

THE UNION'S ROOTS

There is no future without struggles

We present and ask you to vote on this alternative document because we want the Congress of the CGIL leads to a political and organizational change of the line in recent years. We want a stronger CGIL, that overcome the consensus crisis we have and recover a close relationship with the real needs of the labour. We think we need more radicalism, not moderation. We need a CGIL less top-down and less bureaucratized which gives more power to members, workplaces, shop-steward who they are much closer to the problems that each of us experiences daily.

This is a bottom-up document. It is mainly supported by shop-stewards: few general secretaries uphold it. The document claims his basic aims right from the title. The "union's roots": we refer with this expression to the need of a greater radicality and the recovery of the struggle traditions of the trade union movements. We say that "without struggles there is no future" because we want to propose a different model from consultation with governments and unity with the CISL and UIL leaders. In recent years, in our opinion, this strategy has prevented any advancement and the defence of our protections, our wages, our pensions.

In these 4 years, since the last Congress, the CGIL leaders have decided not to really oppose the Draghi's openly anti-popular government. When we finally got to the general strike on December 16, it was late. And yes, we led workers on strike, but then there was no struggle for months, despite another broken promise on pensions and the impoverishment of wages, due to inflation. We have lived in these years with the pandemic, the environmental crisis, the threat of a world war and our increasingly poor wages in the face of skyrocketing inflation. In this extraordinary phase we need, more than ever, an antagonist and conflictual CGIL, which knows how to oppose the interests of the government and the employers (Confindustria).

The very situation of the workers says it. In the last 30 years, in Italy, real wages have decreased, working hours have become longer, precariousness has increased. Today the women's employment rate is much lower than the European average, especially in the South, and on average, three people a day die on the job. In recent years, billions of euros have gone to businesses and now they will go to military spending. We are left with the crumbs: a policy of sacrifices. This situation risks worsening because of war and inflation. It's time to say "Enough". To change, the CGIL leaders must first question the strategy they have accepted and practiced in recent decades.

For years, congresses have promised a campaign to reduce working hours for the same pay. It is a fundamental goal, but it is not enough to write it down. In the last years, we didn't even struggle to reduce the retirement age. The CGIL must change its strategy, otherwise we will not be able to obtain even one of the rights that we lost and that now we promise to regain. We all should take a leaf out from the GKN labor dispute, the factory in Campi Bisenzio (near Florence) which was occupied on 9 July 2021. An extraordinary struggle that has managed to give everyone a prospect of change: the GKN Factory Collective proposed an alternative and radical trade union strategy, not sectarian but demanding, which put aside the sense of defeat and resignation. This struggle has been able to build a broad and supportive movement, under the slogan **Let's rise up!** (#Insorgiamo!). And this movement has managed to bring together workers, students, environmentalists and those who fight for peace.

In our opinion, this is what the entire CGIL should do. Our union should finally put aside years of social concertation (an Italian particularly form of consultation between trade unions, government, and enterprises), wage moderation, resignation, and compatibility with the existing system. Years of unsuccessful struggles (such as in 2011 on pensions), started late (such as the one against the Jobs act in 2015) or not continued (such as the last general strike, in December 2021). Years of bureaucratization of the organization, bilateral bodies [agency set up by trade unions and firm associations] and individual services. Years of social pacts. In these years, we have distanced ourselves from social movements. It is necessary to overturn this strategy. We must have the courage to go back to being a conflictual and demanding trade union, to break with the sense of powerlessness and defeat, to oppose governments and bosses. Above all we must not to be afraid to say the word strike. If we say we want to change the present state of things, let's do it! But this time seriously and to the end because the practice of recent years has been another. And the balance is all against us. Without conflict, struggles, strikes we will not get a tenth of what they have taken away from us in recent years.

With this spirit, in relationship with social movements, we propose in this document a great campaign of struggles, starting from these questions.

- **Against the laws on precariousness, the repeal of the Jobs act and the reconquest of Article 18.** Against outsourcing and procurement policies, staff leasing, school-work alternance.
- **To raise wages and finally break with the wage moderation policies of the last 30 years.** We need to claim real increases in national contracts, and we need to cancel the IPCA reference which we have accepted in recent years. That is, the mechanism that adjust the wages to inflation, purified by the increase in energy and oil costs. This impoverishes wages. It's time to claim the minimum wage and a new general wage escalator.
- **To repeal the Fornero law and any automatic mechanism for extending the working age.** It is unacceptable to think that you can work up to 67 years! It is necessary to reduce the retirement age, return to a final salary pension, anticipate the exit of those who carry out heavy and strenuous work, who started working very early and who also carry out care work. Everyone thinks so, but if we don't really struggle and to the end, we will never be able to cancel the Fornero law.
- **For a generalized reduction of working hours for the same wages.** The work must be redistributed between those who work too much and those who work too little. We must impose limits on flexibility, overtime, work on Sundays and holidays, broken shifts, involuntary part time, starting with national employment contracts.
- **For a social action for health and safety at work.** It is not acceptable that in this country, annually, 3 people a day die in the workplace. They are not accidents, but murders. We want certain and more severe penalties, with the crime of homicide at work. The right to report risky conditions must be guaranteed without retaliation. It is necessary to increase investments in inspections, to multiply the resources and the inspectors in verifying working conditions, and to ensure compliance with safety regulations.
- **To defend jobs, against layoffs and business relocations.** Enough with enterprises that take money from governments and shut down overnight, relocate and leave rubble behind them.
- **For a public, universal, and quality welfare state.** Healthcare, schools, universities and research, social services, transport, common goods, water, housing must be public and guaranteed to all. Enough cuts, privatizations, outsourcing, corporatization, and regionalization. No to any differentiated autonomy, no to contractual welfare and to supplementary healthcare. It is necessary to demand the ethical, social and economic redemption of the South, because the differences in the country are enormous and not tolerable.

All these things seem impossible only because they have accustomed us to resignation. Instead, we must pretend to regain the many rights that have taken away from us. Governments always find the money for military spending, businesses and banks. But never for us. We must claim them, we must demand a highly progressive taxation of income and finally we must really fight against tax evasion and avoidance. But if we don't struggle, if we don't take them, no one will ever give us anything. In our opinion, this is what the CGIL must do.

We address many other issues in the document and in particular the need for the CGIL to recover a closer relationship with social movements. Our union must be more radical on issues like opposition to war, the dispatch of weapons to Ukraine and military spending, the climate crisis, and the women's rights, against any gender discrimination, violence, repression and racial hatred.

We have decided to present an alternative document to this Congress not because we want to break the CGIL, but rather, because we want it stronger. Confronting different positions is normal and healthy, especially for those who want a more democratic and less top-down CGIL, like us. We in fact want a CGIL less linked to institutions and political buildings. Instead, we want a CGIL based on the shop steward, their autonomy and radicalism, on struggles, on the vote of workers and on the relationship with social movements.

For this reason, we invite you to vote this document, the second. To give us, from the base, the strength to bring the CGIL back to its roots, returning radical. Because it is from the roots that a tree is watered and cared for, and only in this way it will blossom again.

If you are a member of the CGIL

VOTE: THE UNION'S ROOTS

First signatory: Eliana Como