

# The Communist Party

WHAT DISTINGUISHES OUR PARTY – The line running from Marx to Lenin to the foundation of the Third International and the birth of the Communist Party of Italy in Leghorn (Livorno) 1921, and from there to the struggle of the Italian Communist Left against the degeneration in Moscow and to the rejection of popular fronts and coalition of resistance groups – The tough work of restoring the revolutionary doctrine and the party organ, in contact with the working class, outside the realm of personal politics and electoralist manoeuvres

newspaper of the  
International Communist Party

May 2021  
Issue 32 | 25¢ 25p 0,50€

## May Day 2021: Only World Revolution Can Stop the Crisis of Capitalism

**While the economic crisis is exacerbating the tensions between states and accelerating the rearmament race, on this May Day 2021, marked by pestilence and the winds of misery and war, the international proletariat, united across all borders, launches anew its challenge to the dying bourgeois world:**

**COMMUNISM!**

The vaccine trade war that has been unleashed between states prevents them from addressing the health crisis. This also shows that the regime of capital, based on profit and the exploitation of wage labour, is the regime of a dying society that is now incapable of knowing and doing.

Instead of uniting the efforts of science and technology in the common goal of its containment, which is only possible in a society that has moved beyond commerce, the pandemic has, on the contrary, given further impetus to the antagonisms and confrontation between national bourgeoisies, above all blocs and alliances.

Not one state has hesitated to sacrifice its workers to defend the “national economy”, which only means national capital, in an attempt to use it to gain an advantage over its competitors.

Vaccines, which should be freely available to all humanity, have become a weapon of the rich bourgeoisie against the poor classes of the less industrialized countries, and an instrument of diplomatic or military pressure.

The economic crisis caused by the overproduction of goods, exacerbated by the pandemic, is causing unemployment across the globe. In this situation, the working class is seeing its conditions worsening everywhere.

In all countries the ruin of the small and medium bourgeoisie has accelerated; most of their commercial and small production activities are closed, while profits and revenues continue to grow for big business.

Pay below the living wage, working hours so prolonged that there is no room for any other human activity, the increasingly frenetic pace of work, unemployment, permanent precariousness and insecurity, the double exploitation of proletarian woman: these are the weapons of extortion imposed on the working class for the economic privilege of an inept bourgeoisie now condemned by history.

Faced with this attack on an international scale by the bourgeois regime, the response of the working class must be equally solid.

There are already scattered attempts at real class struggle around the planet. They appear in some categories, often those proletarians that are most oppressed. These struggles show that a minority of the proletariat knows that it is being exploited and rebels against the yoke of capital, even if they fail to fully unite and lead the vast majority of proletarians, who are often still dominated by the illusions of reformism.

The regime of capital is becoming more and more

despotic and militaristic, even in states that proclaim themselves to be democratic. Laws against strikes and class-based trade unions are being strengthened everywhere, and populist, racist, nationalist and religious-extremist movements are being bred, all ready to support the repressive apparatus of the state against any attempted proletarian rebellion.

But the proletariat has nothing to gain from the defence of bourgeois democracy, which is only a mask for its ruthless dictatorship.

The economic crisis, aggravated by the pandemic, has repercussions for states' finances; the proceeds of taxation have collapsed, while interventions to come to the aid of the capitalists have inflated the public debt.

Whereas great efforts should be made to strengthen the world healthcare system, to drastically reduce the insane overproduction of useless goods, and to defend those natural resources that allow the harmonious reproduction of animal and plant species, it is clear that nothing is changing in the regime of capital, nor can change, in the purpose and function of social forces and resources.

Meanwhile the growth of military expenditure is accelerating. The larger states are adopting aggressive attitudes to ensure control of regions and strategic hotspots, preparing for a new general war. In 2020, world military spending exceeded a whopping \$1.83 trillion, up 3.9% on the previous year in real terms.

The economic crisis will not stop with the end of the pandemic. And it will have a violent impact on the working classes and the middle classes. But it will also overwhelm entire financial, industrial and commercial sectors. The tension between the major economies and imperialisms will increase further: the USA, China, Germany, Japan, Britain, France, Russia, etc.

In this crucial situation, the proletariat – a class that has always been international, in fact and in its historical destiny – must look back and rediscover the great strength of its powerful economic and political organizations, those which, a century and a half ago, “stormed heaven” in the Paris Commune and, a century ago, made all the ruling classes of the world tremble, successfully taking power in Russia and establishing its own dictatorship.

The first proletarian state was destroyed from within by Stalinist counter-revolution; there is still a long way to recover from that defeat, but the time will come.

The proletariat will then reject any nationalist parochialism, any national solidarity with its own bourgeoisie. Rejecting the path of class collaboration onto which the social democratic parties and collaborationist trade unions invite it, the proletariat will strengthen its organizations against them: its real trade unions, which are necessary for the defence of its daily conditions, and its party, the indispensable organ for directing

the struggle against bourgeois states for the world communist revolution.

## Against Democratic Racism – For General Class Struggle

*April 13*—Here we are again. Rarely do things reappear so quickly and with such striking resemblance as they did in Minnesota on the afternoon of April 11. Eleven months earlier, George Floyd was murdered by a police officer in Minneapolis. Now, ten miles away, at the very same time that Officer Derek Chauvin is on trial for Floyd's murder, another black worker has been killed by the police. The latest murderer and her colleagues, both on the police force and among the bourgeoisie in general, are already resorting to the same tired excuses and the same repressive measures we have seen in prior police slayings. They blame the victim, feign ignorance, and weep crocodile tears over the tragedy. At the same time, calling for “peace,” they harass, arrest, and assault any workers who stand up to their racist terrorism.

Daunte Wright, age 20, was driving with his girlfriend when he was pulled over by police in Brooklyn Center, Minnesota for some contrived driving offense (variously reported as an expired registration or an air freshener hanging from the rearview mirror). The cops claim that they found out he had a warrant for his arrest. They have yet to show this warrant to the public, and no one in his family knew of such a warrant if it did exist. Wright started walking away from the police when they tried to arrest him. In response, a white police officer named Kim Potter shot him. Wright ran back to his car and attempted to drive to safety, only to die from his wounds a few minutes later.

The cops had their excuses ready. The perpetrator of this bloody crime, which really constitutes a summary execution, claimed that she meant to fire her taser at Wright but used her pistol by mistake. The chief of police, Tim Gannon, called this an “accidental discharge”. This is ridiculous on its face, an insult to the public's intelligence. An accidental discharge refers to any time a gun fires when the shooter did not intend it to, whether through a malfunction or through improper handling. Even the most generous definition of the term does not describe what happened on April 11. The bumbling cop in Brooklyn Center, who has been apparently on the force for 26 years, just grabbed the wrong weapon, one meant to kill instead of maim. That, according to the fairy tale the police are spinning, is the real tragedy! The whole tale resembles the excuse of a kindergartner who punches her classmate and then claims it was an accident: “I was just pretending! I didn't mean to really hit him!” And why would they need to tase him to begin with? 30,000 volts for insubordination? These are just more of the excuses that come from the bourgeois state when its brutality becomes clear for all to

see.

The police clearly see that the public has rejected their story. Potter has been charged with manslaughter, and has retained the same attorney who represents Chauvin in his trial. Protests against the killing, which began within hours, have continued in spite of the state's lies.

Liberal democracy's propaganda apparatus is already up and running. Governor Tim Walz, a Democrat, pretends to be shocked that this could happen again, despite the cops acting under his command. But at least he is “praying for Daunte Wright's family”! The mayor of Brooklyn Center, Mike Elliott, claims that the near-instantaneous repression of the protests was all about “safety”. He sends out caring thoughts on Twitter as riot police run wild in his city.

The bourgeois state had its repressive measures ready. The riot police and National Guard were on the scene within hours. A curfew was declared that night and every night since (to punish all the workers for their insolence!). The bourgeois state will not be embarrassed again like it was last year. To that end, a multi-agency security program, called Operation Safety Net, was already in place to deal with protests surrounding the Chauvin murder trial, which are expected to increase when the verdict is announced. The operation entails the militarization of the entire Minneapolis region, complete with National Guard troops and paramilitary police. It is a transparently repressive operation, designed to punish free expression before it even occurs. Now it gets an unexpected test run in Brooklyn Center.

But as communists we know that rights do not really exist under capitalism – they are only tools for the bourgeoisie to oppress the proletariat, and woe to those proletarians who try to use them to their advantage.

Daunte Wright was a worker. He held retail and restaurant jobs, through the pandemic, to support his two-year-old son. He struggled in school because of a learning disability, but planned to pursue his GED. He was, by all accounts, a loving and beloved person. And these are the same reasons the cops killed him. They killed him to send a message to black workers and the working class in general that no amount of hard work, dedication, or compassion can save them from the bourgeoisie. This is the bourgeois state. This is its terror! And the terror continues for the workers who gather to mourn their murdered friend, who are greeted with “less lethal” bullets and chemical weapons.

The whole situation of police violence and protest is a serious test for the Biden administration. Liberal propagandists have been telling us that everything evil in the US departed for Mar-a-Lago with Donald Trump. But the murder of Daunte Wright shows everyone that nothing has changed. Trump was a normal president: George Floyd was killed and the protests against his murder were harshly repressed. Biden is a normal president: Daunte Wright was killed, and the protests against his murder are being harshly repressed at this very moment. The US state behaves the same way regardless of who is running it because bourgeois states always act in the

interests of the same class.

This is also a test of the protest movements that sprung up in opposition to Trump in the past several years, which were primarily composed of the petty bourgeoisie. Will they still come out for demonstrations now that the orange man is out of office? Of course not. And good riddance! Those grifters were only there for their own private gain.

The situation in Minnesota demonstrates the bankruptcy of the anti-fascist strategy that became so trendy during the Trump years. It was not a neo-Nazi who killed Wright, but a representative of the democratic state, acting in a democratic way. Fascism is only the most chauvinistic form of the oppression that is immanent in democracy. Not only did the Minneapolis City Council not defund the police, but they gave them more money. Wright is among the victims of that oppression. And in any case, anti-fascism is cheap. Even the most reactionary parts of the ruling class can oppose fascism because they believe it is below them (the Catholic Church's response to fascism is a perfect example). The same reactionaries are happy to see the police crackdown on the workers, so long as it is in service of a democratic “order”.

The task now is to mobilize the proletariat as the leading force in the struggle against racism. We saw the first seeds of this class mobilization in the George Floyd protests last year. Some unions played an active role in the movement, the ILWU's June-teenth action being the most prominent example. In Portland, Oregon, workers marched together in blocs by profession (a nurses' bloc, a teachers' bloc, etc.), an extremely rare display at demonstrations in the US. These are the seeds that communists must cultivate. We will show every worker that class struggle is the only solution to capitalism's racist terror. We will also show workers of all races that the struggle for the liberation of our class must necessarily abolish the racist violence that sustains capitalism.

## Anger Erupts in Northern Ireland

Northern Ireland has had 23 years of relative “peace” between republicans and unionists, but the class war continues, even if it is still framed by the unique situation of these six counties remaining part of the “United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland”. But the first ten days of April saw riots flare up in unionist areas of Belfast, (London)Derry, Carrickfergus, Newtownabbey, and Ballmena, discontent that was subsequently echoed in some nationalist areas. Water cannons were turned on demonstrators for the first time in years.

Ostensibly, the cause of the unrest was unionist dissatisfaction with the Brexit settlement, which effectively imposes a customs border between Britain and the whole of Ireland. Northern Ireland remains politically a part of the United Kingdom, but economically within the European Union. Before the riots

*Continued on page 2*

## Northern Ireland

Continued from page 1

started, graffiti appeared across the province calling for “no Irish Sea border”.

In November 2019, Boris Johnson assured Northern Ireland businesses and the fervently pro-British Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) that there would be “no barriers of any kind” to trade crossing the Irish Sea. So, they could all put EU customs declarations forms “in the bin”. But in January 2021, the opposite proved to be the case, with many delays to goods crossing the Irish Sea and outright bans on certain imports. Some supermarket shelves were bare.

This was like taking a baseball bat to a hornets’ nest, reawakening the unionist “siege mentality”, which goes back (at least) as far as the Siege of Londonderry of 1688-89: Northern Ireland unionists, who see themselves as more loyal to Britain and more British than the British themselves, had an opportunity to dust down their ancient grievances and give them a really good airing.

Unionists also took the opportunity to kick up a fuss about the funeral of a former commander of the Irish Republican Army (IRA) which broke lockdown rules back in June 2020. But these were just the sparks that set Belfast on fire. Social unrest and frustration already provided the tinder and gasoline.

While some sections of the petty bourgeoisie prospered, the working class of Northern Ireland has seen no meaningful improvement to its situation since the Good Friday Agreement of 1998. Over the past year, coronavirus has made things far worse. Businesses that had once prospered, especially in the tourism and hospitality sectors, went to the wall, throwing more people out of work and closing off opportunities to young workers. Even the traditional escape routes to London or Glasgow were now closed off. Frustration at poverty, unemployment and social deprivation inevitably boiled over. Most of the rioters in Belfast were teenagers whose experience of life has been nothing but prolonged misery and hopelessness.

The same misery exists, of course, on the other side of the “peace walls” dividing unionists from Irish nationalists. There was a possibility that youths on both sides might see a common frustration, a common interest. A common class enemy! Not surprising, then, that the two main bourgeois parties, the nationalist Sinn Féin and the unionist DUP, issued a joint statement condemning the violence.

In Northern Ireland everything is framed by the republican-unionist divide, and everything is done to maintain it, at least within the urban working class. The paramilitary organizations such as the Ulster Defence Association (UDA) and the Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF), which continue to operate as criminal cartels while maintaining “order” in their separate “communities”, rely on the division to stay in business. The same applies on the other side, where the IRA and its dissident factions traditionally discipline the working class and “tax” local businesses.

Tellingly, the riots were brought to a halt when the unionist establishment called for calm on 9 April to “show respect” for Prince Philip, who died that same day. Such calls for calm from the political elite are brutally enforced with threats of violence and actual punishment beatings by the UDA and UVF.

In March of this year, the UVF and Red Hand Commando renounced their current participation in the Good Friday Agreement in a letter to Boris Johnson. Things could get nasty.

The only way out of this mess is a class-based response that unites republicans and unionists, nationalists and loyalists. That is easy to say, harder to achieve, though there have been positive developments such as a long-running series of strikes by Northern Ireland nurses demanding pay parity with the rest of the United Kingdom. There was intense anger in October 2020 when the authorities refused to refund pay docked during an earlier strike – despite the extra hours of intense work that nurses put in during the pandemic.

In the workplace, the sectarian divide ceases to have meaning as common class interests come to the fore.

But the paramilitaries on both sides will do everything in their power to put the brakes on class solidarity, so that they can continue with their criminal rackets. Meanwhile the British and Irish bourgeoisies, the British and Irish political establishment, and European and American imperialism will join hands in “deploring” and “condemning” the violence in Northern Ireland while offering “solutions” that only deflect from the true causes.

## UK Deliveroo Riders Strike Over Pay and Working Conditions

Hundreds of Deliveroo riders, members of the Independent Workers of Great Britain (IWGB) went on strike on April 7 for better pay, safety protection and basic workers’ rights. Street protests also took place in London, York, Sheffield, Reading and Wolverhampton. Deliveroo riders are paid as little as £2 per hour according to research by the Bureau of Investigative Journalism, while the company’s owners and investment firms have made millions from their labor.

Deliveroo – nicknamed “Slaveroo” by many of its workers – has benefited hugely from the closure of pubs and restaurants during the Covid-19 pandemic and employs some 100,000 riders worldwide. Their numbers have swelled as workers who were previously in relatively secure employment, including many with family commitments, have been thrown out of work by the pandemic and economic restructuring. Their sham contracts treat them as “self-employed”, which essentially means they have no entitlement to sick leave or holiday pay, while also leaving them exposed to mistreatment and exploitation by employers as they are effectively doing piecework. Deliveries are a race against the clock, putting riders in city centers at high risk of traffic accidents. Moreover, the nature of their work has made riders vulnerable to coronavirus infection.

The bosses call these slave labor conditions “flexibility” and hypocritically refer to workers as “team members” as though they were their social peers!

There is nothing new about this “gig economy” apart from the name. Midway through the last century Karl Marx noted that in times of crisis the growth of the “reserve army of the unemployed” provided ample opportunity for capitalists to push down rates of pay and impose tougher working conditions to drive profits back up.

In February another independent union, the App Drivers

and Couriers Union (ADCU), won a partial victory when the UK Supreme Court ruled that taxi drivers working for the taxi company Uber are workers, not self-employed. Nevertheless, workers cannot expect to get any justice from bourgeois legal institutions without struggle, as the union noted.

The ADCU issued the following statement:

“While we welcome Uber’s decision to finally commit to paying minimum wage, holiday pay and pensions. We observe that they have arrived at the table with this offer a day late and a dollar short, literally. The Supreme Court [ruling] ... means that Uber drivers will be still short-changed to the tune of 40-50%. Also, it is not acceptable for Uber to unilaterally decide the driver expense base in calculating minimum wage. This must be subject to collective agreement ...

“We cannot accept anything less than full compliance with legal minimums. We would also expect to see Uber make progress towards trade union recognition, a fair dismissals appeals process and a data access agreement.”

The IWGB timed the Deliveroo strike action to inflict damage on large shareholders in the company, coinciding the action with the share offering to retail buyers on the London Stock Exchange (LSE). Alex Marshall, President of the IWGB and former bicycle courier, stated before the strike: “They said it couldn’t be done but by getting organized and speaking out, riders have triggered a domino effect which already slashed £3 billion from Deliveroo’s valuation and that should give pause to any corporation that thinks precarious workers can be endlessly exploited without consequence. It’s time for Deliveroo to do the right thing, recognize its riders as workers and treat them like human beings.”

Greg Howard, Deliveroo rider and chair of the Couriers & Logistics Branch of the IWGB, said: “I’ve seen conditions decline for years and then working through lockdown I contracted Covid-19 and got very little support from Deliveroo. After the pandemic more people than ever understand this exploitation is no way to treat anyone, let alone key workers”.

The gig economy is an attack on the working class worldwide and highlights more than ever the need for an international response. The IWGB is itself active internationally, with supportive actions taking place in other countries including Australia, France, the Netherlands, Ireland and Spain.

At the other end of the class divide, Deliveroo CEO Will Shu, a former Wall Street investment banker, made around \$36 million when the firm began trading on the LSE. He also retains a 6.3% stake, worth hundreds of millions.

## Amazon in Alabama: A Referendum Used Against the Workers’ Struggle

At the Amazon warehouse in Bessemer, Alabama, the vote to join the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union (federated with the United Food and Commercial Workers, AFL-CIO)—according to the by-no means-compulsory practice favored by collaborationist unionism in the US—registered the defeat of the union’s supporters: 1,798 no votes, 738 yes. “The final

count showed 1,798 votes against and 738 in favor, with about 55% of the 5,867 eligible workers casting a ballot, according to a tally by the National Labor Relations Board” (CBS News, April 9).

It is certainly no secret that Amazon has “worked” hard to intimidate the workers, and to win some of them over with real or presumed favors. Even *The Wall Street Journal* writes about it, always ready—to pretend to ignore such obvious facts when the workers’ struggle takes place within national borders.

First, if a vote is necessary, it should be done by open vote, by show of hands, in an assembly of those who have made the effort to attend, taking responsibility for the choice. It is even better if the meetings take place outside the workplace, more protected from corporate spies. With a secret ballot, on the other hand, individualism prevails, and, almost inevitably, the blackmail of the individual by the boss.

Second, even if the option that is supposed to be favorable to the workers prevails—such as, for example, the rejection of a sellout agreement or, as in the case of Bessemer, the introduction of the union into the workplace—struggle is in any case the necessary next step to actually implement it.

There is no shortage of cases in which anti-worker agreements rejected by a referendum by the workers were then imposed in substantially the same way in the absence of an adequate strike force to bend the company to the verdict of the vote.

In Italy, for example, it happened in Termoli in 1994, when FIOM (an Italian metalworkers union) terrorized the workers, who had voted against the introduction of 18 shifts (expanding operations to 6 days a week around the clock), by threatening to move the production of engines to Mirafiori. The then-national secretary of FIOM, Claudio Sabattini, issued the following pronouncement: “If you decide for the no vote [as if the workers had not already decided in the referendum!] we will respect your decision. But don’t say that we didn’t warn you that this would destroy an industrial reality in the South”.

The US is no exception. In 2018, the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, representing workers at UPS, overruled a majority of the members who voted down a contract that let the company force drivers to take a pay cut from \$36 to \$30 per hour as well as increased overtime, hire many more part-time workers, and pull out of a joint pension plan it maintained with the union. The union leadership invoked a provision in the constitution that allowed them to do this if the vote fell below a certain threshold.

Also noteworthy is the corruption scandal that rocked the United Autoworkers. Multiple local and international UAW officers, including members of the UAW executive board, were caught taking millions of dollars in bribes from auto industry officials. These pie-cards abandoned their members and locals, and have allowed Chrysler, GM, Ford, et al. to ram wage cuts and speedups down the throats of the workers. The companies are allowed to hire many more permatemps and lower-skilled workers at a cut

rate, while gradually eliminating the high-paying, skilled tradesmen’s jobs.

In each of these instances, strikes were deliberately averted and contracts forced on the rank-and-file by top-level officials. The contract—the relationship between the pie-cards and the bosses—not the union, was sacred. We should expect nothing different from RWDSU.

\*\*\*

It is organizing and striking more than voting that counts. In other words, it is strength that counts: the strength of the organization, of the strike, of the picket line.

The bosses are well aware of this, which is why they try to ensnare the workers in the trap of individual voting. This is helped by all the collaborationist trade unions, as well as the inadequate ideological framework of many leaders of trade unionism, who often invoke the myth of referendums and democracy in the abstract.

This “democracy”—one head, one vote—wants the opinion of the sycophant, the coward, the scab, the individualist to be worth as much as that of the worker with more experience of trade union battles and who fights and has sacrificed themselves for the interests of their comrades and their class. This “democracy” wants the weapon of intimidation to be left to the company and the collaborationist trade unions, who use it in a thousand ways, and never used by the combative workers against the scabs, for example on the picket line. This “democracy” wants the strike, or even just the union organization proposed by a substantial minority of workers to be denounced by the company and the press as “illegitimate”. It is nearly always the case that it is not the majority of workers who are able to predict the real balance of power in the field and the actual chances of mobilization and victory. Often, only a minority of the workers, in a factory or in an industry, start to organize or go on strike, counting on having a good chance of quickly convincing the rest to follow suit. Waiting for the prior and formal opinion of the majority means to postpone, maybe for years, the reaction of the workers, guaranteeing the bosses many more years of exploitation and profits.

Sometimes a strike can win by involving the great mass of the exploited even if it is initiated by a minority. For the class struggle is a question of strength, and therefore certainly of numbers, of the great masses, who mobilize, and much less of individual opinions, which may not even rise to consciousness, and that often only with much delay.

\*\*\*

If the workers in Bessemer were not able to organize themselves today using the ineffective and unsuccessful methods of collaborationist unionism, they will do so tomorrow using the very different means of class unionism. In any case, it is certain that one in three Bessemer workers wants to form a trade union: we think this is a very good result, which gives us hope that they will soon build their own trade union, outside the constraints and intimidation of the bosses!

**The Communist Party is Printed and Produced by**

Associazione La Sinistra Comunista - Casella Postale 1157 - 50121 Firenze - Italy

I.C.P. Editions - c/o 96 Bold Street - Liverpool L1 4HY - United Kingdom

C.L. Publishers - PO Box 14,344 - Portland, OR 97293 - U.S.A.

**international-communist-party.org**