

Italy: Build the response to the fascist attack on the CGIL and the policies of the bosses

Sunday 17 October 2021, by [TURIGLIATTO Franco](#) (Date first published: 13 October 2021).

It is correct to call for the banning of fascist and extreme right-wing organizations, but there can be no illusion that their threat will be defeated as a result of actions from capitalist institutions.

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The events of the last few days confront us with a particularly serious political and social situation, made even more complicated and difficult by its contradictory elements and the collateral effects it produces. There is a deepening fog of confusion and a lot of over-simplification, even if some key facts are clear.

The assault on the CGIL headquarters

After a series of demonstrations called under the aegis of the no vax and no green pass campaigns in which the presence of extreme right-wing organizers was already all too clear, the large demonstration in Rome on Saturday chose, without hesitation, a hundred years after the destruction of the Chambers of Labor by the Fascists, to target the national headquarters of the CGIL. The assault by the forces of the extreme right, under the smug gaze of hundreds of people, was prolonged, reaching the fifth floor of the building, without being in any way countered by the so-called forces of order. The latter were therefore fully complicit in the aggression, responsible also for a policing of the streets that has left the no vax and various fascist components free range to roam the city for many hours. To the extent that at the end of the day there were virtually no arrests or detentions. Some arrests only happened on the day after.

There can be no doubts about what happened. It is a political and symbolic attack by fascist forces on the historic organisation of the working class. It is an aggression against the unions that, over and beyond the leaders' current line of collaboration, represent an entire historical epoch of class organisation. It is an attack on millions of organized workers, an objective attack on all trade union organizations, both confederal and grassroots, on all workers in our country. It is of serious concern.

It expresses at the same time the degree of whitewashing of fascists that has been going on for years. There has been a lack of a real anti-fascist mobilization that is not just a hollow political front. Government policies and political parties' complicity and / or indifference at various levels have facilitated this normalisation. At the same time we have seen the increasingly reactionary climate of the dominant ideologies as well as massive deprivation caused by the economic policies of austerity.

It is not only an alarm signal, but a more immediate danger, and for this reason it was positive that there was a strong and immediate reaction, with the defensive assemblies outside the union halls and office, with a strong mobilisation of union activists and with the calling of a national demonstration.

It is also clear that the attack was possible because there is no overall mobilization against layoffs, precariousness, the policies of the Draghi government, for work, employment, wages, rights, a real revival of health care and public education, all fundamental in any fightback against the manifest social breakdown. This is where the fascists can build support. We have been fighting for a long time together with the trade union currents of class struggle, both at the grassroots and the minority within the CGIL for an overall anti-austerity fightback.

That's why, if on the one hand it is right to fight for the banning of fascist organizations, at the same time we must be aware that the capitalist state will never eliminate them. Only mobilization and struggle can nip fascist squadristism in the bud. Whoever forgets the lessons of history, can only favor the emergence of new misfortunes.

The by-products

Then there are the side effects that complicate our response. The union leaderships have been practicing class collaboration with the government and the bosses for years and even recently refused to support the general strike call made by the GKN workers along with tens of thousands of other workers in Florence on September 18 with their slogan of "Let's rise up". The union tops do not seem to want to understand the demand for a change in union policy. But at the same time what has happened provides them a new political credibility both internally and externally. They obtain the solidarity of many political forces and also that of the government. Draghi's gave Landini a solidarity hug on TV. We can only be concerned about this "embrace" because it is a true "class collaborationist embrace"; it serves the head of the government to cement the convergence and consultation of the CGIL (the confederal union still subject to some fighting pressure from below) in the management of the Recovery Plan and in the upcoming financial legislation. The union reaction will not lead to a radicalization and the hypothesis of a general strike which appears further away than ever. But it is also for this reason that the demonstration in Rome next Saturday becomes an important political event it could define a new relationship of forces in the country, especially if it is large and if sectors of workers find a way of expressing their combativeness and their will to fight on radical demands. We will see.

The law of dialectics acts powerfully in these events in the interplay between objective facts and the subjective choices of political and trade union forces and bourgeois institutions.

The general strike of the grassroots unions

This is the second important recent event. After longterm efforts, the rank and file, class struggle trade union organizations, based on a unified platform, carried out a national strike on October 11, which drew support from the present social contradictions and from the suffering of many sectors of workers. The strike could not, given its present support, truly block the country, but it found a greater response than in the past, with significant participation in some sectors, with large demonstrations in many cities: in Rome with the presence of Alitalia workers, in Piacenza with the concentration of logistics workers, but also in Turin, Milan, Florence and other cities. This mobilisation was very positive, even if it was a patchy. Of course the demonstrations were also

characterized by a lot of confusion, by union extremism, here and there by the intrusive presence of no vax campaigners, and also by unacceptable sectarianism such as those expressed in front of the CGIL union offices in Milan. But in that same demonstration many other striking workers instead exchanged solidarity with the comrades who were defending the CGIL building. Perhaps we can also say that the leaderships of these unions do not always have a full understanding that happened in Rome affects, even if indirectly, all of them.

In part all this is inevitable given the current state of the class struggle.

The divisions within the working class are first of all objective, they are due to low levels of consciousness that then take on different forms, they are union based and finally also political. I want to express this in a personalized form. The undersigned, who assiduously attends both the events of the majority confederal union world and those of the grassroots unions, is always concerned and also embittered by both the bureaucratic leaderships' conservative and comanagement propositions and by the rank and file leaderships' rebellious ones, which are understandable but often lack real substance. We have seen these dichotomies many times in the history of the workers' movement and they are not easy to overcome. For now I don't see enough forces working patiently to overcome them. This is fundamental if we want to rebuild class unity and a class struggle bloc able to stand up to the capitalist offensive.

The key strands of our orientation

Our organization has been present in these days in front of the union halls and in the Monday marches of the grassroots unions, advancing its positions and distributing our leaflets. We will be present at next Saturday's demonstration in Rome on the basis of these political positions.

A serious, mass struggle must be waged against the fascist forces. Fascist and extreme right-wing organizations must be banned, but there can be no illusions that capitalist institutions can solve this problem. We can welcome any coalition with other democratic forces in the struggle against the fascists. They are useful and necessary, but independence from the capitalist state and building an alternative strategic class struggle pole are decisive to achieve success and not end up crushed and/or subordinate to the policies of the government.

At the same time, a strong battle must be waged against the policies of the capitalists, against the economic choices of the Draghi government and of the bosses, who are the other enemies to be fought along with the fascists. The battles for employment and for the defense of the living conditions of the working class are all ongoing and the construction of the insurgency is more than ever on the agenda. It must be expressed in the next period in a very large general strike with radical demands.

We propose to work together with the political forces of the radical left to build this way forward.

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P.S.

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