on behalf of USB and as a member of the fsm secretariat, i welcome this important european conference

thank you to cgt val de marne to host it and all the work the comrades are doing

The international phase that humanity as a whole is currently going through is characterised by an unprecedented economic and social crisis in countries with mature capitalism, which is reflected on the political and military fields through events that are unfolding with increasing speed. From the war in Ukraine to the genocide in Palestine, from the tensions in the China Sea to the process of decolonisation underway in Central Africa, to the profound transformations in Latin America, the world is being shaken by a redrawing of power relations that threatens to lead to increasingly devastating and destabilising wars.

We are facing a process of profound transformations, of power structures and relations of force consolidated after the Second World War, disrupted first by the end of the Soviet Union and today by a profound crisis of hegemony of western imperialism due to several factors, one of which is certainly the growth of powerful competitors, coagulated around the grouping of world economies known as the BRICS.

Upstream of these potentially apocalyptic scenarios we can clearly see the crisis of a mode of production, the capitalist one, which has reached its limits of development. The current clash deepens, rather than resolves, this crisis, leading to a fragmentation of the places of production and markets, thus narrowing the profit margins for large multinational companies and, consequently, for states and governments completely enslaved to them through the neo-liberal policies pursued from the 1980s until today.

War, the worsening of the living conditions of workers and peoples, and laws against the right to protest, to social conflict, are today the elements that characterise this historical phase and without any prospect of change, indeed war is increasingly becoming the only viable path for a capitalist system in crisis. In Italy, the Meloni government, in perfect continuity with previous governments and with the indications of the European Union, continues to increase social differences, to keep wages low, to reduce taxes for the richer classes, to support Ukraine and the genocidal Israeli government.

The Draghi Report on the Competition of the European Production System sets the direction: all resources must be used for competition, strengthening European companies operating in strategic sectors, investing in the war and defence industry. The military/industrial system is becoming the flywheel of a possible economic recovery.

Resources to war, starvation wages, increasing poverty, deindustrialisation, development only of sectors such as tourism, where wages are lower, work is precarious and exploitation high.

Our government's only response is repression, the heavy restriction of the spaces of democracy and freedom for social, political and trade union conflict.

The new bill proposed by the Meloni government and in the process of being approved by the Senate, called the ‘Security Decree’ hits youth and environmental organisations, those who fight for the right to live, those who promote strikes and roadblocks, those who take to the streets for their fundamental rights

In this situation the only possible response is to strengthen our trade unions and social organisations, relaunching the conflict. USB has taken on this task, not an easy task in Italy given the permanent passivity of the world of work.

We are facing this phase by promoting continuous initiatives, mobilisations, marches and strikes that link the no to the real social and repressive war against our class to the struggle against the ongoing genocide of the Palestinian people by the Zionist state of Israel, against the political and military support guaranteed by the Italian government to the genocide, against the use of resources taken away from wages, health, schools, housing and social services to support NATO and Ukraine.

We went through an autumn season that saw us as protagonists of important struggles and strikes that involved thousands of workers participating in demonstrations under the flags of our class union

Let's talk about the strikes in the logistics and transport sectors in September and October, two leading sectors for the economy and extremely combative, so much so that various ministers intervened calling for greater repression and further tightening of the already heavy strike law.

Let's talk about 31 October, when the civil service called a strike of the entire sector with a major demonstration in Rome under the Ministry of Public Administration,

Let's talk about the national industry strike in November with demonstrations in many cities and the participation of major Italian companies.

Lastly, the general strike on 13 December, which in the major metropolises and in many cities blocked public transport and other strategic sectors of industry and logistics, leading thousands of workers to two major demonstrations in Rome and Milan and resulting in a resounding defeat of the transport minister Salvini, who wanted to impose a strike restriction.

On the basis of these tangible results we continue the fundamental work of strengthening the class union organisation in our country, the USB.

This conference must be the beginning of a common path of analysis and struggle, particularly on some strategic sectors in Europe today, such as transport and logistics, which are closely linked to the war industry, and industry, which is currently experiencing a deep crisis in the main European countries.

Only the strengthening of the class and conflictual unions belonging to the fsm can be a real response to the attack on our class.

Dear comrades, our role and function today, as 80 years ago when the WFTU was founded, are fundamental.

We who fight every day against war, against capitalism, against a system that wants us as slaves, who block Israel's weapons in the ports and fight for workers' rights.

Long live the WFTU

Long live internationalist solidarity