

INFORMATIVE BULLETIN

ORGAN OF THE REVOLUTIONARY STUDENTS UNION (ITALY)

«*Politics is the science of production*» Claude Henry of Saint Simon

INTERVIEW WITH CDE. D. ROVICS

HIS CONTRIBUTION TO NORTH AMERICAN AND INTERNATIONAL SOCIALIST MUSIC IS UNPARALLELED

Today's issue, for our usual readers, must surely be peculiar. In fact, we have interviewed not an Italian but an international musical author. Comrade David Rovics, a brilliant interpreter of North American socialist music culture, fully deserves this issue. Indeed, it is perhaps too little that we can offer to his musical genius, whom we all so much admire and in whom we place immense hopes for the future of socialist music. Modernly, his relevance is unquestionable on every level, internationally as much as within the borders of the United States of America.

Well, indeed, for those comrades who may not know him, Comrade Rovics lives in Portland, Oregon, in the United States. Apparently, even the world's most criminal nation has been able to generate a shining rose for the world's proletarian culture. As if his past contributions were not enough, Comrade Rovics is in full activity, and even frequently visits Europe for his concerts, which is extraordinary for a singer from the New World: thus it contributes to socialist and popular culture on a world scale, spreading excellent songs of more than inspiring ideological direction. The popular masses must give thanks to this giant of socialist culture. Given this, it should be obvious to any of our readers why we decided to interview this very important personality. For our readers outside Italy, we thank you for your

attention by reading this Bulletin (which is produced in two languages, Italian and English).

We are convinced that a socialist and students' organization must, in a modern way, also deal with cultural politics. Our own constitution, in Section One, says: *Article II. The Revolutionary Students Union is a cultural initiative devoted to the education of the student population through discussion, devoted to the demystification and explanation of revolutionary socialism.* It is therefore necessary in the very constitution of a modern Marxist Organization to be concerned with popularizing socialist culture as well, and not only its doctrine. Communism, in fact, could never triumph or spread universally without cultural works that support and dignify it, make it more accessible, and spread it throughout society by cultural and not directly political means.

However, not all of us are capable of composing music, painting, sculpting or producing other cultural works: indeed most people are not well versed in any art specifically. The need for works of art therefore also and especially requires the existence of specialized authors. Among specialized authors, Comrade David Rovics is one of the best nowadays. His star's sun cannot be dimmed. If the need for such geniuses is clear, to be able to celebrate them biographically and culturally as we do today is an honor

and a duty of every modern culturally oriented organization.

Already Ludwig Geymonat, immense Marxist epistemologist and historian of science, lamented the inability of an old PCI in the cultural sphere, and hoped in his speech at the founding congress of the Communist Re-foundation Party [note for our international readers, an attempt to reconstitute the PCI after the fall of the Berlin Wall: the PCI (ICP, Italian Communist Party) had been liquidated by the social democrats in 1991] for a new cultural policy and attention to intellectuals (as he says, a program worthy of the Renewed Communist Party, the new Communist Party). We can only embrace this call, also and especially, with initiatives of this kind, highlighting the importance and extraordinary ability of authors such as Comrade David Rovics.

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D. ROVICS BIOGRAPHY

Writing Collective

DAVID ROVICS, BASTION OF PROLETARIAN MUSIC IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

David Stephen Rovics, born in New York on April 10, 1967, is an independent singer-songwriter, musician, writer and podcaster living in Portland, Oregon. His music, which is unique in the United States of America, deals with current topics such as, for example, the 2003 Iraq War, anti-globalization, but mostly addresses justice and social struggles. Rovics has also harshly criticized former President George Bush, the Republican Party, John Kerry, and the Democratic Party, as he spares no criticism of U.S. government policies, stating that "the foreign policy of the U.S. government represents the interests of U.S. corporations" and that "the U.S. government does not like democracy at home or abroad." Although some of Rovics' work is not self-published and much of it is commercially distributed, Rovics has made all of his recorded music freely available as downloadable mp3 files. He encourages free distribution of his work through all non-profit means to promote and spread political messages, opposing Web sites or programs such as iTunes that charge money for downloading his songs. Rovics has also encouraged the performance of his songs at protests and demonstrations and has made his sheet music and lyrics available for download.

When he was young, his family moved to Wilton, Connecticut, where he was inspired politically during his adolescence by his experiences with conservative and Christian environments. His parents, both classical musicians and educators with liberal views, influenced Rovics' adolescent social activity, particularly on issues such as nuclear disarmament, vegetarianism, and other counterculture issues. He described himself as an "anti-Zionist Jew from New York." In 1985 Rovics enrolled at Earlham College in Richmond, Indiana, where, however, he abandoned his studies

and moved to Berkeley, California. There, while continuing and pursuing his musical interests as a street performer, on the subway and in small clubs and bars, he held jobs as a cook, bartender, secretary and typist. Rovics thus immersed himself in the left-wing counterculture, coming into contact with other songwriters and artists on the underground music circuit (meaning all those genres of music that are programmatically at antithesis with mass culture and to the music industry system). By the early 1990s he had become a full-time street musician in the subways of Boston, Massachusetts. Since the mid-1990s Rovics has spent most of his time on world tours. In 1996 he self-produced his first album, *Make It So*, containing mainly covers of songs by other artists. In 1998 he released his second album of covers. Between '98 and 2003 he produced a series of five albums of self-produced original songs. The album *Who Would Jesus Bomb?* It was distributed in its entirety in mp3 format on the Internet freely and had no commercial release, although it was later included in the best-of album. In 2003 Rovics signed a record deal with Ever Reviled Records, with whom he released a studio album, *Return*. In the same year he released *Behind The Barricades: The Best Of David Rovics*, released by Daemon Records, which included his previous self-productions that were commercially successful. Since the release of *Songs for Mahmud* as a self-production in association with Ever Reviled Records, Rovics has been publishing several albums a year.

Although David Rovics has not achieved great commercial success he has been consistently acclaimed by critics and some sections of the press: BBC "If the great Philip Ochs were resurrected today, he would probably be hailed as the new David Rovics" (Andrew Kershaw) and "Absolutely brilliant. David Rovics says exactly what needs to be said" (John McMillan); MTV "David Rovics is a

freaking genius" (Henry Spitznagel). Rovics is, in fact, a fundamental point of reference for all counterculture and anti-capitalist realities in the United States of America and throughout the world. Just to cope with the worldwide spread of his music Rovics regularly tours four continents, playing to audiences, large and small, at protests and festivals, as well as in occupied social centers and folk clubs. He has played in more than two dozen countries, including all of the United States of America except Mississippi and North Dakota (except for an open mic in 1989 in Bismarck). He has been featured in protests throughout North America and Europe, including many demonstrations against the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank in Washington DC including one on April 16, 2000; anti-war protests in Washington and New York including one on February 15, 2003, for half a million people. When George Bush went to Berlin in 2002, Rovics entertained the more than one hundred thousand people who went to protest; at the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Treaty protest he sang for two hundred and fifty thousand people. He also attended the G8 protests in Rostock in 2007, the G8 protests in Scotland in 2005, the G20 in Pittsburgh in 2009, and the G20 in Toronto the following year. He has also played at protests for thousands of people in England, Denmark, Sweden, Belgium, the Netherlands, Australia and Japan. In addition to his musical involvement in anti-capitalist, labor, environmental, and anti-war movements internationally, since 2000 he has been writing and singing songs during protests related to the Israeli occupation of Palestine, which is part of the reason why false and slanderous accusations of anti-Semitism and Holocaust denial have been leveled against him.

In 2005 he did a tour that included ten performances in the West Bank, as well as performances in Lebanon and Jordan. He has also toured in Japan, Hong Kong and several Latin

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American countries, as well as Australia, New Zealand and most of Europe. His music is also played regularly on community radio stations and has also been broadcast by Democracy Now!, BBC-where for a time he was a regular guest on a national radio program in the UK, until Andrea Kershaw lost her job-, Al-Jazeera (Qatar), Acik Radyo (Turkey). He has occasionally been a guest on other media, including the Washington Post, Russia Today, Press TV (Iran), Al-Manar (Lebanon) and national radio programs in Canada, Denmark, Sweden, Germany, Ireland, Australia and elsewhere. His essays are published regularly by Counter-Punch, and have also appeared in Fith Estate, Truthout, Alternet, Dissident Voice, Common Dreams and many other sites, including - of course - his personal blog. The more than 200 songs that Rovics makes freely available on his website have been downloaded more than a million times. His songs have also been performed by various musicians, including one of the leading exponents of the Cuban Nueva Trova: Vincenzo Feliú, who translated the song Song for Ana Belen Montes into Spanish. The song The Commons, on the other hand, was translated into Dutch and recorded with The Kik by Dutch singer-songwriter Armand. The Wakes of Scotland recorded They're Building A Wall and St Patrick Battalion, which has been performed and recorded by many throughout Europe and the Americas. Other widely covered songs of his are Black Flag Flying and I'm A Better Anarchist Than You. His songs have appeared in songbooks, including Rise Again and in the official songbook of the Norwegian Confederation of Trade Unions (LO) and the Danish Socialist Youth Front (SUF). His songs have also appeared regularly in Sing Out! magazine and also in high school textbooks in Germany and Sweden as tools for developing a deeper understanding of U.S. Politics.

Rovics, through his music, political engagement and role in protest

movements internationally, has been cited in numerous books on history and contemporary politics. He is also particularly featured in the last section of William Kaufman's Singing for Peace, a history of the music of the U.S. peace movement from the Revolution to the present. Rovics also wrote a novel, A Busker's Adventures, in 2016 and a pamphlet published by PM Press: Sing for Your Supper - A DIY Guide to Playing Music, Writing Songs and Booking Your Own Gigs. He has recorded dozens of albums and millions of his songs are streamed each year. Rovics also plays children's music with the Pirate Chorus project, directed by him and his partner Reiko (a classically trained pianist with a master's degree in American studies as well as an early childhood educator), with whom he has produced two albums (Ballad of a Dung Beetle and Har Har), one of which features The Pirate Song: one of the rare pieces about pirates that does not mention inappropriate topics for a child audience such as alcohol and contains no swear words, and indeed has been included in elementary school plays throughout the Anglo-Saxon world. Rovics' music has soundtracked many documentaries, broadcast by West Virginia Public Television and ABC in Australia, and has been used as theme music for Truthout audio broadcasts and other radio and Internet broadcasts. This once again gives us insight into the greatness of his music

and his ability to synthesize, creating songs on a wide variety of historical and social themes. His material was used by director Aschello Wexler in Four Days in Chicago and by Muhammad Al-Attar in The Iron Wall. In 2009 in Copenhagen he opened at Valby Hall for Venezuelan President Ugo Chavez-where he also sang his famous song Song For Hugo Chavez- and Bolivian President Evo Morales who were speaking at a gala event organized by the Danish group Friends of Cuba. Rovics has also shared the stage with other left-wing politicians in many countries, including U.S. Congressmen Daniel Kucinich, Bernard Sanders, Cynthia McKinney, with U.S. Green Party presidential candidates David Cobb and Jill Stein, with members of the European Parliament and parliamentarians from many European countries, including the United Kingdom, Denmark and Portugal. He is also a member of the Industrial Workers of the World. Rovics currently lives in Portland, Oregon, having moved here in 2007 with his family and has three children. All the various moves throughout his life have allowed him to come into contact with various social and cultural realities, which have evidently and strongly influenced his musical career and music.

In the words of Pete Seeger, one of Rovics' greatest inspirers, "Listen to David Rovics!"



**Comrade David
Rovics.**

**4/10/1967
20 germinal
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INTERVIEW WITH D. ROVICS

Writing Collective

We now present the interview with Comrade Davide Rovics, thanking him again for the extraordinary opportunity presented to us. The translation was carried out by comrade S. Fontanari, who also conducted the interview, who apologizes in case of inaccuracies. Henceforth, in italics the interviewer's questions and in plain text Comrade Rovics' answers.

Interview with Comrade D. Rovics

1) How did you approach the social-communist world?

I suppose most of the people who come to my shows and listen to my music probably would describe themselves as somewhere on the left, whether socialist, communist, anarchist, social democrat, or elsewhere on the spectrum. so this question is a bit like asking what's my approach to life. And as far as my music goes, my approach is to bring people together, help people find common ground, provide some background for folks looking for our shared history, and especially to encourage people to keep going. When there's a social movement happening, my aim is to help build it by fostering a greater sense of community through music.

2) Why did you decide to express your political beliefs through music?

I was raised by classical musicians, so i guess expressing anything through music for me was a more likely thing than for most people, perhaps. I was also exposed to social movement-oriented music from a pretty young age, so i was aware that this was a thing. then in my late teens i discovered that the tradition was very much still current, when i went out to the west coast of the united states, where i discovered songwriters like Jim Page, from Seattle, who was and is a genius at the craft. Looking back at my drift towards focusing more and more of my energies into

writing songs, it was experiencing what Jim did to the consciousness of a crowd of people that made me think, i want to do that, too. I've basically been aspiring to write a Jim Page song for the past 35 years or so.

3) What does it mean nowadays to be a socialist in the United States of America?

My impression is it's much more acceptable to much of the general public to be a socialist than it has been in a long time. Also, even with those folks who are allergic to the word "socialism," when you explain the general principles involved, most people who think they don't like socialism turn out to like it very much. But certainly this country is a constant ideological battleground, and there are a lot of obstacles in the way of anyone trying to be a good socialist. Such as a completely corrupt political system dominated by billionaires and arms manufacturers.

4) American socialist music has had great contributions in the United States from people such as Pete Seeger. Can you illustrate your relationship with him?

Pete Seeger's music was part of my childhood, both at home and at the hippie elementary school I went to in wilton, connecticut, which is not far from where pete lived, in new york's hudson valley. As a young adult, I had a lot more exposure to pete, through the people's music network (pmn) and their regular gatherings. Pete was a big inspiration for me as a person, as a musician, and as an organizer. He had that inclusive, ecumenical orientation that i have long embraced, he was a brilliant multi-instrumentalist, and for him it was all about the movement and the music, not being a celebrity or making money, and all this really resonated with me from an early age. When i started doing a lot of writing,

recording, and touring, Pete was very supportive in many ways.

5) You are the continuator of a great cultural tradition: how does it feel to be the most relevant heir of that process?

Well it feels good for someone to think i'm the most relevant heir to this tradition! I'd say there are many heirs to the tradition, and the tradition in modern terms would certainly include all kinds of punk rock and hip-hop and other styles, because at least as I view the tradition, it's not about the musical styles of the day, it's about communicating stories and ideas about the world and politics and history through the medium of music. It's great to be part of this tradition. One of the wonderful things about this profession is it involves live performance, where you get immediate, tangible feedback from a live audience, and you don't need to wonder whether you're having an impact. I think it's pretty clear to anyone who's part of this tradition, whether as performer or audience, that using music as a vehicle for community-building and popular education is a powerful thing.

6) Speaking more specifically about music: what are your musical and cultural models?

Definitely Pete Seeger and Jim Page are two of them. But there are so many more. And I don't say that to impress anyone with how steeped I am in different musical traditions, but just to say that in life, there are inevitably so many influences, each of which itself has so many origins. Take, for example, the brilliant italian band, the Modena City Ramblers. They have their own fairly unique sound, but the irish influence is clearly very deep. I've also been at various points obsessed with irish traditional music, which has definitely had a profound impact on me, as has

INTERVIEW WITH D. ROVICS

Writing Collective

appalachian music, and music from Mali, Senegal, and so many other places, that I've at different times been very exposed to. Some of the other songwriters or performers i find particularly mesmerizing include Silvio Rodriguez, Robb Johnson, Christy Moore, Dick Gaughan, Alistair Hulett, Phil Ochs, Bob Dylan, and Buffy St-Marie.

7) *Your song "Glory and Fame" is one of the most moving mosaics of proletarian class history in the world. Can you tell us how it came into being?*

I was just getting started with writing songs that i'd still be proud to be associated with today, when i wrote "glory and fame," which was in 1993. I was living in san francisco, and one of my closest friends, who also lived in the same four-bedroom apartment as me, had just been shot to death. The first decent song i ever wrote was about him. The second was "glory and fame." When i look at that song now, it's a classic kind of song that someone would write who's just starting out with trying to write songs related to politics or history. There is a tendency to try to say everything in one song. Usually it doesn't work, and i often discourage people from trying to say too much in one song, as a general rule. But sometimes it works, and this song might be an example of that.

8) *On the other hand, your song "Failed State" is perhaps the most famous song in your recent discography. Are you proud of it?*

"Failed State" is a really fun one to play, because of the thumpy groove involved. It's another of these songs that covers a lot of ground in one fell swoop, but does so in a way that works. As a piece of songwriting i'm not especially proud of it, I mean for me it doesn't stand out above a lot of other songs, but I don't have enough

songs that have an upbeat musical groove like that one, so I definitely include it in almost every live show, since it shakes things up a bit.

9) *What relationship do you see between the Student Movement and the Workers Movement? Are there possibilities for common struggle?*

I don't mean to sound cynical, but I'm not sure what student movement exists these days. I haven't been to Italy for a long time – I rarely play in southern Europe, for reasons of language, so I'm not so familiar with the political landscape in Italy as I am in Germany, Scandinavia, Great Britain, or Ireland, the Northern European countries where I do most of my touring. In some of these countries, there's an active leftwing youth scene, but I wouldn't call it a student movement, since it's not based out of high schools or universities, but more just youth-based. Maybe I'm being too semantic about definitions, I'm not sure. Generally, students and workers have everything in common, since they are one and the same, just at different stages of life. The students all become workers, though maybe more in the white collar areas of work. The students and the workers struggles are the same – we all benefit from things like egalitarian access to free higher education, a living wage for everyone, high-quality universal health care, universal housing, and all the other policies that any sensible student group or union would be advocating.

10) *What perspectives do you see for the Socialist (or Communist) Movement in the United States and the World?*

It seems to me that if we don't collectively, globally manage to free ourselves from the stranglehold of capitalism -- which is literally killing life on earth overall, as it immiserates people around the world in so many

different ways -- then there's no future for any of us. So, it's socialism or death. Given these simple, fairly obvious options, I choose socialism! Unfortunately, the capitalists in charge of things in the USA and so much of the rest of the world don't choose socialism and life, they choose a profit-driven system hellbent on global ecocide and an unimaginably horrific future of suffering, starvation, and mass extinction. Our only hope is to defeat them, despite all of their power and dominance. The chances look bad for our side, to be perfectly honest, but we also have no choice but to make an effort, do we?

If there are important topics we have not covered, feel free to add anything.

Nothing to add.

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Comrades!

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The editorial board

To international readers

Comrades!

We are sorry that we cannot translate all our materials. You can find other Italian-language materials at:

www.unionerivoluzionariastudentesca.it

With some modern automatic translators, you can even translate entire files into PDFs.

Socialist greetings!

The editorial board

MUSICAL REVIEW: GLORY AND FAME

Writing Collective

We interrupt the usual column devoted to Raffaele Mario Offidani's songs to review two of Comrade Rovics' best and most emblematic musical works. For more information on the composition of this and the next song, see the interview.

The song first appeared on the album *Make it So* in 1996, but the currently circulated and sung edition is the (reduced) one on the subsequent album *We Just Want the World*, from 1998. Recites the Rovics website page on the song that the original title was another, *Ballad of the Proletariat*, a name perhaps more didactic for us Italians. On the advice of Peete Seeger (who said about the title: *Proletariat is a long, Latin word. It might as well be in Swahili or Chinese*) Rovics changed the title to *Glory and Fame* (he notes with the lapidary words: I promptly changed the title). For us Italian readers such a dispute is hardly understandable, but we must remember that the English language is not as neo-Latin as Italian, and therefore "proletariat" is not a word seen as naturally as in our language. It is understandable that popular song should use different stylistic devices to be easier to spread, risk deformation (as we often see in recorded versions of Offidani's songs).

The song is a moving mosaic of the history of the working class in the world, which illustrates with immense skill successively the struggles of the working class in its history, referring to very important milestones in the struggle and exploitation of the working class. As in an immense fresco, the proletarians follow each other in their struggle one after another, falling, but carrying forward the torch of the Revolution until the end, programmatic, poetic, vindictive. We cannot, for reasons of space, provide a translation, nevertheless, considering how a very large proportion of our readers understand English, and so as not to betray the poetic value of the text, we feel it makes sense to

present the original as provided by the author himself:

*I pulled the stones for the emperor,
stacked 'em up and made that wall
I thought, a mountain lasts forever but
the rain must always fall*

*I worked the mines in Chile for
conquistador*

*Died there in the pitshaft, joined my
family with the ore*

*I tapped the trees for Leopold, and
then he took my hands*

*The sap sailed to Brussels and my
blood stained the lands*

*I cut down the sugar cane on the
islands off the coast*

*Oh but the sweet taste of freedom is
the stuff that I love most*

*Tell me who am I
Do you know my name
Will I lie forgotten
Or arise in glory and fame*

*I fought with Poncho Villa, stood with
him side by side*

*When the Bluecoats took the land, I
thought how long is freedom's ride*

*I was there at Haymarket with the
martyrs eight*

*For striking in Chicago, death would
have to be my fate*

*I cut the timber in Centralia, nearly
broke my back*

*Tried to organize a union and they
tied me to the tracks*

*I fought in Barcelona, kept the fascists
there at bay*

*Then when Hitler's tanks came
rolling, I knew we couldn't stay*

Chorus

*I mined the ore in Arizona, last of the
Navajo*

*Got that radium a-glowin' then it was
time for me to go*

*I marched in South Africa, found
myself in Sharpeville*

*Once the police came and went I was
lying oh so still*

*I campaigned for Allende for a nation
without fear*

*Didn't look behind me for the day I'd
disappear*

*I spoke at Tiananmen to revive the
revolution*

*Didn't think for Deng Xiaoping,
rolling tanks were his solution*

Chorus

*I grew the mangos in Somalia for the
people in the west*

*And when the price of fruit went
down, I went down starving with the
rest*

*I worked the plant in Bangkok,
breathed the dusty air*

*When the cotton started burning, I
knew my life would not be spared
The cops beat me in Los Angeles but I
would not be scared*

*When they sent the Army in, I thought
next time we'll be prepared
Yes I've been yearning for a new day,
all the world wide*

*Some day my time will come and you
will have to step aside*

Chorus

As can be seen, we have very little space. Nevertheless, the poetic force of the composition is noticeable even without specific commentary. Great are also the references, which feature events that are as distant in time (the *conquistadores*) as they are close (such as, back in the day, the Tiananmen Square massacre).

Worth of note is the operation that is carried out in the song, where the history of the proletariat is the illustration of its ultimate future redemption. Just as Karl Marx in his *Capital* draws out the laws of society, demonstrating the historical necessity of the revolution of the proletariat, and providing a prospectus of history leading to it in the sciences; so David Rovics provides a poetic and dramatic vision of the same historical process, dialectically-demonstrating how the field of counterrevolution is also the field, by contrast, of revolution.

MUSICAL REVIEW: FAILED STATE

Writing Collective

The song we review on this page is one of the most relevant and best-known of Comrade Rovics in recent times. The song, first released on the 2018 album *Ballad of a Wobbly*, is succinctly described by the author with the words "The USA". It is clear that the song must be a passionate and sadly objective representation of the United States of America, the birthplace of Comrade Rovics. Well we know how the U.S. is responsible for immense murders of communists, overthrow of democratic and popular regimes all over the world, destabilization of autonomous and anti-imperialist governments, bombing of unarmed civilians and so on. We well know how the United States treats the entire Americas as a feud, and how the enslavement of capital is maintained through them, bandits among bandits, all over the world. It is no secret then that Comrade Rovics found something to complain about.

One thing, for us Italians, unthinkable is the almost total absence of public health care freely accessible by paying taxes, which condemns millions of workers not to receive even basic care. Corruption is widespread, as is control by multinational corporations and cartels of parliament. Elections are punctually held between only two parties, so as to prevent the formation of a revolutionary far left with a voice in parliament (as Andrea Costa already called for in his political program). Prisons are under the control of unscrupulous directors, led by businessmen and sharks of the worst kind, aimed at profit with every muscle in their bodies. The police is radically racist and violent toward minorities and popular struggles.

The United States of America is, in short, the ultimate proof of what capitalism taken to its ultimate consequences is: a brutal, murderous plutocracy that holds the title of democratic in the most fraudulent way imaginable. We present again the original in English, as reported by the author.

*When you're working two jobs and
living in a tent
When a house costs a million bucks
and you can't pay the rent
When politicians say they'll help but
it keeps getting worse
Each time the landlord lobby pulls the
strings of the purse
When the human right to housing isn't
even part of the debate
You know you're living in a failed
state*

*When millions of citizens are
spending half their lives
Locked up in a prison for trying to
survive
When laws must be broken just to
have a place to stay
When the prisons pay the senators to
look the other way
If you have to be a criminal to put
food on your plate
You know you're living in a failed
state*

*When you're facing climate
breakdown, when the trees are all on
fire
When half the country's underwater,
when a climate change denier
Runs the nation and the opposition
party
Votes for oil rigs and pipelines, this is
not so much a country
As it is a corporation, buckling under
its weight
You know you're living in a failed
state*

*When your nation is an empire facing
daily blowback
And the only thing your leaders can
think to do is attack
Bipartisan consensus that we need to
spend
700 billion before the year's end
On a military budget to make America
great
You know you're living in a failed
state*

When almost every day some psycho

*with a gun
Has to open fire on a crowd before it's
done
When a music festival becomes a free
fire zone
And all they can say is it's OK now, he
was acting alone
Buy some armor, pray to God and
hide behind a gate
You know you're living in a failed
state*

The succession outlines great skill in dramatic style, which is particularly vivid in the overview of American society presented in the 5 stanzas of the song. The solution to the problems of the American state are not given, they are only hinted at by the highlighting of existing problems, which only with socialism can be solved.

We cannot, international comrades, present here what is found in the Italian edition, which describes the text that you can read so easily instead. Rather, it seems relevant to us to note something more about the dramatic style used, which is extraordinarily refined and vivid.

All the description is done frantically, in a fast-paced music, where problems are piled on top of each other in an overall vision that allows listeners to realize the degree to which the United States has reached corruption and destruction. And it is from the ashes, from the ruins of the old world that the new one can be built, as Comrade Rovics himself had to say: *It's moments like these, standing on the edge/ That we might catch the strongest breeze, to land furthest from the ledge/ We can fly, you know - all you need is wings/ (Our Imagination).*

We render glories and honors to Comrade Rovics, who so majestically provided, provides and will provide us with musical weapons to fight against capitalism, against capital and against the bourgeoisie. His name will not be forgotten, and neither will his verses.

THE CLOSING PAGE LIFE IN THE MOVEMENT

Writing Collective

We present in this issue an excerpt from the transcript of the XXIV General Meeting of the Organization. That meeting had its significance with the election of a new Standing Committee with the renewal of the General Administration (from XI to XII).

From the transcript of the R.I., R.G. XXIV, 1/IV/CCXXXI

I Strategic Report Coordinating Collective

Comrades delegates to the XXIV General Meeting! I thank you all for attending. The election of a new General Administration is relevant in the revolutionary perspective of internal renewal. Indeed, the resumption situation after the winter vacation calls for a new approach, preparing us for the 3rd National Congress of the Organization.

However, the Movement's strategy, necessarily guided by the programmatic framework, must consider the latest developments, which promise with the resumption of school activities the resumption of a cycle of violent struggles to impose student rights. We affirm that we are still convinced of the need for a Revolutionary United Front, including all the maximalists lacking a real revolutionary program.

That is why we must continue to cooperate on a national scale with as many maximalist organizations that fight for student rights. Should these want to avoid our contribution, it would be necessary to reevaluate our strategy. Evident was the failure of the strategic debate of the 11th Standing Committee, which did not lead to any innovation. The 12th has this great task.

We can undoubtedly give a revolutionary direction to this reform of strategy. We must with great haste procure a set of theses that are characteristic for the very history of the Student Movement. The elaboration of this should be the main task of the most varied organs of the Union. The historical basis for this is necessarily to be drawn from the decisive experiences of 1968 and 1977.

Only in this way can the Union assert itself on the Italian political scene as the main promoter of a revolutionary student program. The masses, already in motion in their agitations, are ready to receive from the Union such a result. It is only up to the true revolutionaries to conclude such programmatic work, which can once and for all unite the socialist and student organizations and groups. Anyone who wants the revolution can only orient himself for a revolutionary program. The organizational disorder of those who try to avoid the problem

of the program in any way deeply disgusts us.

Students! Let us work united under the red flag of the Commune on a historic program for the Movement!

End of the report

RICHEDIBILE BOOKLETS (in Italian)

I) Documenti Fondativi dell'U.R.S., prima edizione, Nevoso CCXXIX;

II) Documenti Fondativi dell'U.R.S., seconda edizione, con nuova introduzione e note, EG n°2, Germinale CCXXX;

III) Documenti del Primo Congresso Nazionale dell'Organizzazione, seconda edizione, con nuova introduzione e note, EG n°3, Fiorile CCXXX;

IV) Documenti del Secondo Congresso Nazionale dell'Organizzazione, prima edizione, con introduzione e note, EG n°4, Pratile CCXXX.

V) Tesi per l'Autogestione, ovvero la dottrina democratica per l'Autogestione delle scuole, terza edizione, con introduzione e note, EG n°5, Messidoro CCXXX.

-INFORMAZIONI EDITORIALI-

Numero LV

15 NEVOSO CCXXXI

Edizione Cartacea: 100 copie

Redazione: direttore - *Sebastiano Fontanari*

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**VI RINGRAZIAMO E VI RIMANDIAMO AL
PROSSIMO NUMERO, TRA 15 GIORNI**