

Up The Ante On Italy Fight

Feb. 15 (IPS) — The U.S. Labor Party has generated 2,500 calls per day to Congressmen and parliamentarians in the U.S. and Canada over the past week to put a stop to Wall Street's continuing destruction of the Italian economy. Although large sections of the continental trade union bureaucracy are now moving behind the Labor Party's mobilization, elected officials have yet to take decisive action in support of an Italian debt moratorium and an immediate end to the bank-dictated oil embargo on Italy. In the coming week, an all-out mobilization of the U.S. and Canadian working class must raise hell with these public officials until those decisive steps are taken. The targets remain:

Congress and Parliament

Completely in the dark about the Italian crisis until informed by their constituents, many Congressmen succumb to terror during the first words of U.S. Labor Party briefings. A significant and growing number however recognize the debt moratorium and the USLP's Emergency Employment Act as the only existing policy solutions to the depression crisis — but they have not yet moved. Briefed by the Labor Party at a New Jersey political meeting on Feb. 14, Rep. Ron Dellums (D-Calif) became the third U.S. Congressman to voice support of the debt moratorium. Rep. Dan Rostenkowski (D-Ill) of Chicago told Labor Party supporters this week that he was behind the debt moratorium but suggested calling on his colleague, Congressman Annunzio to get the job done.

State legislators and local officials

Under direct and increasing pressure from their constituents, state and local officials in greater numbers are joining the USLP in pushing Congress to stop the rape of Italy. One Massachusetts mayor informed the Labor Party that he will discuss the Italian situation with Sen. Edward Kennedy (D-Mass) in a Feb. 16 meeting. New York State Assemblyman Greco from Buffalo, a city with a substantial Italian-American community, is preparing a statement of support for Italy.

Trade union bureaucracy

The USLP is focusing the fight against U.S. austerity around the fight to save Italy. Five trade union bureaucrats have requested Labor Party educationals for their membership. Ray Johnson, UAW local 3 education director at Dodge Main in Detroit is organizing plant committeemen to a Labor Party educational in the local union hall. After returning from a trip to Italy with their colleagues, half a dozen members of the Toronto Canadian-Italian Trade Union Council joined with the Labor Party in circulating a telegram in support of Italy to Parliament and are mobilizing their membership behind the USLP campaign.

Other bureaucrats have responded to the challenge to move by asserting their adamant opposition to the Atlanticists' dying austerity plan for the U.S., the Humphrey-Hawkins bill. But many labor hacks who desperately need classes are too stupid to ask for them. "What has Italy got to do with me?" asked one. "Italy's not in my union," said another. In the next week, the lesson must be rammed home.