

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

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For Women's Freedom, For Communism! International Working Women's Day

International Working Women's Day is a tradition that dates back to 1911. Proposed by Clara Zetkin to the Women's International Secretariat of the Socialist International, it was intended to be a day of demands for the rights of working women. More than a century later, Women's Day has been completely stripped of its revolutionary content.

Under the pressure of bourgeois and petty-bourgeois ideas, March 8 has become a festival of anecdotes, where we celebrate the achievements of some "exceptional" women to warm the hearts of liberal moralists! The bourgeois media bombard us with portraits of women who succeed in traditionally male circles or hold CEO positions. They try to get us excited about parity in governments or the increase in female representatives in parliaments. In reality, a victory for a bourgeois woman is by no means a victory for *all women*, much less for women of the working class. These "exceptional" women are only asking for the same exploitative power as their male counterparts, that is, the power to harness the labor power of both women and men.

Shattering the glass ceiling for a few privileged women does not help improve conditions for women in general. In fact, the wages of working women are almost always lower than those of working men, and they occupy more precarious jobs. The organizations of the working class must therefore put forward the demands of working women, since their poor conditions have an impact on the whole proletariat. From the onset of big industry, capitalists used women to drive wages down, to the detriment of all workers. It is through the union and revolutionary struggle that women have been able to improve their lot and obtain the same treatment as men. The unity of the whole proletariat is therefore essential for the emancipation of women – and all of humanity.

The current pandemic has only made the problem worse. Women everywhere are responsible for homeschooling, for childcare, for ensuring that the whole family has the necessary resources, and for taking care of elderly family members. The pandemic exposes yet again what the communists have been saying for nearly two centuries: domestic chores must be socialized. The emancipation of women will not be possible without the destruction of the bourgeois family, in which the woman has the role of first servant. The bourgeois family is an essential tool for the defense of the capitalist system and the private ownership of the means of production.

The feminist movement is vast and diverse. The struggle should not be dominated by the bourgeoisie and its representatives. The reforms granted by capitalists are nothing but sweets given out by the left hand, to be taken back by the

right hand as soon as they judge that the economic or social situation no longer allows it. The first enemy of women is not men in themselves: it is capital which exploits them doubly and which sucks the labor force of all workers. Bourgeois feminism turns its weapons against men in general instead of inciting working women to unite against the capitalist class.

Comrades, workers, it is high time to restore the communist and revolutionary character of International Working Women's Day! Working women have always been at the forefront of revolutionary struggles, as the heroic experiences of the Paris Commune and the Russian Revolution have shown! The revolutionary struggle must continue until the final victory: the dictatorship of the proletariat. Only the proletarian revolution can really ensure the emancipation of working women and all of humanity from capital!

Amazon: There Will Be No Justice – There is Just Us!

6,000 workers at an Amazon warehouse in Bessemer, Alabama are in the midst of voting on whether to unionize. If the workers vote to join the union, it will be the first Amazon facility to do so, and a large one at that - a serious blow to the ruthless exploitation of labor by one of the most powerful corporations in the world. There were a number of solidarity demonstrations across the country in support of the workers on the eve of the union vote. Our party produced the following leaflet, which was distributed at demonstrations in three different states.

Yes to Bessemer Amazon Union - No to Service Unionism

Word on the street has it, a win at Bessemer Amazon will be a new start for the labor movement in the USA. We hope this is true and it happens. But a century and a half of working class experience tells us certain conditions need to be met for the union to win.

Workers! Don't Give Up Your Power - Strikes and other Work Actions

We would say a "win" can only occur if the union members at Bessemer have direct control of their union and retain their freedom to stop production. The union's real power comes from the membership's ability to slow or stop production.

Striking - as a union, outside a union, or by wildcatting against a sellout regime union - won COVID protections in 2020. When workers stopped striking and looked to bourgeois elections to serve "justice," the bosses started rolling back workplace protections, with fatal results.

Amazon workers cannot afford to limit their struggles. Their fight does not stop at a single facility. It is not restricted to a single city, region, or country. It is not happening only in

warehouses. Nor is it limited only to Amazon. Other warehouse workers, delivery drivers, port workers, airline pilots, retail workers – the whole logistics sector – are in the same struggle against employers who want to condemn them to poverty. To fight back, all of these workers need to act together, without any limitations.

Turn Solidarity Actions Into Direct Actions

Workers can be a major power in society – if they are united. Unionization at any Amazon facility, like the one in Bessemer, Alabama, is an important step towards turning that potential power into real class action. But it is only the first step. The struggle does not end with one unionization campaign, one facility, or even one company. It does not stop at any national borders. It is the struggle of the international working class for its own liberation, to which Amazon workers are now making a great contribution. To succeed, they need a union operated by and for the workers alone, one that is uncompromising in its fight for their immediate interests. In short, Amazon workers need a class union.

Build the Class Union

In a class union, the members exercise power collectively, as workers in a common struggle. There is no place for the tyranny of self-appointed leaders and "organizers" – whether they are bureaucrats from the regime unions, Democratic Party hacks, or careerists from the various "leftist" NGOs. Once they think they have the workers under their control, they will happily collaborate with the bosses. The fight against the bosses includes the fight against these collaborators.

Internationalize The Struggle - Make Common Cause with Amazon Workers In Canada, Germany, Italy, UK

The unionization campaigns at Amazon facilities in the United States are part of an international struggle taking place at the company. Amazon workers in Poland, Germany, the United Kingdom, and Italy have staged successful actions of their own. Amazon workers in the United States should form relationships with their fellow workers in other countries. This will allow them to learn from each other's experiences in their common struggle. More importantly, it will lay the foundations for unified actions across national borders. Amazon is an international company, so the struggle of Amazon workers must be international as well.

Europe's Vaccine War: The First Shots in a Wider Trade War

On Friday, January 29 the European Union (EU) announced that it would stop the export of vaccines to Northern Ireland by invoking Article 16 of the Northern Ireland Protocol of the Brexit withdrawal agreement, further exacerbating the

nationalist conflict over access to vaccines. Although the threat was rapidly withdrawn following protests issued by Dublin, London and Belfast, it was a further sign of developing tensions between the EU and the United Kingdom. Earlier in the same week the pharmaceutical giant AstraZeneca (AZ) told the EU that it could not keep its promise to deliver 100 million doses of vaccine by March. AZ said it would be able to deliver only 31 million doses during this period (since increased to 40 million) and expected further delays in the delivery of another 200 million ordered doses. AZ cited problems in its production facility in Belgium.

In response, the EU called for AZ to divert part of its production from two British plants in Oxford and Staffordshire to compensate for the shortfall, as the contract with AZ did not state that the EU order had to be fulfilled by plants in the EU. The UK rejected this, pointing out that it had signed an agreement with AstraZeneca three months earlier than the EU, relying on the classic capitalist formula of "first come, first served".

The Anglo-Swedish firm AZ endorsed the British position, unleashing a wave of chauvinism in the British media, which loudly trumpeted that this was proof of the benefits of unshackling Britain from "Brussels bureaucracy". British politicians were scarcely less triumphalist, with Michael Gove and Boris Johnson proclaiming that "our own vaccination program" continues as planned.

Within the EU there were suspicions that the company was selling vaccines intended for the European market to other parts of the world at higher prices. The UK was paying more, and other countries more still. According to the British Medical Journal of January 29, "South Africa's government found itself on the defensive this week after a senior health official revealed that 1.5 million doses of the Oxford and AstraZeneca vaccine just purchased for use among health workers would cost \$5.25 a dose, more than twice what the European Union is paying at \$2.15.

"The EU figure is known because Belgium's budget secretary inadvertently revealed the EU's negotiated prices for every major vaccine on Twitter last month. The EU had undertaken to keep the prices confidential in return for discounts," BMJ added. The EU's lack of transparency, its backroom wheeling and dealing, had misfired.

The Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine is much cheaper than others on the market (Pfizer-BioNTec, developed in Germany and manufactured in Belgium, and Moderna, manufactured in the USA, plus others currently in the approvals process) but neither the UK nor the US could match the EU's \$2.15 deal: they are expecting to pay about \$3 and \$4, respectively, per dose. While AZ loudly protested that it was not seeking any profit on the deals, this seems unlikely given the wide divergence in prices.

Pfizer also announced in December that it would not be able to deliver the promised 12.5 million doses of vaccine for the EU by the end of the year. And at the end of January Moderna

announced that it would deliver 20% fewer vaccine doses than agreed with Italy. Frustrated by the delays, Hungary applied to China and Russia for vaccine supplies, breaking ranks with the EU's common procurement policy. Delays and disruptions, and the consequent tensions between nation states, are inevitable as these capitalist enterprises haggle and compete to reduce costs through complex contract negotiations with suppliers and manufacturers as well as their end customers. In the short term, there are apparent winners and losers. By jumping the queue and brandishing wads of cash, within the first two months Britain was able to deliver a first shot of the two-shot vaccine to around 20% of its population, while across the EU the average was still around 4% (though more people had received a second shot).

In a rather obvious attempt to manage demand and expectations, the German and French governments, led by German Health Minister Jens Spahn, questioned the effectiveness of the AZ vaccine and said they would not allow it to be administered to the over-65s.

Nonetheless, the UK, the EU and the USA are among the richest regions of the world – so what chance do people in poorer countries have? They are right at the back of the queue, so the repeated declarations by liberal politicians that "nobody is safe until we are all safe" ring very hollow indeed.

We have dealt with the wider issues raised by the pandemic elsewhere. Capitalist states have responded to the Covid-19 pandemic with what can only be described as criminal negligence, putting the interests of business and the wealth of the financial elite ahead of any concerns for the public at large, and putting hundreds of thousands of lives at risk, not least those of front-line health and care workers. The undignified scramble to procure supplies brings further infamy on the capitalist system after the monumental multinational efforts by scientists, lab assistants and production workers to design, develop and manufacture the vaccines.

The Trade War Gathers Momentum

As well as exposing the utter absurdity of applying capitalist commercial principles in response to a global pandemic, the "vaccine war" has exacerbated a growing trade war between the European Union and the United Kingdom after Brexit.

Much of the British bourgeoisie had little to gain from Brexit, although not much to lose either. What they feared most was a no-deal exit, which would have meant trading on World Trade Organization (WTO) terms. The consequent tariffs would have imposed considerable costs, wiping out any gains from deregulation. By contrast, medium sized enterprises have been hit by non-tariff trade barriers such as VAT payments, T1 transport declarations and, in some sectors, time-consuming veterinary inspections. In January, the practical impact was the cessation or delay of exports of fish, meat and other foodstuffs. At Britain's main fishing harbor, Peterhead in Scotland, rotting fish

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Europe's Trade War

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piled up on the quayside. Fishing companies marginally increased their share of the European catch but lost their biggest market. An irony, as the fishermen had been exploited as an emotional battering ram by the leading exponents of Brexit, such as Nigel Farage. His previously vocal "Fishing for Leave" website has disappeared without trace.

By the end of January, around 55% of lorries leaving the UK for the EU were empty, and in early February a Road Hauliers Association survey suggested that exports through British ports were down by 68%. The Guardian reported on January 20 that many European carriers were rejecting jobs in Britain altogether. For example, "Transporeon, a German software company that works with 100,000 logistics service providers, said freight forwarders had rejected jobs to move goods from Germany, Italy and Poland into Britain". The Guardian also quoted a logistics professional as saying that a truck with a £200,000 cargo would need cash or a T1 financial guarantee document for £40,000 in VAT alone, a significant burden for transport companies with multiple trucks going to the UK.

Meanwhile the Byzantine workings of the Northern Ireland Protocol are putting jobs at risk in Great Britain and the province itself. Although Northern Ireland is formally part of the United Kingdom, it remains part of the EU's customs union, which means goods moving between the two are subject to checks and controls – a situation that cannot continue indefinitely, although a united Ireland remains a distant prospect. A further tension exists in Scotland, where the population – and the ruling elite – is split down the middle between those who wish to remain part of the United Kingdom and those who wish to rejoin the European Union as an independent Scotland. Neither of which outcomes offers any perspective for the working class.

A significant section of the British bourgeoisie, which is now in the driving seat, sees its future as lying beyond the EU, where it has difficulty competing with German business in particular. It sees the solution as reducing the regulatory burdens imposed on it by the European Union such as the Working Time Directive. There has even been talk of turning the UK into a "Singapore on Thames". Of course, this aspect was played down in the popular press, which has reveled in an orgy of xenophobia since well before the Brexit referendum of 2016. This extends far beyond simple "Brussels-bashing".

The average British worker puts in 1,670 hours per year, compared with 1,354 hours by the average German worker. (And note: in Singapore the figure is 2,238 hours, the highest in the industrialized world – burnout and suicide due to work pressure are commonplace.) While foreign investment has succeeded in raising productivity in some sectors of the British economy, the Brexit project is to achieve competitiveness by avoiding EU norms, attacking working conditions and trade unions, as well as dodging international standards such as financial regulation.

Inevitably the daily demonization of foreigners and immigrants – and the incessant invoking of World War memes, reinforced in popular culture with recent films such as *The Darkest Hour*, *Dunkirk* and *1917* – meant that Brexit took on an irrational momentum of its own, beyond the competing economic interests

within the capitalist class, gaining a broad popular base in the petty bourgeoisie and the lumpenproletariat.

Brexit is but one symptom of inter-imperialist rivalries that will adversely affect workers across Europe. On the other side of the Channel, President Emmanuel Macron of France took the opportunity in December to impose a 48-hour blockade on freight movements from Britain. This was ostensibly because of the outbreak of a new "UK variant" of Covid-19, but there are good reasons to suppose that the French authorities were flexing their muscles. Britain is highly reliant on freight movements, especially through the port of Dover, which handles around 22% of roll on-roll off ("Ro-Ro", i.e. non-container cargo). Any threat to this route would also be devastating for Ireland, which is now investing in sea lanes as an alternative to the UK land bridge to the continent.

Moreover, Britain relies on imports of energy from the EU. The UK returned to being a net energy importer in 2004 and is now a net importer of all main fuel types. In 2019, 35% of energy used in the UK was imported. While electricity imports and exports can fluctuate significantly, the UK is highly dependent on suppliers in France, the Netherlands and Belgium, which contribute around a tenth of the British electricity supply (this rises considerably in South East England). President Macron has dropped strong hints that if the UK diverges from its obligations under the Brexit deal, France would be prepared to disrupt or halt supply.

The vaccine war, and the trade war that is gathering pace, expose the bankruptcy of an economic order based on capitalism and the nationalist division of the world economy. It is often said that a trade war is a prelude to a real war; it appears that the opening shots have come in the form of a vaccine.

The Draghi Government in Italy: Apparent Democracy, Reigning Fascism

The living conditions of the workers and of all wage earners have been continuously worsening for decades, subjected, in perfect continuity, to the attacks of all successive governments. Above parliamentary alchemy, every government of the bourgeois state is necessarily opposed to the workers.

This is because the real holder of power is not the current government, but those who today, with hypocritical modesty, call the "strong powers," and who are none other than the industrial, financial, and landed, the national and international bourgeoisie.

The parties of the parliamentary arc are bands that pose as representatives of classes and class interests, but the threads of these puppets are in the hands of big capital: they cannot go beyond certain limits in their disputes over how to divide the surplus value extorted from the working class, and must discipline themselves to protect the common interest of the entire ruling class, which requires that they maintain of the productive system based on the exploitation of the working class.

The story of the probable settlement of Mario Draghi as head of the government is the driving license. Who better than that international banker can embody the current, stringent

general needs of the Italian bourgeoisie?

This is an urgent hour, and all the lobbies and tradesmen of media-parliamentary politicism must step aside or kneel and obey – these clowns are useful only for the staging of an apparent democracy, played only to mask the fascism that, behind the scenes, is alive and prevailing everywhere.

The working class is therefore not interested in taking sides for or against the formation of this government. Democracy, the mask of the dictatorship of capital, must not be defended; its role must be denounced and the true face of our enemy exposed. The new government – be it "technical" or "political" – will work against the living conditions of the wage class, in perfect continuity with the previous ones.

What is needed instead is to rebuild the strength of a real class union to deploy real strikes. This is the only means that the proletarians have to stop the deterioration of their conditions.

The signing of a new national contract for metalworkers on February 5 confirms this urgent need. The Italian Confederation of Metalworkers (FIOM), the Italian Federation of Metal Mechanics (FIM), and the Italian Union of Metalworkers (UILM) in 12 months of dispute have called the category to only 4 hours of national strike, finally obtaining a salary increase well below what they requested: 82 euros out of 153.

The Italian General Confederation of Labor (CGIL), the Italian Confederation of Workers' Trade Unions (CISL), and the Italian Labour Union (UIL) are collaborationist and regime unions that prevent workers from returning to struggle. On the other hand, the rank and file unions still do not represent a valid alternative because of their divisions, a consequence of the pettiness of their leadership.

For this reason, the inescapable task of communists and militant workers in the workplace and in the trade union movement today is to fight for the unity of action of conflictual unionism – base unions and opposition in the CGIL – to win the struggle against current opportunist leadership, the first practical step towards the rebirth of a true class union, outside and against the regime unions.

Only on the basis of a reborn workers' movement will more and more workers return to join the revolutionary communist party, which is the fundamental weapon of the class for the overthrow of capitalism and its political regime.

GameStop, Reddit, and the Failure of the Bourgeois Left

Early this year, shares in the company GameStop (ticker symbol GME) shot up in value at a wild and unexpected rate, bringing enormous amounts of capital into the hands of a select few day traders and snatching billions of dollars from a group of hedge funds who had been betting on the continued decrease of the value of the shares.

The meteoric rise of GameStop shares did not take place by pure chance, however. On Reddit, a community of day traders who make up the r/WallStreetBets subreddit, whose members pride themselves on sinking money into high risk/high reward stocks, began to notice that several hedge funds had been shorting GameStop, leading to a continuous decline in the price of its shares, and, according to the users of r/WallStreetBets, the

undervaluing of GameStop stock.

With mixed motivations – partly out of a desire to hurt the massive hedge funds to satisfy their moral resentment of them, and partly to enrich themselves – they hatched a plan that gained widespread support across the site: the users of r/WallStreetBets would buy GameStop stock en masse, thus driving up its price astronomically, costing the hedge funds billions and making a tidy profit themselves.

In January 2021, the plan truly took off, with GameStop hitting a record high of \$347.51 per share, where the price had been below \$3 less than a year previously. This sparked a flurry of attention in both the more traditional mass media and on other social media platforms, with some bemoaning the terrible consequences they alleged would occur, while many cheered on what they saw as ordinary people fighting back against the parasitic elites.

One of the segments of the online community which rallied around r/WallStreetBets most vigorously were those who consider themselves socialists. With little dissent, they cheered the petty-bourgeois day traders who were raking in millions and encouraged working-class people to throw everything they had into the fray, describing what was happening as "revolutionary" and a textbook example of "class warfare" against "the 1%".

However, closer examination of the GameStop incident exposes the nonsense at the heart of this romanticised view of things. For one, massive investors have thrown millions of dollars into GameStop stock, including some of the hated hedge funds, and even Elon Musk, the poster-boy of capital himself, has publicly celebrated the actions of r/WallStreetBets. Furthermore, the true beneficiaries of this are not at all proletarian – aside from the handful of working-class individuals who will scrape meagre profits from the incident, the rewards will be reaped by those who had the capital necessary to purchase large numbers of shares, namely the petty bourgeois day traders who make up the core of r/WallStreetBets, and the bourgeois investors who hopped on the bandwagon after GameStop began soaring, not to mention the other hedge funds already circling their stricken brethren. The obviousness of this fact can hardly be overstated – the figurehead of the entire movement, who goes by the username "DeepFuckingValue", has made millions, but only because he was capable of investing tens of thousands of dollars at the beginning of the scheme.

The foolishness of these "socialist" cheerleaders goes beyond the above observations. In their enthusiasm for this redistribution of capital among the owners of private property, they have gone so far as to encourage proletarians, even those on the edge of total ruin, to throw their money into what is undeniably a speculative bubble. In one particularly egregious example, someone whose father had died as an indirect result of the financial crash of 2008, and who understandably held great resentment for Wall Street, was applauded for sinking everything they had, which was very little to begin with, into the GameStop bubble. While a small number of bourgeois and petty bourgeois investors will profit enormously, and a handful of working-class

people will get out with a little more money in their pockets, as is the case with any speculative bubble the vast majority of those who invested, a body largely proletarian in character following the massive media attention focused on the event, will lose their whole investment, and in many cases will be ruined. The thoughtless excitement of these "socialists," perhaps fuelled by a frustrated streak of adventurism, has harmed many of the proletarians they claim to be advocates of, and shows that these so-called socialists are nothing more than petty bourgeois activists whose enmity is directed not at capital and class in general, but at the bloated titans of commerce and finance. The beneficiaries of the words and actions of these "socialists" are the petty bourgeoisie, whose fate in the development of capitalism is to be proletarianised and have their property subsumed by the massive concerns as they inexorably monopolise the market.

The entire GameStop debacle has exposed with a glaring light a sad failure of "the left" – they have internalised their own propaganda about "the 1%" and the "99%", and now large segments of their movement view class struggle not in terms of the proletariat seizing power and abolishing class relations, but rather in the amorphous entity known as "the people" fighting against "the 1%", the largest of the big bourgeoisie. This view of the world is absolutely incorrect – while the petty bourgeoisie and the smaller elements of the bourgeoisie proper do in fact have interests which often oppose those of the big bourgeoisie, that does not mean they align with those of the proletariat, whose interest demands the abolition of property. This is a proposal which even the boldest forms of petty bourgeois radicalism cannot abide – when they claim to, deeper analysis of what they call for gives lie to this assertion – for the ideology of the petty bourgeois does not seek the abolition of class itself, but the universalisation of petty bourgeois conditions. Any "socialists" whose programme involves the advancement of petty bourgeois causes have nothing to offer the proletariat but empty words and foolish activism, and they should be given all the respect which their behaviour accords to them.

The failure of leftist sloganeering has been laid bare by the GameStop incident. All the rhetoric which heaped fury upon "the 1%" never reflected the true reality of class relations as they exist under the capitalist mode of production (or under any other mode of production, for that matter), and the anti-worker consequences, which are the natural conclusion of this line of propaganda, should make it clear to anyone who pays attention that it should be abandoned immediately by those who still cling to this and other varieties of idealist nonsense. All this makes one thing clear – the rhetoric and propaganda of the workers' movement must be based not upon what slogans can best rally a broad coalition, but rather upon those which reflect the social relations of production and the class dynamic as they really are. Anything else, regardless of how many signatures or new reading-circle members it may garner, will only lead to ruin and ignominy, as all opportunism inevitably must.

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