world.

The second wave of world proletarian revolution is developing on the basis of the assessment of the experience of the first wave in the light of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism (MLM). Within this frame-

³ The CARC Party defines an imperialist group as a section of the ruling class that pushes a particular set of imperialist interests. A section of the Italian bourgeoisie carries out the interests of US imperialism in Italy, and this is what is being referred to here as “the US imperialist groups.”

work, the communist parties of our respective countries (Italy, the US, and Canada) must develop: (1) a frank and open debate on theory (the first and decisive aspect for advancing our unity); (2) active, reciprocal, and unconditional solidarity; and (3) an exchange of information and, where possible, common action at an international level (for instance, the largest Italian company—formerly Fiat—is today part of the multinational group Stellantis, which includes Jeep, Chrysler, Dodge, and Ram Trucks, all of which are based in the US). We see this interview as advancing the tasks of points 1 and 3.

To answer the first question, our party, P. CARC, is an open party with public offices that avails, on the one hand, of the political freedoms conquered by the anti-fascist resistance in Italy (1943–1945) and, on the other hand, of the struggles of the '70s in order to organize the working class and the rest of the popular masses into workers' and people's organizations that will step-by-step take over different parts of society, eventually form the People's Bloc Government (PBG), and, from there, proceed towards socialism.

CARC stands for "Committees to Support Resistance—for Communism." The name is a synthesis of the line developed in 1992 with the birth of the CARC, a line that is the same as that which was later brought forward by the (n)PCI in its *Manifesto Program*:

Unite closely and unreservedly with the resistance that the masses put up against the advancing general crisis of capitalism, understand and apply the laws that this resistance develops, support it, promote it, organize it, and make the leadership of the working class prevail until it transforms into a fight to make Italy a new socialist country, adopting as the main method of work and direction the mass line.⁴

The conception of the world from which this line draws is as follows:

- The masses put up resistance to cope with the progression of the general crisis of capitalism. This is an objective phenomenon, and it is spontaneous (not conscious). Resistance is widespread:

⁴ *Manifesto program of the (n)PCI*, Section 2.1.5, "The construction of the new Italian Communist Party," 66.

individual and collective; active and passive; constructive and destructive.

- The communist party is *consciousness*, and very precisely the consciousness, based today on MLM, that in the imperialist phase, the working class must guide the popular masses through to the construction of a socialist revolution (thus transforming that spontaneous resistance into the conscious struggle for socialism).
- There exists a dialectical relationship between the resistance of the masses (objective) and the struggle for communism (subjective). The two are not identical. They must become one. This dialectical relationship generates political line.
- In the context of a crisis, *any* form of resistance that does not transform into a struggle for socialism will come to be directed by the imperialist bourgeoisie and will become a reactionary mobilization.

2. January 2021 marked 100 years since the founding of the original Italian Communist Party. Since then, the communist movement in Italy has passed through many phases. We understand that your movement traces its roots back to both the Red Brigades and the Marxist-Leninist/anti-revisionist currents of the '70s, and also, as you've already indicated, that your party upholds the manifesto of another party, the (n)PCI. Can you explain how your party figures into this rich and complex history of communism in Italy?

Italy is one of the main imperialist countries, although it never had a primary role—except during the 1920s and '30s when the Italian bourgeoisie created the first fascist regime in history, therein becoming a historic example for the bourgeoisie all across the world.

The creation of fascism was the bourgeoisie's answer to the great developments of working class struggle in Italy during the Red Biennium (*Biennio Rosso*, 1919–1920), a struggle that placed the seizure of power on the agenda following the October Revolution.

During those years, the working class occupied factories and created what Antonio Gramsci saw as the Italian equivalent of the soviets: workers' councils (*consigli di fabbrica*). Peasants occupied lands, and a revolutionary movement shook the entire country. However, the absence of a real Bolshevik-style communist party prevented the seizure of power. Nevertheless, this struggle was very important for the birth of the first Italian Communist Party (PCI), founded in January 1921 under the direction of the Communist International.

By 1922, the bourgeoisie established fascism, compelling the PCI into clandestinity, from which it organized resistance for 20 years. That resistance contributed to undermining the fascist regime and put the Party in the position to lead the armed resistance of 1943–45 that liberated Italy from Nazi-fascism. However, the PCI—like all the other parties of the imperialist countries—never assimilated Leninism to the point of being self-sufficient in elaborating and applying adequate strategy and tactics to make socialist revolution in Italy. It was always politically dependent upon the Communist International and the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.

At the end of the war for Italy's liberation from Nazi-fascism in

Benito Mussolini (second from left) in the putschist “March on Rome” by the National Fascist Party that pressured King Victor Emmanuel III to appoint him as the new prime minister on the following day, 29 October 1922.



1945, at a time when the bourgeoisie and its institutions were in a deep political crisis, the PCI entered into a politics of compromise with the bourgeoisie. Its leader, Palmiro Togliatti, gave strategic value to Stalin's tactical direction during fascism to enter a united front with anti-fascist bourgeois forces, including monarchists. In other words, the so-called *Svolta di Salerno* (the "Turn of Salerno") should have been a tactical maneuver but instead was a strategic turning point: Togliatti had embraced modern revisionism.⁵

5 In the spring of 1944, the partisan war was almost at its peak. The northern part of the country was occupied by the Nazis, and the PCI was leading the armed resistance through mass organizations on the ground. In the south, there was a government led by Pietro Badoglio operating as a protectorate of British and American imperialist forces. Togliatti returned from the USSR as the leader of the PCI and urged the party to rectify the line of opposing the Badoglio government hitherto followed by the PCI, given the common commitment in the anti-fascist struggle. This stance quickly paved the way for the formation of a new Badoglio government supported by and composed of elements of the PCI (Togliatti was Vice President of the Council) along with technicians, soldiers, and monarchists who had hitherto been in the government with Badoglio. The new government took office on 24 April 1944 in the province of Salerno, and, for this reason, the new line brought by Togliatti will go down in history as the "Turn of Salerno." Togliatti's turn could have

Togliatti in Salerno, 1945. That the same party, the PCI, could yield both a leader as great and far-seeing as Antonio Gramsci and a revisionist as consequential as Togliatti can be explained only by the Maoist understanding that communist parties are always subject to two opposing lines. In fact, were it not for the turns to revisionism years earlier by Earl Browder of the CPUSA and Tim Buck of the Communist Party of Canada, Togliatti might just deserve the title of the founding father of modern revisionism.



In the immediate post-war period (1945–1947), the PCI discouraged mass organizations from mobilizing further to rebuild the country. Its leadership feared breaking the united front with bourgeois anti-fascist forces. The left wing of the PCI (their leader being Pietro Secchia) eventually realized that this line was opportunistic, but they did not conceive of revolution as a Protracted Revolutionary People's War (they thought the point was just organizing another insurrection), so they did not have an alternative line to oppose it.

Since 1947 and up to the present, the Italian imperialist bourgeoisie that has ruled the country has been composed of the following groups: (1) the Vatican;⁶ (2) the US imperialist bourgeoisie; (3) the criminal organizations; and (4) the Italian and EU imperialist bourgeoisie. The conditions in our country have been determined by the bloody and fractious struggles within these bourgeois groups and fierce attacks against the working class, including several massacres that have consisted of killing striking workers, struggling peasants, and young demonstrators.

been the beginning of an action aimed at beating class enemies by isolating them from other forces, starting with fascism and the Nazis. This line, if rooted in the development of mass organizations, would have been consistent with the united front line launched by Georgi Dimitrov (see *The Fascist Offensive and the Tasks of the Communist International in the Struggle of the Working Class against Fascism*) at the Seventh Congress of the Communist International in 1935.

6 Many may not know this, but the Vatican is one of the most powerful imperialist groups in the world owing to its economic, political, and social power throughout the world. A peculiarity of Italy is that the Catholic Church is the highest moral authority of the regime—a kind of constitutional monarchy without a constitution. Its legal status exists within its own high and unquestionable authority. The Church directs the official status and governs the country indirectly. On the other hand, the Church takes no responsibility for the consequences of their government. In short, it is an irresponsible power of last resort, tacitly accepted by all the members of the Parliament who voted for the Italian Constitution in 1947 (which includes the so-called Lateran Treaty, or *Patti Lateranensi* in Italian, between the Italian Republic and the Vatican) and all its heirs. For this reason, we refer to the institutions of the enemy today in Italy as the Papal Republic.

After having led the resistance, the PCI counted 2.2 million members in 1945 (whereas there were only 5,000–6,000 in 1943), making it the largest communist party of all the imperialist countries. For decades, the working class struggles led by the PCI on an electoral basis continued to achieve economic, political, and social achievements. Those conquests were the material foundation of so-called “capitalism with a human face” (1945–1975), which was made possible by the recovery of capital accumulation after the devastation of World War II. Throughout this entire period, however, the PCI was one of the most representative of modern revisionism.

In the early '70s, a grassroots working-class movement carried out struggles in factories, schools, city departments, and even in the Army and in jails. Workers' councils arose again on a large scale. The movement expanded to such a scale that the bourgeoisie was compelled to respond with the “strategy of tension,” promoting state terrorism that it blamed on communists in order to justify a severe repressive turn (with over 5,000 people eventually imprisoned). And so class conflict became armed.

A new generation of revolutionary communists—the leaders of the movement—was born, joined by ex-partisans of the resistance to Nazi-fascism, and they were struggling not only against the own-

Partisans of the Italian resistance movement, which grew exponentially after the Nazi invasion and occupation of Italy in September 1943 and lasted until Liberation Day, 25 April 1945.



ers and their government but also against the PCI, its union, the Italian General Confederation of Labor (CGIL), and the opportunistic line they promoted. The ultimate task of this struggle was the reconstruction of a revolutionary communist party. Two main movements pursued this aim: the first was the Marxist-Leninist movement embodied by the Communist Party of Italy—Marxist Leninist (New Unity) (*Nuova Unità—Partito Comunista d'Italia Marxista-Leninista*), and the second was the armed communist movement, mainly the Red Brigades (*Brigate Rosse*). Dogmatic deviations characterized the first, and militarist deviations eventually characterized the second.

At the beginning of the 1980s, in conjunction with the beginning of the second general crisis of capitalism (1975 up until the present day) and the exhaustion of the first wave of world proletarian revolution (1917–1976), the combination of these two lines—dogmatism and militarism—led the revolutionary movement into a hard defeat, with thousands incarcerated, tortured, and/or killed. This defeat carries precious teachings for revolutionaries concerning the limits and mistakes which are necessary to overcome for the rebirth of the revolutionary movement and the reconstruction of real communist parties.

Former Prime Minister and President of the Christian Democratic Party Aldo Moro's body was discovered in the trunk of a Renault 4 in Via Caetani on 9 May 1978, 54 days after his kidnapping by the Red Brigades.



In the late '70s, the National Coordination of Committees against Repression (*Coordinamento Nazionale dei Comitati contro la Repressione*) was born as organized committees to provide active support to political prisoners of the Red Brigades and other armed organizations. In 1985, the leading group of the Committees founded the magazine *Social Relations* (*Rapporti Sociali*)⁷ to offer an up-to-date analysis of capitalism, an assessment of the experience of the first communist movement, and to set future tasks. On the basis of this theoretical work, the CARC were founded in 1992.

Step-by-step, this work created the conditions for the establishment of a new and real communist party founded on MLM. A rich debate spread about the role and nature of the party and the necessary conditions for its reconstruction among the organizations that considered themselves communist. Eventually, in 1999, a group of comrades, including former National Secretary of the CARC Giuseppe Maj, clandestinely constituted the Preparatory Commission (PC) for the Founding Congress of the (new) Italian Communist Party. This group launched the program of the new clandestine communist party, founded on MLM, that would be able to carry out the Protracted Revolutionary People's War. The PC began publication of *The Voice of the (new) Italian Communist Party* (*La Voce del (nuovo) Partito Comunista Italiano*)⁸ and started the construction of clandestine party committees.

The bourgeoisie has repeatedly waged repressive campaigns against communists, particularly against CARC and PC members, imprisoning two comrades in Paris, Giuseppe Maj and Giuseppe Czeppel. But the communists faced this repression by denouncing the bourgeoisie's persecution and carrying out vast propaganda and agitation against the repressive investigations. In this way, they were able to promote the work carried out for the construction of a new communist party to many people. Their resistance strength-

⁷ The archive of *Rapporti Sociali* is available at www.nuovopci.it/scritti/RS/indicom.html

⁸ *The Voice of the (new) Italian Communist Party* is available at the (n)PCI website: www.nuovopci.it

ened the reconstruction of the party, and on 3 October 2004, the (n) PCI was founded.

The CARC greeted the birth of the (n)PCI with joy: the reconstruction of the working-class party was the aim which had led their work for 12 years. The birth of the (n)PCI necessarily required that CARC members had to decide what to do from then onwards. Many realized that the PC's statements about the clandestine character of the party were interesting and well-founded. Nevertheless, the CARC were firmly persuaded that a legal political organization of communists was also important for the development of class struggle in Italy. This organization could use what was left of social and political freedom conquered by the Resistance to promote the elevation of revolutionary forces, the communist orientation of popular masses, their aggregation around the (n)PCI, their mobilization, and their engagement in revolutionary political activity and social struggles to make Italy a new socialist country. In Italy, many workers and advanced elements of the popular masses still have a bond with the first wave of proletarian revolution—they still have “a hammer and sickle in their hearts”—and thus look for a public organization to refer to.

From 9–10 April 2005, an Extraordinary National Direction of the CARC ratified the transformation of CARC into a party (the CARC Party, or P. CARC), drafted a new statute, and nominated members for the directing organs of the Party. Since then, the relationship that exists between the P. CARC and the (n)PCI is one of ideological unity and unity on the strategic objective: to make Italy a new socialist country. However, they are two distinct organizations. The discovery of the need for two parties to make revolution in an imperialist country like ours is a novelty in the international communist movement, but it is the result of our experience in light of the conditions we find ourselves operating within.

Since its founding, the P. CARC has held five congresses and three internal active ideological struggles to become the national party that it is today. At the Fifth Congress (2019), the Party set the

goal of becoming a “party of cadres and mass” to raise the quality of its cadre to the point of being able to enlarge the base of the organization and the network of relationships required to carry out its work. The distinction between cadres and mass among the membership is the distinction between comrades who choose to dedicate their entire lives and the many comrades who can make contributions which, however small, are essential for victory. At present, we count 24 chapters of the Party in four regional federations, in addition to contacts in and reports coming out of 17 regions out of the 20 in Italy.

At this stage the Party operates through three main lines of work: (1) support for workers’ and people’s organizations (see the following question); (2) promotion of a broad political front against the Draghi government and all governments of the “grand coalitions”(see Question 6); and (3) interventions among other organizations that consider themselves communist in order to promote ideological unity that aims at organizational unity.

The work of the P. CARC is conducted and established upon four understandings that have been elaborated by the (n)PCI: briefly, (1) the assessment of the experience of the communist movement, (2) the nature of the current capitalist crisis, (3) the political *regime of preventive counter-revolution* that is in force in the imperialist countries, and (4) the revolutionary strategy of Protracted Revolutionary People’s War. The assimilation and application of these four understandings—elaborated in the document *Four Main Issues to be Debated in the International Communist Movement*⁹—is necessary from every cadre who wants to contribute to the rebirth of the international communist movement.

3. What are the popular classes in Italy and what is the relative weight among them? Where do you see the greatest revolutionary potential among these classes? And where and in what ways does the CARC Party have presence among the people and their struggles?

9 Available at www.nuovopci.it/eile/en/testi/NPCI_Four_Issues.pdf

Class analysis is fundamental to any communist who wants to bring about a socialist revolution. The P. C.A.R.C. takes its class analysis from Section 2.2 of the *Manifesto Program of the (n)PCI* (which is based on data up to 2004). This program broadly defines two camps in our society: on one side is the popular masses, those who, in one way or another, must work to live; and on the other side is the imperialist bourgeoisie, those who do not need to work to live or, if they work, do so mainly to increase their wealth or for pleasure.

The imperialist bourgeoisie is the class that is directly or indirectly linked to the accumulation of financial and speculative capital and is composed of diverse categories of individuals, including financiers, entrepreneurs, rentiers, senior state officials, prelates, rich professionals, artists, athletes, journalists, superior officers of the armed forces, and national politicians. In Italy, this class consists of six million people. The objective interests of this class are hostile to socialist revolution, and the relationship between this class and the popular masses and the communist movement is a relationship of war.

The popular masses (what you may call in English “the people”) in our country are composed of proletarian and non-proletarian elements that amount to about 51 million people.

The proletariat is composed of:

- Workers employed in the private sector: those upon which the valorization of capital is based and, therefore, upon which the whole capitalist system is based. Their exploitation is the condition for capitalist production. Marx has already clearly explained that a worker is defined not by the type of goods he or she produces (or services he or she provides) but by the fact that he or she exchanges labor power against capital. In Italy, this section of the proletariat consists of approximately 17 million people. This is the class that must direct the socialist revolution because they are already in the objective and partially also subjective conditions (e.g., they’re used to collective work) that are required to make a socialist revolution.

- Workers not employed in private companies: public sector workers, workers in family or artisanal companies, and personal assistants. In Italy, these workers account for 19 million people and are the closest allies of the working class.

The non-proletarian popular masses, on the other hand, are all those who have control over their own work or whose qualifications or skills are such that they are not easily replaced in the production process. This includes the self-employed, small professionals, the lower management of companies, and small proprietors whose income derives mainly from their own participation in the production process. We call these classes the “non-proletarian popular masses” instead of the petty-bourgeoisie, because they are objectively a layer of society which the proletariat can and must direct politically—that is why we conceive them as belonging to our field. Although these classes oscillate between one field and the other (they follow who is the strongest), the crisis impels these classes to mobilize against the imperialist bourgeoisie, because it objectively opposes their interests. It is our task to lead the proletariat to exercise political direction over these classes. In Italy, they amount to 15 million people.

To root itself in the working class—the proletariat and the broad popular masses—the P. CARC focuses the core of its activities on the development, support, and coordination of workers’ organizations (WOs) and people’s organizations (POs). WOs and POs are mass organizations open to all those who want to participate constructively and that the popular masses create, partly spontaneously and partly thanks to the initiative of communists, to cope with the disastrous effects of capitalist crisis. Workers in the private sector from one or more companies may come together, regardless of the trade union card they may have in their pockets, to mobilize themselves around relatively simple but deeply felt battles (e.g., the issue of health security in a department). They are the embryo that can develop into WOs and workers’ councils. POs are similar to WOs and are equally necessary, although they are hierarchically inferior for our purposes. POs are made up of: (1) workers of the

public sector or (2) proletarians or other elements of the popular masses. They can have a specific area of action (e.g. a neighborhood committee) or they can be issue-based, like a committee for the defense of the environment, a feminist group, a student committee, a sports group, a reading group, or, for example, the group of restaurateurs who have been protesting closures that the government has imposed because of COVID-19.

We must begin by leveraging a widespread network of mass organizations that can be increasingly organized around a center that directs its consciousness and directs its action, and which makes it capable of common action. The establishment of the Soviet government would not have been possible without the creation of a widespread network of soviets of workers and soldiers throughout the country—the bulk of which were peasants mobilized for the war—which were aggregated around the Bolshevik Party.

The creation of this widespread network of WOs and POs across the country—organized around the vanguard communist party and opposing the power of the imperialist bourgeoisie and the clergy—is the heart of the *construction of the new power* in our country, and is at this stage the central aspect of the socialist revolution. It is our task to prepare for reaching a decisive confrontation under the most favorable conditions possible.

This is why the P. CARC promotes the formation of WOs and POs: it is the soil and the roots of our main work. Our goal is to bring these organizations to the point of becoming *New Public Authorities*, as was the case with the workers' councils in Italy in the '20s and the '70s. We see in these organizations the embryo of the future socialist state—the dictatorship of the proletariat. WOs and POs will have to become *New Public Authorities* today for the socialist state to have its social base for tomorrow. Also, a widespread and extensive network of these organizations is the social base upon which the national emergency government, the People's Bloc Government, will be formed as a tactical step toward socialism (see the following question).



A demonstration by the CARC Party, whose banner reads, “Organize, coordinate, build the New Public Authorities.”

We are presently conducting important experiments through this line of work: for example, in the factories of the former FIAT, in the steel sector, and between health workers and teachers in public schools. Spontaneous resistance constantly produces innumerable streams of WOs and POs that we must join and diverge to feed the river of socialist revolution. To date, however, this work is not yet at the level of being the main factor directing class struggle in our country. In Italy at present, the network of mass organizations is not widespread and coordinated enough, and this is why we’re in the situation we’re in. This network of organizations must be built—or rebuilt—and this time driven by the will to go all the way. The acceleration produced by the health crisis has offered us more foundations to build on. We must build the work in stages and, guided by our science, broaden it. We know that the process of rooting ourselves progresses dialectically through quantitative accumulations and qualitative leaps.

4. Can you elaborate upon your political line of building towards a “People’s Bloc Government?” Is this a new parliamentary arrangement? A new constitution? Some kind of revolutionary

united front? Is this a stage in the struggle towards socialist revolution?

To win a war, we need a war plan. The line of constructing the People's Bloc Government (PBG) is part of this plan and it emerges from the objective and subjective conditions in our country. These conditions consist, on the one hand, of the substantial weakness of the communist movement—a slow accumulation of forces due mainly to internal limitations—and, on the other hand, the existence of significant mobilization and organization among the masses in coping with the progression of the general crisis of capitalism. Furthermore, this line is the product of our assessment of the experience of the first wave of proletarian revolution and its experience with popular front governments (starting from the Seventh Congress of the Communist International in 1935).

None of the principal measures needed today to confront the crisis are possible without a government to implement them. In order to implement the demands of the thousands of WOs and POs that exist in our country today and impose as law those measures adopted by them, a government is needed that, on the one hand, supports and promotes the organization and mobilization of popular masses and, on the other hand, is supported by WOs and POs. This government will be composed of people who, though not necessarily communists, enjoy the confidence of these organizations.

The organized popular masses today still have confidence in civil society personalities, trade unionists, politicians, and intellectuals. Our goal is to prepare the WOs and POs to impose a government composed of these trusted figures. This is a necessary measure, because it's not possible in our country today to impose a government led by or with the participation of a communist party (unlike the popular front government of the first wave of proletarian revolution). The defeat of the first communist movement and the betrayal of the revisionists still weighs heavily on the minds of the people. The new communist movement needs to first clear the ruins from the field: it must be able to answer when asked why the

first communist movement retreated, and it must reveal the role of revisionists in opposing the communist movement. All this will be the result of an experimental process and the activity of communists. However, immediately, if the popular masses have confidence in the sorts of people we describe above, communists must lead the masses to organize and mobilize to entrust those personalities with the responsibility of government. If those personalities can criticize the governments of the imperialist bourgeoisie, then they should take up governing.

A government of this kind won't be constituted necessarily through elections.¹⁰ It'll be born from the conscious mobilization of the WOs and POs, who must impose it on the ruling class by making the country ungovernable for them. We can rely on the fact that, due to the collective nature of the productive forces, the bourgeoisie need the consent (or at least the passivity) of the majority of the popular masses to run the country. If this goes off, there is nothing they can do but bite the bullet or resort to mass repression, both of which give ammunition to the revolutionary process.

With simple and rapid measures, a government that has this social base can immediately put an end to the most serious effects of the economic and environmental crises. Such a government can prevent these crises from proliferating further, even in the face of the crises still raging across the rest of the world (that is, until a sufficient number of countries have taken measures similar to those that we will apply in Italy). We can place the country on the road to renaissance and progress, to a higher level than where we arrived when the communist movement was still strong in the world, and this will be a road that we'll easily travel together with other coun-

¹⁰ In Italy, we've had many examples of governments that were not formed through elections. For instance, in 1960 the Fanfani government was established after the Tambroni government not as a result of elections but because of a general mobilization of the masses against the presence of neo-fascists (known as the Italian Social Movement) in the Tambroni government. Other examples of non-elected governments are the fourth De Gasperi government (1947), the first Berlusconi government (1994), and the Draghi government itself.

tries across the world.

The tasks of the PBG can be summarized in seven points:

1. The assignment to every company productive activities that are suitable to its nature and according to a national plan. No company must be closed.
2. The distribution of products to families, individuals, and companies and toward collective uses according to clear, universally known, and democratically determined plans and criteria.
3. The assignment to every individual socially useful work and, in exchange for their scrupulous execution, a guarantee to all of the conditions necessary for a dignified life and for participation in the larger functioning of society. No worker will be fired, every adult will have useful and dignified work, and no individual will be marginalized.
4. The elimination of unnecessary or harmful production and activities, and the reassignment of companies involved in those activities to other tasks.
5. The reorganization of all other social relations in accordance with the new productive base and the new system of distribution.
6. The establishment of relations of solidarity, collaboration, and exchange with all countries willing to establish them with us.
7. The purge of the top leaders of the public administration that sabotage the country's transformation, conforming the police, armed forces, and intelligence agencies to the democratic spirit of the Constitution of 1948, and the restoration of universal citizen participation in military activities in defense of the country and to protect public order.

The success of the PBG will not be hinged upon the good intentions or honesty of the people that will compose it, but instead will be based on the dialectical link between the PBG and the WOs and POs. The WOs and POs will have to demand from the PBG that

they be given power and that all necessary measures established by them be enacted into law, even if these measures harm the interests of the bourgeoisie, the clergy, the rich, and the imperialist world system or oppose their customs, institutions, aspirations, and mentality.

For WOs and POs to constitute the PBG, communists and the politically advanced elements of the masses must succeed in creating three conditions: (1) convince the WOs and POs that only by constituting an emergency government can they achieve their objectives; (2) multiply the number of WOs and POs by encouraging their creation in every company, in every neighborhood, and in every field; and (3) push the WOs and POs to coordinate at local, provincial, regional, and national levels in order to establish consistent networks unified on a territorial basis and by objective and/or field of activity.

When this work exceeds a certain quantitative level, the leaders of the Papal Republic will have to swallow the constitution of the PBG as a lesser evil and as an interim measure. The ongoing acute conflicts among the bourgeoisie will facilitate the establishment of the PBG. They are not yet ready to unleash a civil war to suppress the insubordination of the popular masses. They will try to get the situation under their control by sabotaging the actions of the PBG. This, however, will open a new phase.

Following the establishment of the PBG, the WOs and POs will mobilize to implement concrete measures, to ensure their meticulous execution, and to suppress any attempt to sabotage or boycott the actions of the PBG. In so doing, they will learn to govern the country and direct affairs themselves, and they'll be able to cope successfully with a civil war if the most criminal elements of the bourgeoisie and the clergy dare to unleash it. We communists will gain the lead in this struggle against national and international enemies. This is how we will pave the way for the large-scale revival of the communist movement and the establishment of socialism.

5. As we understand it, the CARC Party has engaged in some bourgeois electoral contests in the past. What's been your experience with elections, and what is the strategic thinking behind these tactics?

In the past, our interventions in electoral campaigns have aimed to develop the organization and mobilization of the working class and popular masses by seizing upon false promises made by the bourgeois parties. For example, faced with the fact that the bourgeois parties speak to the issue of unemployment, we have worked to build committees of the unemployed and precarious. We have worked to ensure that these organizations continue their existence even after the election. So, in this sense, we have learned to seize upon every opportunity—even initiatives led by the bourgeoisie, such as elections—where there is potential for the organization and mobilization of the working class and popular masses.

In an early phase of the development of our party, we took part in local electoral competitions following the said criteria. However, the development of the general crisis has led the popular masses to increasingly detach from the theater of bourgeois politics. So, at this stage, we do not feel it useful to continue to present ourselves directly in the electoral arena.

We are opposed to the principle of abstensionism, as Lenin taught us in *“Left-Wing” Communism: An Infantile Disorder*, and so we still give our members and sympathizers direction to vote for one or more lists or one or more candidates who stand out in practice in giving space, voice, and means to the mobilizations of the workers and popular masses. We push the WOs and POs to take the opportunity of electoral campaigns (where the attention of the masses in politics increases) to urge candidates or those elected.

In the last few years, we have been supportive of the Five Star Movement (M5S). Although they come from an electoral perspective that's driven by an unrealistic conception of the *Bourgeois Left*,¹¹

11 The Bourgeois Left consists of the range of parties, organizations, and individuals who concretely—in their political activity, in their programs, in their

M5S has effectively expressed vast and legitimate contempt on the part of the masses for bourgeois institutions and “grand coalition” governments.¹²

We believe that between 2016 and 2018 there was an important turning point in the political system of the imperialist countries, and that the imperialist bourgeoisie is no longer able to rule with the methods with which it had since the advent of Margaret Thatcher in the UK (1979) and Ronald Reagan in the US (1981), i.e., by implementing what we have called the “common program of the imperialist bourgeoisie.”¹³ In all the major imperialist countries, the advocates of this program were overthrown or put in seriously difficult situations due to the contempt of and resistance waged by

initiatives and political proposals—do not see that any productive enterprise is possible other than that which is based on the initiative of capitalists, stemming from the private property of capitalists, rooted in the production of profits, and based in the market relations of buying and selling. They cannot conceive of or they explicitly reject socialism. But at the same time, they believe (we suppose sincerely) that all members of society should have a decent life. They would like decent wages, decent pensions, and employment for all proletarians. In short, the Bourgeois Left wants capitalism and a bourgeois society (i.e., founded on the property and on the economic initiative of capitalists) but without all “the evils of capitalism.” They want capitalism without the inconvenience of capitalism.

12 Grand coalitions—or *larghe intese*, as they are called in Italy—refer to coalition governments. The parties of the grand coalitions, like those who today support the Draghi government (or, for another example, those parties in Germany that have sustained the “Große Koalition” governments—the Christian Democratic Union and the Social Democratic Party), present themselves in the elections as divided and in competition. But in reality, everyone implements the same program—the common program of the imperialist bourgeoisie (see the following footnote).

13 The common program of the imperialist bourgeoisie today can be summarized in two points. One, in the imperialist countries, complete the liquidation of what remains of the conquests of civilization and well-being (wages, workplace rights, collective agreements, stability) wrested by the popular masses when the communist movement was strong in the world; and two, participate in the resumption of wars launched or fomented by NATO, the US, Israel, and EU countries, and assist in the combination of and competition between imperialist groups to carve out the largest part of the exploitation of the popular masses of the former socialist countries and oppressed countries.

the masses. We consider this a *breach* that the popular masses have opened in the political system of the imperialist bourgeoisie, and we regard even the Trump election as part of this objective process.

The breach has taken different forms depending on the particular objective and subjective conditions of each imperialist country. In Italy's 4 March 2018 elections, the popular masses made it impossible for the imperialist bourgeoisie to establish the grand coalition government that they wanted. The elections led to the success of the M5S and the two governments led by Giuseppe Conte. These governments were not *direct* expressions of the imperialist bourgeoisie and, in fact, were actively sabotaged by the ruling class. At this stage, our line was to "widen the breach," urging WOs and POs to mobilize so that the M5S would be able to keep their electoral promises.

However, due to our limits today, due to the relative weakness of the movement of the WOs and POs, and due to the fact that most M5S leaders refused to mobilize the masses to enforce the just demands that were the basis of their electoral success, the breach has been temporarily "patched up." Mario Draghi, former president of the European Central Bank, is now prime minister of a (very unstable) grand coalition government. It is our primary objective today to build a front to overthrow this government.

The experience of the two Conte governments demonstrates that *it's possible for mass resistance to create a breach in the institutions of the imperialist bourgeoisie*. This is a precious lesson considering our aim of establishing the PBG. However, this experience also reveals that *no government can pursue measures contrary to the interests of the imperialist bourgeoisie without promoting the mobilization and organization of the popular masses on a large scale*.

6. The last decade has witnessed a massive influx of migrants from Africa, who have been displaced by climate change and imperialism. What are the conditions of these migrants and refugees in Italy? Are they being absorbed into the Italian proletar-

iat? How does the struggle against xenophobia fit into the larger revolutionary struggles of the popular classes? Has the CARC Party been able to mobilize or organize refugees and migrants?

Taking advantage of the weakness of the conscious and organized communist movement given the exhaustion of the first wave of proletarian revolution (1917–1976), and under the pressure created by the need to valorize capital in the context of the unfolding general crisis of the system, the imperialists have brought devastation, looting, and wars of recolonization to the oppressed countries of Africa, Asia, and Latin America as well as to the former socialist countries of Eastern Europe. Thus, an enormous mass of people has been forced to move to the imperialist countries, where they live in suburbs, in refugee camps, in facilities that are nearly prisons, and in areas that are barely or not at all inhabited. This exodus of “migrants” has involved the most exploited classes of those countries. There’s no problem for those who belong to the

Hundreds of thousands of African refugees and migrants have made a perilous journey across the Mediterranean in recent years, fleeing the ravages of capitalism-imperialism: economic devastation, climate change, imperialist aggression, and proxy wars. Pictured here are migrants traveling between Libya and Italy.



exploiting classes—whatever their race, color, religion, or country of origin—who travel to make themselves comfortable as tourists, businessmen, or even to settle in another country. The doors are always open for these migrants. The question of migrants, therefore, is neither a question of “human rights in general” nor a question of race or religion; it is a question of class.

In our country, immigration became a mass phenomenon starting at the end of the 1970s, beginning with the second general crisis of capitalism and increasing with the collapse of the socialist countries of Eastern Europe (Albania, Romania, etc.) at the end of the '80s. Since then, more than 5 million proletarians and lumpen-proletarians have settled in our country (according to 2018 data), the vast majority of whom arrived in the last 20 years. Most of them are therefore first-generation immigrants.

The imperialist bourgeoisie manages the immigration produced by its criminal affairs in Italy and abroad in the only way that it knows how: by exploiting the immigrants arriving in the country, deriving profit from the so-called “immigration system,” and placing these workers in competition with the native working class for work, wages, housing, healthcare, and even basic goods and services, all of which are already being denied to a growing part of the popular masses. Immigration, unemployment, the relocation and closure of companies, illegal work, and the degradation of the suburbs are essentially the result of the (mis)management of society by the imperialist bourgeoisie.

The imperialist bourgeoisie copes with the increasing resistance that these contradictions generate among the popular masses by channeling their growing indignation into intolerance against immigrants. In this way, the imperialist bourgeoisie tries to transform the antagonistic contradiction between the ruling class and the popular masses into contradictions among the masses (*guerra tra poveri*, or war among the poor).

For this reason, the best form of integration and welcome that

we can—and must—give to immigrants who arrive in Italy is to promote their participation in class struggle and in the struggle to establish the PBG and implement its emergency measures. We do not conceive of immigrants as “brothers of misfortune”; we do not start from the color of their skin or from the fact that they are more unfortunate than us (as with clerical pity). Nor do we defend some abstract “right to move” in the name of an interclass (bourgeois) cosmopolitanism. We go to them as comrades in the struggle, as workers and young people who can join the fight for the PBG and to make Italy a new socialist country.

The political importance assumed by the presence and arrival of immigrants in our country has pushed the P. CARC for the last two years to start investigations and undertake specific interventions among immigrant workers. We have only taken the first steps in this new and experimental work for the communist movement in our country. We have also come to understand that we must begin this work in the working class, especially among those who have some concrete ties with the communist movement historically (in our country, most of the immigrants come from formerly

A strike organized by *S.I. Cobas*, one of Italy’s most important trade unions, which is presently organizing migrants and warehouse workers from companies like Amazon and FedEx-TNT.



socialist countries in Eastern Europe or from China). In addition to this, we're developing support for those grassroots unions (such as *S.I. Cobas*) which have brought together mostly immigrant workers to fight important battles over the last ten years, mainly in the logistics sector.

7. Italy was one of the first countries after China to be hit hard by COVID-19. Why was this the case? How did the Italian state respond? How are the masses understanding this crisis? What's been the impact of far-right conspiracy theories in shaping people's understandings of the pandemic and the crises it is intertwined with?

The reason Italy was the second country hit by COVID-19 after China are still unknown. But it is possible the cause resides in the fact that the productive apparatus of Northern Italy has close and important links to China. It is also well known that the virus was already circulating since the summer of 2019, so it is not possible to establish its precise origin.¹⁴ However, we can affirm with a good degree of certainty that the spread of this pandemic has mainly passed through capitalist enterprises, especially where the productive forces are most concentrated and socialized—which is the case in Northern Italy, one of the most highly socialized production areas in the world and the source of the greatest number of outbreaks and cases. The ruling class can't afford to stop production in these areas without impacting companies and sacrificing their market positions internationally. This contradiction is the basis of the mass murder taking place in our country for over a year now, with a rate

Gisella Vagnoni, "Researchers find coronavirus was circulating in Italy earlier than thought," Reuters, 16 November 2020, www.reuters.com/article/health-coronavirus-italy-timing-idUSKBN27W1J2 (accessed 2 August 2021). See also Aylin Woodward, "Suspensions mount that the coronavirus was spreading in China and Europe as early as October, following a WHO investigation," *Business Insider*, 22 December 2020, africa.businessinsider.com/news/suspensions-mount-that-the-coronavirus-was-spreading-in-china-and-europe-as-early-as/zhqb1f5 (accessed 2 August 2021).

of hundreds of deaths a day that was only partially interrupted in the summer months from June to October 2020.

For these reasons, as in the other imperialist countries, at the beginning of the pandemic, the Italian state's initial response was to insist that all enterprises should remain open. By the end of February 2020, the first outbreaks in the southern part of Lombardy led to the collapse of our national healthcare system, which was already on its knees after decades of privatization. But it was only after massive spontaneous strikes by metalworkers—of which there is an important presence in Northern Italy, especially between Bergamo and Brescia—that the second Conte government opted for a total lockdown of all non-essential productive activities across the country until the summer of 2020. These measures brought the pandemic under control but gave the bourgeoisie opportunities of various kinds to attack the working class with closures, relocations, layoffs, etc.

Starting in September 2020, the line of the second Conte government and the Draghi government that followed it has been to enforce stay-at-home orders on the popular masses, close schools and small businesses, and keep large companies open.¹⁵

The pandemic is a product of the general crisis of capitalism, a qualitative leap in the unfolding acute and terminal phase of the general crisis of capitalism in the world. In this situation, there is no going back: there is no normalcy that can be returned to. The pan-

¹⁵ Also very important have been closures and restrictions in tourism, gyms, entertainment, and other areas of popular culture as well as the *case del popolo*, or “houses of the people.” (There is perhaps no popular equivalent to these houses of the people in North America, but imagine a sort of hybrid between a community center and a cafe but under popular control. They're essentially a network of POs that are the legacy of the first socialist movement in our country tracing back to the late 1800s, and for this reason, they only exist in the northern areas of the country. Historically, they were also one of the main targets of fascist raids in the '20s.) The churches have, of course, remained open. So not only have the centers of the imperialist bourgeoisie remained open (factories, banks) but also the centers of the clergy.

demic has exacerbated the contradictions that the popular masses were already subjected to in their daily lives. They increasingly understand that the (mis)management of society by the bourgeoisie is leading to death, ruin, and misery, and that the measures being taken—from lockdowns to the use of personal protective equipment and vaccines—are speculative rather than guarantees. Furthermore, the popular masses consciously or unconsciously understand that these measures are not implemented to ensure people's health and safety, which is why some sections have reacted by refusing to adopt or comply with these measures, while others deny that the virus even exists.

By contrast, in all those countries where those institutions created in the course of the first wave of proletarian revolution remain to some extent—Cuba, the People's Republic of China, the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, the People's Democratic Republic of Laos, the People's Democratic Republic of Korea—the pandemic has been handled with much better results than in imperialist countries or across the rest of the imperialist world system.

In general terms, what these countries have achieved are due to:

- the unity of interests that links the public authorities (state and local) to the popular masses;
- a widespread system of mass organizations that gathers a large part of the population and is headed by those countries' respective communist parties;
- strong public direction over much of the economic activity of the country: not mere financial, tax, and other related incentives, but clear direct administration through assignment of tasks and other directives; and
- public health systems aimed at protecting the general health of the population.

These are important facts that show the popular masses that the establishment of socialism is a matter of life and death.

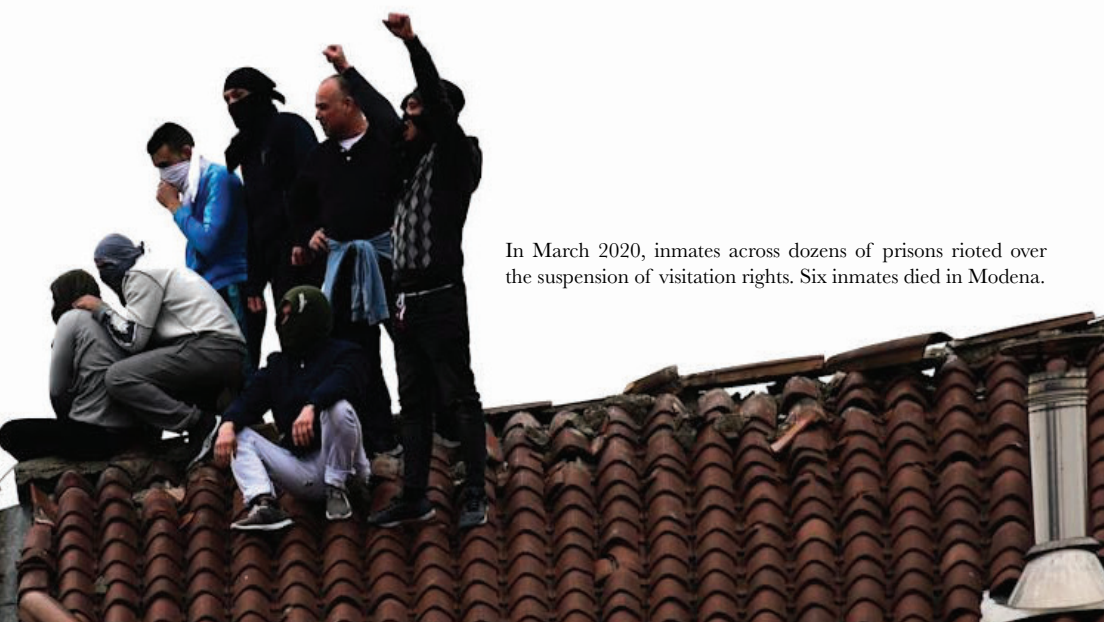
Regarding the part of your question concerning right-wing conspiracies, they've had little hold over the masses in Italy. They have had only a minor role in the mobilizations, and common sense has prevailed that prevention, early intervention, a network of local clinics, and adequate facilities—i.e., a national free and public health system—can successfully address the pandemic.

8. There were significant prison uprisings in Italy in the early stage of the pandemic. In addition to this, can you describe the most defining moments of proletarian struggle in Italy over the course of the pandemic this past year?

The press agency of our party has monitored and promoted on a daily basis the ongoing mobilizations across the country during the first lockdown.¹⁶ I'll limit myself here to list only the main ones:

- The riots in dozens of Italian prisons, which occurred almost immediately at the beginning of the first lockdown in March 2020 and which saw 13 prisoners killed by prison guards. Up to the present, a PO called Committee for Truth and Justice has re-

¹⁶ P.CARC, "Mobilitazioni in tutto il paese per fare fronte dal basso al COVID-19," 10 March 2020, www.carc.it/2020/03/10/in-aggiornamento-organizzarsi-e-mobilitarsi-per-fare-fronte-all'emergenza-COVID-19/



In March 2020, inmates across dozens of prisons rioted over the suspension of visitation rights. Six inmates died in Modena.

mained active in the city of Modena since the massacre. It has produced mobilizations and a grassroots investigation while also engaging the relatives of the victims. The judicial system has recently reacted by closing the official investigation in a clumsy attempt to clear the air. The struggle is ongoing.

- The spontaneous strikes that occurred in the engineering companies (which were mentioned above) that led to the first and only truly generalized lockdown in March 2020. That was undoubtedly the most salient moment of struggle, as it forced the state to change its political direction in the short term. Since March 2020, the ban on layoffs has remained in effect, and both the second Conte government and the Draghi government continue to uphold it, as they fear the social consequences and class struggle that would result from mass layoffs.
- Small but significant and cutting-edge mobilizations called for by the P. CARC to break with the government's terroristic line to "stay at home" and to indicate to the popular masses the need to mobilize directly to cope with the crisis rather than leave their destiny in the hands of the criminal killers of the ruling class. These occurred

A strike of metalworkers in Genoa, March 2020.



during what we called the “Red Week” (or *Settimana Rossa* in Italian, which refers to the week extending from 25 April, the anniversary of national liberation from Nazi-fascism, to 1 May, International Workers Day) of 2020. We learned that even small actions—for instance, breaking restriction orders to place flowers at partisans memorial buildings—can give confidence to the broad popular masses and trigger emulation when planned following a correct political line.

- Strikes to claim income and workplace safety, the implementation of health protocols in workplaces, documents for immigrant workers, and the blocking of evictions carried out by workers in logistics, couriers, entertainment sector workers, rural workers, and other precarious workers like delivery workers, which were mainly organized into grassroots unions.
- Solidarity brigades, which emerged as early as March 2020, especially at the initiative of young people who went to the houses of the elderly, sick, and poor to bring food and medicine as well as to propagandize and mobilize against municipal institutions. In addition to these first solidarity brigades, health brigades were added: groups of healthcare workers who self-organized the mass distribution of personal protective equipment, scientific literature, and free COVID tests to the population through “health tents.”
- Mobilizations around public schools, where a national movement arose—*Priorità alla Scuola* or “Schooling Comes First”—that uni-

A June 2020 rally organized by many popular organizations in Lombardy that aimed to kick out the regional government that was responsible for more than 30,000 COVID deaths.





During the lockdown, hundreds of brigades were born to take care of the popular masses that were abandoned by the institutions of the bourgeoisie. Above, members of the South Milan Brigade hold a banner that reads “Enough is Enough! United for jobs, housing, health and income.” Below, members of the Red Aid Health Brigade provide medical aid and equipment to the people.



fied teachers, janitors, parents, and students against the closure of public schools, and which has been working intermittently for more than a year. They have demanded that the necessary measures be taken to keep schools open during the pandemic, from the hiring of necessary professionals to construction work to ensure safe buildings and classrooms for schooling to go on.

9. In North America, fascist sentiments and mobilizations have surged throughout the pandemic, as evidenced by the far-right insurrectionary protest in Washington, D.C. on 6 January 2021. Over the same period, how have popular sentiments in Italy shifted in relation to fascism? And where do the various fascist currents weigh in in terms of the overall balance of political forces in Italy right now?

Fascism in the last century was counter-revolution: the suffocation of the revolutionary movement in progress. It was effective suffocation because the communist parties were not up to their tasks. The bourgeoisie resorted to fascism in countries (namely Italy and Germany) wherein the revolutionary mobilization of the masses was strong and the regime of preventive counter-revolution¹⁷ was not yet sufficiently developed to deal effectively with it.

Today, the weight of the explicitly fascist currents is marginal in Italy, and those who promote the reactionary mobilization of the masses are found in the system of “broad coalitions.” As we write, the Draghi government is allowing gangs of bodyguards paid by company owners (namely FedEx) to assault workers on strike.¹⁸ The imperialist bourgeoisie must implement their common program (see Footnote 13), and to do this, they will be forced to extend

17 *Manifesto Program of the (n)PCI*, Section 1.3.3, “The preventive counter-revolution.”

18 See “A strong and unified response to the repressive escalation of the Draghi government and the bosses is urgently needed!” *S.I. Cobas*, 28 May 2021, sicobas.org/2021/05/28/call-a-strong-and-unified-response-to-the-repressive-escalation-of-the-draghi-government-and-the-bosses-is-urgently-needed/ (accessed 15 June 2021).

repression and mobilize the masses against one another more and more.

As a matter of fact, the world of the ruling class is in flames, the internal war in the enemy camp is exacerbated, and the masses are increasingly pushed to resist in a thousand ways. In this context, our task as communists is and will always be to take on the legitimate discontent among those social bases which the reactionary social groups leverage. We must mobilize these social base more effectively and more radically than the bourgeoisie.

For example, in Italy, the closure of restaurants, gyms, and small businesses in general have led the non-proletarian masses to organize themselves to demand non-repayable aid from the government and re-openings for their enterprises. In October 2020, this led to nights of spontaneous revolts in some cities. To date, the *Io Apro* ("I Open") movement carries the claims of these classes. Fascists and the extreme right have tried to infiltrate *Io Apro*, but it is mainly because of communist limitations (sectarianism against non-proletarian forms of resistance) that this movement hasn't linked yet to the other forms of popular mobilization mentioned in my previous answer.

Ultimately, the only two ways forward today are for a communist-led revolutionary unity of the popular masses against the imperialist bourgeoisie (revolutionary mobilization) or the clash between workers and a war among the people that's directed by the imperialist bourgeoisie (reactionary mobilization). We do not live in some kind of regime of "modern fascism," but rather a situation wherein the struggle between the revolutionary mobilization and the reactionary mobilization of popular masses is at play.

The situation is objectively revolutionary and the masses are

"WE DO NOT LIVE IN SOME KIND OF REGIME OF 'MODERN FASCISM,' BUT RATHER A SITUATION WHEREIN THE STRUGGLE BETWEEN THE REVOLUTIONARY MOBILIZATION AND THE REACTIONARY MOBILIZATION OF POPULAR MASSES IS AT PLAY."

mobilized. They may mobilize under reactionary banners (as is what happened, from what we understand, with the protest in Washington that your question refers to), but it is not by blaming the masses for mobilizing that we can make advances. Under what flag the masses fight depends on the role played by and the strength of the communist movement.

Our task is therefore not to judge whether a mobilization is “fascist” or not. Fascists may very well be the promoters of a particular mobilization, but the mobilization itself is a mass phenomenon and has objective causes. It’s the task of communists to take the lead. There are no pure areas of struggle, and contradiction penetrates every aspect of class struggle. “Whoever expects a ‘pure’ social revolution will *never* live to see it. Such a person pays lip-service to revolution without understanding what revolution is,” as Lenin teaches us.¹⁹

¹⁹ Lenin in “*The discussion on self-determination summed up*” (1916). From the same document, this passage is also relevant:

The Russian Revolution of 1905 was a bourgeois-democratic revolution. It consisted of a series of battles in which *all* the discontented classes, groups and elements of the population participated. Among these there were masses imbued with the crudest *prejudices*, with the vaguest and most fantastic aims of struggle; there were small groups which accepted Japanese money, there were speculators and adventurers, etc. But *objectively*, the mass movement was breaking the hack of tsarism and paving the way for democracy; for this reason the class-conscious workers led it.

The socialist revolution in Europe *cannot* be anything other than an outburst of mass struggle on the part of all and sundry oppressed and discontented elements. Inevitably, sections of the petty bourgeoisie and of the backward workers will participate in it—without such participation, *mass* struggle is *impossible*, without it no revolution is possible—and just as inevitably will they bring into the movement their prejudices, their reactionary fantasies, their weaknesses and errors. But *objectively* they will attack *capital*, and the class-conscious vanguard of the revolution, the advanced proletariat, expressing this objective truth of a variegated and discordant, motley and outwardly fragmented, mass struggle, will be able to unite and direct it, capture power, seize the banks, expropriate the trusts which all hate (though for difficult reasons!), and introduce other dictatorial measures which in their totality will amount to the overthrow of the bourgeoisie and the victory of socialism, which, however, will by no means im-

When General Kornilov organized a garrison in Russia in 1917 to march on Petrograd, overthrow the Kerensky government, and establish a reactionary military junta, the Bolsheviks reacted not only by organizing armed popular defense but also by sending delegations of Red Guards to propagandize among the troops of Kornilov—to persuade the soldiers to join the revolution.

The most important lesson we draw from events in the US for our country is that we have to work hard to multiply WOs and POs, strengthen them, bring them into coordination with each other, and unify them under the political objective of establishing an emergency government, specifically the PBG. The ongoing political crisis of the imperialist system will have a stronger impact over the course of things as much as, in a growing number of countries, communists are able to enhance the discontent of the popular masses and grow their resistance in order to transform them into a governing force.

If, in Italy, we fail to establish the PBG and reactionary mobilization prevails, we will have to change our plan of action accordingly, since the very existence of an open party like P. CARC would be impossible and unnecessary. But even then, history has shown that it is always possible to turn reactionary mobilization into revolutionary mobilization (see the October Revolution during World War I and the outcome of World War II), and this is precisely why large sectors of the ruling class today fear an open reactionary turn and will discourage it as long as they can.

10. What is Italy's place within the capitalist-imperialist world system today, and how is Italian imperialism orienting to the inter-imperialist contradictions playing out in the world? After Brexit, is the movement for Italexit in advance or retreat? What section of the bourgeoisie in Italy favors staying in the EU versus withdrawing? And how do these pro-EU and anti-EU currents relate to NATO and the 30,000+ US military personnel stationed

mediately 'purge' itself of petty-bourgeois slag.

in Italy? How do they relate to the aid and overtures made by Russia and China during the pandemic?

Italy is a weak link in the imperialist chain for historical reasons, namely the fact that the Church opposed the development of the capitalist system in its early stages in the peninsula, and because, in addition to the structures that are part of the EU imperialist groups, we have the presence of the Vatican, US troops, and criminal organizations. This scenario renders the various groupings vying for leadership over the country in perpetual conflict with one another.

The process by which the EU has been constructed, beginning immediately after World War II, has unfolded in stages. The European imperialist groups—despite their contradictions, the hostility of the US imperialists, and the growing opposition of the peoples of many member states—work to force the states of the member countries to straitjacket the masses with the objectives of: (1) eliminating the concessions wrested by the masses during the period of “capitalism with a human face” (1945–1976) when the communist movement was strong in the world; (2) stifling the resistance of popular masses to the course of things and preventing a renaissance of a conscious and organized communist movement; and (3) coping with the US imperialist groups and other countries that are also struggling with the second general crisis of the absolute overproduction of capital. The European Stability Mechanism and the Recovery Fund are present-day operations aimed at these goals.

Putting an end to the catastrophic course of events in any European country necessitates breaking with the EU (and with NATO). In fact, the catastrophic course of events is the only course that the European imperialist groups are able to set countries on as a ruling class given their nature and the general crisis of capitalism. To propose to make the EU into a body of cooperation among the peoples of Europe makes as much sense as trying to make water dry. Those who want to end the catastrophic course of things in their own country must restore *national sovereignty*, reorganize their country

(starting from productive activities), and establish relationships of exchange, collaboration, and solidarity with *any* other country willing to do the same. A world socialist revolution can only come about through the combination of revolutions made in many countries, with each country raising its own banner of national sovereignty. In the stage of imperialism, the banner of national sovereignty has been dropped in the mud by the imperialist bourgeoisie, as most countries are merely hunting grounds for a small number of large imperialist groups.

So we have to put an end to the EU and NATO not only in the sense to getting out of them, but also in the sense of subverting them completely. If four or five NATO countries break ranks, even just as Turkey has, by withdrawing their troops from external operations outside their borders, NATO is finished. If a country the size of Italy issues mini-BOTs²⁰ and breaks other EU austerity orders, the EU is over.

An article in *Le monde diplomatique* from 2018²¹ runs a fairly detailed simulation of what an EU country's government can do in order to restore sovereignty by "arm wrestling" with speculative and financial capital. However, (1) the Tsipras government elected in Greece in 2015 clearly revealed that in order to put forward an agenda in the interests of the popular masses, a government must either mobilize the popular masses against the bourgeoisie's retaliation or succumb to it. In other words, these are tasks that only

20 "Mini-BOTs," or "mini-Bills of Treasury," is a proposal for the Italian central bank to issue small-denomination government bonds that could then be used by members of the public as bond certificates to conduct transactions and pay taxes. Practically speaking, they would be very similar to money. However, it is illegal for EU member states to issue their own currencies. See Josh Barro, "The Mini-BOT: The One Weird Trick for Leaving the Euro That Shows Why Countries Can't Leave the Euro," *New York Magazine*, 17 June 2019, nymag.com/intelligencer/2019/06/the-mini-bot-one-weird-trick-for-leaving-the-euro.html (accessed 15 July 2021).

21 Renaud Lambert and Sylvain Leder, "Face aux marchés, le scénario d'un bras de fer," *Le Monde diplomatique*, October 2018, monde-diplomatique.fr/2018/10/LAMBERT/59131 (accessed 15 July 2021).

the PBG, because of its links with WOs and POs, can take up; and (2) as communists, we must be aware that the implementation of such measures in the interests of the popular masses through their mobilization could possibly push the bourgeoisie to unleash a civil war, and so we must plan accordingly (which is the best way to avoid it).

II. Final question comrade: What sustains your hope and commitment as a communist revolutionary today?

Rather than hope, let us talk about understanding, assimilating, and applying the communist conception of the world. The communist conception of the world is based on the scientific elaboration of the experience of class struggle, a practice that no communist in imperialist countries has ever committed to unreservedly (with the exception of Antonio Gramsci, whose case, however, remains isolated). The scientific elaboration that we carry out today is therefore certainty of victory.

The transition from capitalism to communism is not a hope, but an objective historical necessity. One may or may not understand this necessity, but the objective reality remains. This is basically an intellectual matter. The communist conception of the world does not spontaneously arise from class struggle. It is a matter of science; it is a matter of studying. Communists bring the conception to the working class from the outside—this is the essence of Leninism.

Communism is a historical necessity, but it requires the subjective intervention of communists to unfold, just as childbirth (the birth of a new era) needs a midwife (the vanguard party). In other words, understanding that the process is inevitable is not enough for it to happen. Our acting is part of this necessity; we must *apply* what we learn. There needs to be communists who are willing to allow their understanding to guide their moral choices in the world. Choices are to be made on a daily basis. The process of building a revolution is, therefore, not only intellectual but also a moral one.

The capacity to use our understanding as a guide for action is what we call *assimilation* of the communist conception. It is derived from the daily practice of class struggle, the collective assessment of that experience, and the modification of our behaviors accordingly. The granite conviction of communists and the success of our work essentially depends on the level of assimilation of our science.

This is the essence of what the (n)PCI calls *intellectual and moral reform*. Each cadre of our party must undertake this, consciously directed by the Party as the vanguard.²² This is nothing new, as communists have always had to do this to fulfill their duties, and this intellectual and moral reform will be made *en masse* by the entire population, but only after we take power. However, especially in imperialist countries, this process was never accomplished at the required level. Thanks to Maoism, communists today can tread this path consciously.²³ Transformation of the world and the transfor-

22 The party referred to here is P. CARC, however, the same principle would apply to members of the (n)PCI in accordance with the standards of that party.

23 We see the intellectual and moral reform of communists and, by extension, of the people as one of six contributions of Maoism to the communist conception of the world. We see six main contributions of Maoism to Marxism-Leninism (which leads us to speak of MLM):

1. That protracted revolutionary people's war is the universal strategy for socialist revolution—even in imperialist countries. By its nature, socialist revolution does not and will not “break out.”
2. That the new democratic revolution in semi-feudal countries is a component of the socialist revolution.
3. That class struggle in socialist society is essential in the transition from capitalism to communism. In socialist countries, the bourgeoisie is not mainly constituted of the heirs of the old exploiting classes: rather, it consists of those leaders of the Communist Party, the proletarian state, and other social institutions that apply to the problems of development in socialist society solutions inspired by the social system and long experience of capitalism.
4. That the mass line is the main method of work of the Communist Party and its approach toward popular masses. It consists of mobilizing the left in every area the left to join the center and isolate the right; of collecting the scattered and approximate ideas of popular masses, process them, and bring them back to the masses as a line to be implemented.

mation of ourselves are connected. We express this by saying that communists are both “the subject and the object of the revolution.”

None of the results we have achieved so far would have been possible if we had not elaborated, studied, assimilated, and applied the communist conception of the world at the level of synthesis that the (n)PCI has arrived at so far (based on MLM). For me personally, it's been as illuminating as a lighthouse in a stormy sea.

I'll close by saying that we will do what is necessary for the relationship between our organizations to continue and strengthen in the common struggle until victory. Let us move along with the second wave of the proletarian revolution developing all over the world!

-
5. That the two-line struggle in the Party is the principle for its development and the main defense from the influence of the bourgeoisie. At each step in the development of the Party, the available paths can be summarized in two ways and in two lines: one that advances the revolution and expresses the interests of the proletariat and the other that brakes the revolution and expresses the influence of the bourgeoisie. It is essential to locate the two lines, and make the revolutionary proletarian line prevail.
 6. The communists are not only the subject (the promoters and leaders) of the socialist revolution: they are also the object of the socialist revolution. All who adhere to the Communist Party are who they are, but they are also what they are not and who they can become. Each communist must be willing to transform their own conception of the world, their mentality, and to a certain extent even their personality to carry out their role as promoter of the socialist revolution with the greatest possible efficacy. This is an “intellectual and moral reform,” which is part of the permanent training that the Party gives to each member.