

The Communist Party

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Cuba's Proletariat in Revolt against Capitalism's Crises

The protests in Cuba at the beginning of the second week of July are the latest of the jolts in areas where the consequences of the economic crisis of the capitalist mode of production are taking on devastating proportions.

In Lebanon, the state's bankruptcy prevents it from paying its oil bill; power plants stop working and the country remains in the dark. Repeated explosions of popular discontent are suppressed by the opposing bourgeois factions that, although fighting each other, converge in maintaining political power.

Riots exploded in the same days in South Africa, where 117 people have already died, following the sentencing of former president Zuma to a prison term and which the media hastily describe as "inter-ethnic" clashes fomented by the Zulu community. Clearly, the dozens of deaths in the looting of supermarkets are not the product of ethnic hatred, but of unemployment, marginalization, and misery brought on by modern capitalism.

Famines are spreading across the planet, also as a consequence of the economic disruption aggravated by the pandemic, adding tens, hundreds of millions of people to those condemned to hunger.

In this general context, the Cuban protests cannot be underestimated, as is done both by those who defend the increasingly faded image of Castro's "socialism," and by the bourgeois media that spreads a failed picture of a "communist" regime that denies "democratic freedoms."

The flare-up of street riots in Cuba, on the other hand, concentrates in itself all the chaos of the countries of the imperial periphery, a crisis, however, of a fully capitalist economy, the one described and predicted by Marxist theory.

This reality remains valid even without ignoring the two occasional events that, according to a superficial representation, would be the causes of the current crisis: the collapse of tourism due to the pandemic and the embargo imposed by the United States back in 1962, under the Kennedy administration, and further tightened under Trump. We do not deny that these two factors have played their part in bringing the Cuban economy to its knees, but they are intrinsic to the overall crisis of the mode of capitalism. The Trump administration has tightened sanctions against Cuba in line with the foreign policy of a power forced to reckon with its own decline in a global context

of increasing tension. In the contest for markets, the U.S. must counter the penetration of goods and capital from other powers. Cuba's main trade partners are Russia and China, in addition to the ailing Venezuela, and Western European countries, including Italy in particular, play a significant role. The problem for the US is to prevent the Caribbean island from becoming an outpost in the Americas for the commercial advancement of rival powers.

The crisis of tourism has a devastating effect on Cuba because of the intrinsic weakness of its economy, the impossibility for a small country poor in natural resources to sustain a process of autonomous development without the contribution of capital from the major powers. Cuba has never been offered the possibility of asserting itself in the international division of labor, given the balance of power among the capitalist powers.

These unfavorable relations of force have prevented the national anti-imperialist revolution, which in 1959 brought the Barbudos guerrillas to power, from making Cuba an economically strong country. So the petty bourgeois ideological representation was able to blame the Cuban version of false communism of not having been able to realize capitalism! It is truly a terrible test of cunning on the part of those on the false left of half the planet who stubbornly cling to the nostalgia for a "socialist" Cuba. When the living conditions of the Cuban proletariat are deteriorating day by day, plunging into malnutrition, this alleged "socialism" would only be the confirmation for the lying bourgeois propaganda of the impossibility of getting out of the bleak horizon of capitalism.

If, on the other hand, it had been possible to achieve socialism in Cuba alone, as the Castros and Che Guevaras did not want and could not do, why should we have ever feared the embargo of US goods and capital? What happened to the high-sounding proclamations of "Homeland or death" of a grotesque and unrealistic nationalism, accompanied for six decades by a pitiful jeremiad for the disastrous conditions of the Cuban economy attributed to the "Bloqueo genocida," that is, the impossibility of importing goods "made in the USA"?

The worsening shortage of food and medicine on the island is also due to

Italian National Demonstration at GKN Auto

[the following leaflet was released by ICP comrades in Italy against closures at factories of the GKN group. GKN provided parts for Stellantis auto groups which includes Fiat, Chrysler and Peugeot amongst others]

The struggle at GKN must be included in a general protests at the Stellantis group and united with all the other struggles against the redundancies in order to obtain a reduction in working hours, 100% unemployment benefits for laid off workers!

Since 30 June - the day of the release of redundancies granted by Cgil Cisl and Uil to the government and employers - the list of companies announcing closures and redundancies has grown longer: GKN in Florence, Gianetti Ruote in Monza, Whirlpool in Naples, Timken in Brescia, ABB in Vicenza and many other smaller ones that are not newsworthy.

The CGIL leadership is now pretending to be indignant and the Fiom leadership has called a two-hour national strike, divided by territory and by factory: they are trying to regain credibility with the workers, which is increasingly difficult, and above all with their own members and delegates, in whom discontent is rife.

In confirmation of how bogus are the intentions of the regime unions - that they do not intend to call the workers to fight - Fiom Fim and Uilm have not called any mobilization of the workers in the factories of the Stellantis group, except for a two-hour strike at Mirafiori just for July 30. And yet it is clear that, if there is any chance of reversing the closure of GKN, it lies in promoting first and foremost a struggle of the whole ex-FIAT group, for which GKN devoted most of its production.

The automotive sector is particularly affected by the crisis of overproduction that has been afflicting the global capitalist economy as a whole for decades. A few weeks ago, in the main Stellantis plant in Italy - the one in Melfi - Fiom Fim and Uilm signed a disgraceful agreement to reduce the production lines to a single one and to transfer the production of ancillary industries to the parent factory. This will lead to further redundancies both in the factory and in the supply chain.

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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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Venezuela's economic marasmus, which has caused a drop of more than 70% in interchange compared to 2014, with a drastic reduction in imports of Venezuelan oil, which Cuba has been buying cheaply since the days of the 2000 agreement between Chavez and Fidel. In June, only 35,000 barrels per day arrived in Cuba from Venezuela, half of what it was in February and barely a third of what it was in 2012. In the meantime, the trade balance has continued to worsen with the deficit reaching 10% of GDP. The production of sugar, Cuba's main export product, has fallen considerably due to the scarce availability of fuel for agricultural machinery and the lack of spare parts. With the pandemic, in addition to the halving of income from tourism, remittances from emigrants have been reduced by a third.

To this situation—as we have well described in the previous issue—the government reacted with a monetary reform that abolished the convertible peso causing a considerable devaluation of the Cuban peso. Wage increases did not compensate for inflation at all. A situation aggravated by the scarce availability of primary consumer goods that have become hard to come by despite strong price increases.

It is not surprising that in dozens of cities hungry proletarians clashed with the police, looting government food stores. The harsh repression resulted in one death on the outskirts of Havana, numerous injuries and many arrests. The riots have forced the government, having realized the danger, to a sudden reshuffle of government and concessions, the increase of salaries in the public sector and the abolition of import duties on basic necessities, such as food and medicine, which are a means for Cuban emigrants to feed and care for families left behind. The Cuban bourgeoisie is afraid of the proletariat, which shows that it knows how to rebalance the power relations between the classes in its favor with its struggle. The Cuban proletarians feel less the call of the "socialist homeland" than that of the stomach, and nationalist rhetoric is not enough to keep them calm.

In such circumstances, the thesis of the US conspiracy, that the demonstrations were piloted by Yankees determined to overthrow the regime, sounds ridiculous. We don't even know to what extent the US is really interested in destabilizing the island by provoking a new wave of immigrants on the Florida coast. If the US bourgeoisie will try to exploit the Cuban protests to its advantage, this does not imply any intention to replace the regime of false communism with the forms of a liberal democratic system.

Communists do not therefore face the alternative between supporting the rubble of the Cuban revolution or the anti-Castro circles in Miami and the strongest imperialism. It is not a question of defending Cuba and its anti-imperialist revolution, now a historical achievement, although inevitably sold out to the highest bidder among the big bourgeois powers. Nor is it ever a question of accepting the democratic demands, certainly overestimated by the media, of a protest that starts from the primary needs of the proletariat and certainly not from the impotent aspirations of the petty bourgeoisie and traffickers of Cuba to see the birth of a liberal democracy. Communists are nevertheless always with every proletarian rebellion in which they see hints of class awakening, and they direct them towards the maturation of a higher level of class formation, providing themselves with the organs proper to the proletariat, namely the class union and the communist party.

Brazilian Rail Workers

On July 15, organized rail workers working for the Companhia Paulista de Trens Metropolitanos in São Paulo, Brazil went on strike. The strike was called for because of a new contract proposal that included a wage increase of \$0, and the fact that the CPTM, ran by the Brazilian state, refused to pay out their profit-sharing plan on 2 separate occasions. The workers led by their union shut down a section of public transportation that ended up affecting over 40 out of 93 stations and affecting 4 out of the 7 rail lines owned by the CPTM.

The strike was heavily criticized by the President of the CPTM, Pedro Moro, who suggested that the rail workers should be happy because they exist within a privileged position in Brazil. The strike ended the same day it started with the unions negotiating a very meager "win" for the workers they are supposed to represent. The profit sharing will be paid out in 2 separate installments but there would be no percentage gain in wages. For a country that is currently seeing a rise in the cost of living, we would hope that the unions that are supposed to represent their rank and file would negotiate a contract that is so pitiful for the workers, and beneficial for the owners.

Colombian Protests

Protests broke out again nationwide on July 20, the day of Colombia's independence. The protests originally started on April 28th in response to a proposed tax bill and a health care reform bill. The former would increase the cost of everyday commodities like food, and utilities, while the latter would privatise an already failing healthcare system in the middle of the pandemic. With a high rate of unemployment amongst young people, and around 40% of the population living in poverty we can see why the working-class of Colombia choose to fight.

Throughout these protests, we have seen a mixture of different interests all rebelling against the Colombian State. In the list of organizations coming together with a proposal headed by the National Strike Committee, we see local trade unions, feminist organizations, indigenous groups, and student activists. The CNP has created a list of 10 major reforms that are attempting to deal with the social decay of Colombian life. Poverty, state violence, and privatisation of public services are just some of the issues workers are fighting against.

The Colombian state has responded with violent repression against the protestors, who have been confronted by the police and military. While the president of Colombia is calling for the different social classes within the country to come together as a "team", the state he helms is currently killing, maiming, and disappearing people for struggling against the deplorable conditions they find themselves in. The hypocrisy of the democratic state is blatant for all to see.

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Catastrophic Flooding in North-Western Europe another Environmental Crisis

The flash floods in West Germany, Belgium, Luxemburg and the Netherlands were the worst in Europe for decades. By Thursday, July 22, the death toll in Rhineland-Palatinate (RP) and North Rhine Westphalia (NRW) stood at 179, but with thousands more missing, the number was still rising daily. In Belgium, at least two dozen had been killed in the Liège region with many more reported missing. In the province of Limburg in the Netherlands, 10,000 people were evacuated as the authorities feared that if the Maas (Meuse) broke its banks, urban residential areas would be flooded. Also in Perl, in Saarland, the Mosel was more than double its usual level.

By Friday 16 July, 114,000 households in Germany were without electricity. Entire villages were cut off because bridges, roads, bridges and railway tracks became impassable, either covered with water or entirely destroyed.

The worst affected areas were those in the Eifel region, and in particular communities along the River Ahr, a western tributary of the Rhine south of Bonn. The village of Schuld (population 660) in the Ahrweiler district, which is located on several loops in the Ahr, was largely destroyed. In many other places along the Ahr in the eastern Eifel, the houses are flooded, partially or completely destroyed, or in danger of imminent. People were left without drinking water as well as without electricity.

A particularly tragic case occurred in Sinzig, which is located at the confluence of the Ahr and the Rhine. Twelve people died in a dormitory for the severely disabled as a result of the flood. They lived in a house belonging to the Ahrweiler branch of the federal self-help organization, Lebenshilfe. The ground floor of the dormitory was flooded by the sharp rise in the Ahr in the night from Wednesday to Thursday. The residents were not evacuated in time and could not save themselves. In total, at least 362 people were reported as injured in Ahrweiler.

The situation in the village of Erftstadt-Blessen on the River Erft was especially desperate. Several houses and a part of the historic castle collapsed. Firefighters tried in vain to reach people buried in the houses. Aerial photos showed what appeared to be a massive sinkhole. The Erft, also a tributary on the left bank of the Rhine, is 107 km long. It is normally a small, narrow river but developed into a raging torrent as a result of the heavy rainfall. On top of this, a lake broke its banks, adding to the spate. Large areas of land have been inundated and crops destroyed. Volunteers took care of evacuated in emergency shelters. This also raised the threat of a new outbreak of Covid-19 infections.

Another badly affected district was Euskirchen, south of Cologne. As well as its many rivers and rivulets, there are numerous streams in the area, especially in the Münstereifel forest to the south, on whose ridges the watershed of the Erft and the Ahr is located. There were concerns that the nearby dam – the Steinbachtalsperre – would break, which would have completely flooded several mid-sized towns. Consequently many residents were evacuated. The situation in villages in many valleys in the area remained critical.

In NRW 23 villages were flooded. Cities impacted included Cologne, Leverkusen,

Solingen, Hagen, Aachen, Düren and Trier. The regions worse affected were, in addition to the Eifel, Bergisches Land (east of Cologne), Sauerland, and the southeastern Ruhrgebiet. The full extent of the damage will not be known for weeks or months. But in many towns and districts it is certainly on a scale not seen since the Second World War. Many people pitched in to help out, including hundreds of members of the voluntary fire brigades. The government sent around 900 soldiers.

The Eifel – a cursed land

Many ask themselves how can such a disaster happen in such an advanced part of the world as West Germany? The answer lies in part, of course, in the extreme weather caused by the climate change. Scientists have long been warning of its effects, which are causing unprecedented heat and drought in Canada and the western USA, for example. In Europe, the massive downpours can be attributed to the warmed atmosphere, which can absorb significantly more moisture than before. In the German-speaking Belgian border towns of Jalhay and Spa, 271 mm and 217 mm of rain was recorded in just 48 hours. Normally, the total rainfall for the entire month of July is around 100 mm.

But this alone does not explain why it struck here, with such intensity. To explain this, we need to consider the combination of geographical factors and the uneven development of the capitalist economy.

Straddling RP and NRW and crossing over into the Ardennes, the Eifel is one of the most beautiful regions of Germany, but it is also largely a desolate, empty wilderness, a high plateau with rolling heath and moorlands followed by vast expanses of dark green woodland, with, here and there, a black “Maar” – a volcanic lake. There is a tradition that the people of the Eifel themselves believed the region to be “cursed”, and indeed, it has been hit by a succession of tragedies down the centuries. In the Middle Ages the region was prosperous, with several monasteries, but in the early modern times it was surrounded by four superpowers – the Empire, France, the United Provinces of the Netherlands and the Spanish Netherlands – each of which was looking to extend its own borders, or those of its local clients, to make them more defensible. During the Thirty Years’ War, the Eifel lay on the so-called “Spanish Road” and the population was expected to provide billets, bread, meat, wheat and beer for the marching armies. Many villages all but disappeared. Further devastation was visited upon the region by hysteria about witchcraft, the predatory wars of Louis XIV, the Wars of Spanish and Polish Succession, and recurring outbreaks of disease.

In the second half of the eighteenth century, plague ravaged the north and west Eifel and the Ahr valley, destroying many villages. As land ownership consolidated, a monocultural agriculture was encouraged among the tenant farmers, based on the potato; but as in Ireland, this misfired when harvests failed as a result of poor weather and crop disease. Large tracts of countryside were transformed into endless juniper heaths, the only plant tough enough to survive wandering flocks of hungry sheep. As the land depopulated the long roads through became vulnerable to highwaymen, so the roads too fell

into disuse and were gradually abandoned.

A slight glimmer of hope appeared at the end of the eighteenth century. The French arrived on the scene – but this time as liberators, not as oppressors. After 1794 the Eifel became part of the Ourthe department of the First Republic. The Church and feudal lords were stripped of their powers, and for the first time in history ordinary people in the Eifel had civil rights. They no longer had to do compulsory labor or pay unjust taxes. A modest economic upswing took place; new markets opened up for the old Eifel industries: quarries, iron and lead mines again took up production on a large scale.

All this came to an end after the Napoleonic Wars when the Eifel region was given to Prussia under the terms of the Congress of Vienna. Some of the wasteland was reforested with non-native pine and spruce. But the Prussian government omitted to do the one thing that might have saved the region from further ruin: it did not develop a network of communications through this mountainous countryside; this could have enabled the metal industry, which had re-emerged under the French, to benefit from new smelting technologies through the import of coal and coke, and to export in greater quantities.

Instead, the last of the huge beech forests were cut down to produce charcoal – whose use had died out elsewhere in Europe. When the iron industry finally collapsed (at its height, the Eifel produced 10% of Europe’s iron) thousands lost their only source of income, coinciding with the great famines caused by rained-out and frozen harvests. The Eifel became known as the “Prussian Siberia”. As in Ireland, insult was added to injury; the people were blamed for their own misfortunes, characterized as “the hungry boarders” of the Kingdom of Prussia. The Eifel disappeared from public consciousness as a land with its own culture and identity.

The Eifel then became depopulated. Between 1834 and 1911, 140,000 people, almost half of the entire population, emigrated to America. Abject poverty, repeated crop failures, mandatory military service in the Prussian army – and not least, the failure of the revolution of 1848-9 to drive out the parasitical aristocracy – all helped convert a trickle into a flood of emigrants. Nearly all headed to the American mid-west. They settled in four major destinations: McHenry County, Illinois, Clinton County, Michigan, eastern Wisconsin including Fond du Lac and Brown Counties, and Lorain County, Ohio. Among other things, these immigrants filled the ranks of the Wisconsin and Illinois regiments of the Union army in the Civil War.

The Eifel now had nothing to offer the German bourgeoisie other than a way of delaying any possible French invasion. Further south in the Prussian Rhineland, the rich flood plains were ideal for large-scale capitalist agriculture, in particular to grow the potatoes that fed the German working class; to the north-east, heavy industry was established along the lower Rhine and the tributaries on the right bank, the Ruhr and Lippe. But the Eifel remained sparsely populated and the infrastructure undeveloped right up until the 21st century. Even today, the main economic

activity, aside from tapping the mountain streams for mineral water and brewing, is tourism.

It is a region bisected by numerous small but fast-flowing rivers and streams, tributaries of the Rhine to the east and the Maas (Meuse) to the west, and many lakes, with very poor drainage. It lacks the flood plains that protect the more developed and densely populated areas near the industrialized waterways of Germany.

Consequently, when the flash floods struck, the water had nowhere to go, and it was impossible to evacuate people from many towns along the tributaries of the Rhine and in isolated villages. In the narrow valleys of the Eifel, the narrow streams turned into raging rivers within hours or even minutes after days of intense rainfall, giving people absolutely no hope of escape.

Later in the week similar, though less devastating floods hit Saxony, Upper Bavaria and Austria. Worst affected was the county of Berchtesgadener Land bordering Austria, with at least two people killed and many houses destroyed by landslides rising water levels.

Floods in China and Turkey

Other floods have caused disasters in areas of the world that capitalism has transformed rapidly in recent years, but without the essential infrastructure to protect them against the effects of climate change and natural disasters.

Thousands of people remained trapped in areas of central China after severe flooding. At least 33 people were killed in the first week, but the death toll was expected to rise as recovery crews accessed previously submerged roads and tunnels in the city of Xinxiang. Around three million people were thought to have been affected. Extreme rainstorms, which dumped a year's worth of rain on and around the capital of Henan province, Zhengzhou, moved north, affecting exposed outer cities and rural areas, trapping people without electricity or fresh water, including those in hospitals.

China frequently experiences flooding in the summer months, but rapid urbanization, and the conversion of farmland, have exacerbated the impact of heavy rainfall.

Around 200 people had to be evacuated following floods in Turkey's eastern Black Sea region on July 21-22. The Arhavi River overflowed, badly affecting the district center and village roads in the province of Artvin. At least six people died, with two people still missing, in flooding and landslides triggered by heavy rain the previous week in the neighboring Rize province.

Floods are the second most destructive type of natural disaster in Turkey, after earthquakes. Nearly 30% of all the natural disasters in the country consist of flood events. However, according to recent studies, the risks are linked to economic developments (more assets and people exposed to floods) and hardly at all to climate change. These developments include urbanization and the switch from traditional agriculture to intensive farming of cash crops (such as tea and kiwi fruit in Rize province).

Capitalism has no solution

Undoubtedly, preventive action could have reduced the impact. Experts at the European Flood Awareness System (EFAS) issued an extreme flood warning earlier in the week and questioned why the toll was so high. They called the disaster "a monumental failure of the system". But there are also longer-term issues.

Leaving aside for a moment the obvious need to reverse climate change, the technology and hydrological know-how exists to prevent

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Greenwashing in China

At the recent climate summit between April 22 and 23, which was supposedly wanted by the new US President Biden, Chinese President Xi Jinping also spoke with a speech that put harmony between man and nature and "green development" in the first place. To this end, Xi Jinping confirmed the commitment, already expressed in previous months, to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 (China currently produces the largest amount, 28% of global emissions), and to achieve "climate neutrality" in 2060, i.e. zero net carbon dioxide emissions, when the carbon dioxide produced does not exceed that which can be absorbed, for example by forests and oceans.

To achieve this goal, China would focus on three factors: intensification of energy production from renewable sources, a sector in which China holds important world records; increase in the volume of forests on the national territory; and above all reduction in the production of pollutants, and therefore progressive reduction in the use of coal. However, China is highly dependent on coal, so much so that it consumes about half of the world's total. Coal meets between 56 and 58% of the country's energy consumption and two-thirds of electricity production.

In addition, China has financed projects using coal abroad, from Pakistan to Serbia, for an investment of 474 million dollars in 2020. Not even the economic and pandemic crisis has marked a reversal in China's use of coal, even last year production returned to the records of 2015: according to official data, as much as 3.84 billion tons were extracted. The reason is, in part, due to a sort of trade war with Australia, which exports a lot of coal to China. Beijing has blocked these imports, and increased domestic production, in retaliation for Australia's positions on major disputes involving China: alleged Chinese origin of the pandemic, Hong Kong, Xinjiang, Taiwan, 5G etc.

So the overall picture of China's energy needs suggests that we won't see any "major leaps forward" on the path to reducing coal consumption any time soon. It is Beijing's own leaders who predict a peak in coal use in 2030, but without quantifying it. Despite the statements of principle on the "harmony between man and nature", despite the claim of wanting to base the economy on "a sustainable model", despite the long future plans to use "alternative sources", a golden decade for coal in China is opening. Even the latest Chinese five-year plan, although painted green as is obligatory everywhere, does not set limits to coal.

On the other hand, neither could it, since, in a context of increasingly fierce commercial rivalry between capitals, reducing dependence on coal would put its economy at a disadvantage. The "energy question" thus becomes a weapon in the inter-imperialist clash. The war between competing capitalisms is hidden in an apparent clash between "defenders of the environment", of the "climate". This fake "defense of nature" sounds like this: Western capitalisms accuse China of being the main responsible for emissions and push for strong reductions; China responds that it is the old capitalisms, dragged for centuries before China in the industrial revolution, that are the real culprits of the current critical situation.

These "ecological" skirmishes can only be explained in the context of rivalries between states and the crisis of their economies. Specifically, bourgeois China, which arrived a century late to industrial development, feeds its factories, today's power plants, with coal, as did the old capitalisms. The weapon of environmental defense is, therefore, wielded by Western capitalists only to harness the young Chinese industry.

For three centuries of world history, Western capitalism has imposed itself on the backward Asian economies by flooding their markets with its goods. "The low prices of its goods are the heavy artillery with which it flattens all the Chinese walls," says the Manifesto of '48, masterfully outlining the ineluctable extension of capitalism to the whole world. But capital cannot develop in a uniform way, the different world areas follow different development trends. This results in the modification of relations between countries. The current state of world capitalism presents a reversed situation compared to 1848, today are the Chinese goods that traveling to the West are overwhelming modern "walls".

In the commercial war between countries competing on the world market, the climate and environmental issue is used to justify the imposition of barriers against the goods of rivals. This is the case of the European Union's announced "carbon tax" aimed at hitting imported goods, in particular from China. Capitalism cannot preserve nature because it cannot stop the immense production of goods, mostly useless, that determine its rapacity in dispossessing the planet.

It is not a question of producing in a "different", "sustainable" way, but of proceeding to the destruction of the capitalist mode of production. Obviously this perspective is rejected by the Chinese false communists. Under the red, which serves to cover the capitalist exploitation of the proletariat, they have discovered the usefulness of green, of ecologism, the ideology of capitalistically mature societies that, faced with the historical condemnation to destruction, take refuge in the possibility of a "different" capitalism.

But capitalism cannot be reformed, as the petty-bourgeois democrats delude themselves. Ecologism, like all bourgeois ideologies, mystifies the reality of capitalism to convince of its eternity. Ecologism is the ideology of an opulent and proprietary society, the expression of the bourgeoisie, the middle classes and the working class aristocracy. It is clear that from this future, modern, prosperous and harmonious, of high consumption and "eco" lifestyle, are excluded the Chinese proletarians, exploited and with starvation wages, crowded in unhealthy metropolis and forced to live in hovels of a few square meters.

These promises of reconciliation between man and nature can never be realized in capitalism. The "green" ideology, coupled with the propaganda of "socialism with Chinese characteristics", serves to perpetuate the capitalist hell and ensure the domination of capital.

Occupation of Factories in Italy 1920 Lessons for a Century Later

The Context

At the end of the First World War, Europe was hit by a serious economic crisis. During the war, the "sharks" of industries, especially the metallurgical one, had made enormous gains with minimal risk: the State acted both as a supplier, procuring raw materials and coal at controlled prices, and as a customer, purchasing the products needed to fuel the war. It acted as an overseer, militarizing the factories as well as imposing strict discipline on the workers.

After the war, while the proletariat was excited by the Russian Revolution, the economic crisis led to layoffs and factory closures. The class struggle, in this peculiar context, found itself fighting with different rules: the economic strike was no longer an effective weapon, so much so that the capitalists often stifled the movement by imposing a lockout.

Thus already in the early months of 1920 and in particular in September in the industrial centers of all of Italy, over half a million workers, seeing the strike weapon insufficient, began to occupy factories.

The great movement started from Milan, on August 30, when the Officine Romeo & C. Company decided to lock out. The workers responded by occupying the factories. On September 1, when the National Federation of Industrialists decided to close the factories, the movement extended to Turin and all of northern Italy, up to Campania and across other industrial sectors. From an economic/wage standpoint, the movement had taken on a clear political significance.

At the same time land was occupied here and there in the countryside. During the war, many farm laborers had become redundant because of the introduction of new agricultural machinery.

Veterans who knew the massacres of previous wars were still in the army. And while awaiting stand down they followed proletarian actions with interest. Officers had almost lost authority over these soldiers, so their rifles were taken.

Occupied Factories And Armed Proletarians

The situation was incandescent. "At every moment in which external events caused violent emotions (massacres, the beginning of riots in some region, etc.) the masses had no clear idea of what should be done, they had no framework on which to support the action. Hence the need to gather to understand each other, to look for the leaders, to receive passwords. Through the soldiers, due to the abundance of badly guarded war materials, the hasty liquidation of war remnants, the proletariat individually armed itself. But the efficiency of this armament was not

organic" (Internal document of the Communist Party of Italy on the civil war in Italy in the years 1919 - 22, Il Partito Comunista, 41 - 43, 1978).

"It was, in the history of the labor movement in Italy, the first case of its kind [...] In all departments, in addition to normal work, weapons were manufactured and repaired. Adjusters repaired revolvers and rifles: turners mass-produced hand grenades; while the smiths made swords, styli for rods etc. [...] The trucks were armored [...] and machine guns were repaired, etc. because it was believed to seriously and definitively end it with capital" (Prometeo , n.63, 8 November 1931).

Production management was conducted by Internal Commissions made up of workers. "An internal newspaper entitled 'Il Marciapiede' was drafted [...] The first task was to take possession of the archives. It was thus possible to see with what shrewdness the owners of the workshops followed the internal events of the proletarian organization and how they were well informed [...] The defense was perfectly organized [...] One night a patrol of Red Guards kidnapped four individuals who were near the workshop, took them inside the factory and managed, after a long interrogation, to ascertain that they were four former officers who had come on patrol to organize a coup against the workers. The punishment decided consisted in the obligation to work in the furnaces (to put the coal in them) for twenty-four hours. Imagine those daddy children who had never worked!" (Prometeo, n.7, 1 October 1928).

Not a Proletarian Offensive - Not a Bourgeois Offensive

"The occupation of the factory was a great moral factor of the workers' action, a good basis for the armed struggle [...] The criterion that guided the workers was to defend the factory. Each factory had barbed wire, sentries, militia and commanders [...]."

"The State followed an even more restricted criterion of defensive [...] Some industrial districts of the major centers were completely left in the hands of the workers, for the whole time of the occupation [...] The new state of affairs was such that it was necessary to consider the Army as unusable in many dangerous cases [...] A small army was organized in the Army for public safety [...] The student officers, at the schools, were ordered to form groups of under 50 the command of the most senior in rank, and always consider himself at the disposal of the local Military Command. Machine guns were permanently placed in secure bourgeois houses [...] Even militarily the bourgeoisie applied the principle, waiting to be strong for revenge, to give the land to the masses, to retreat to the very last lines, to stall, to prepare the

counterattack."

"Giolitti, old fox [...] intelligent man, from the first day of the conflict there was the conviction that "there is no way out between the two evils, we must decide for the lesser evil, the one that does not represent a mortal risk and leaves the essential members of the organism to subsist, that is, it does not kill the most sacred institutions with the proletarian dictatorship" (Corriere della Sera, November 19)" (L'ordine Nuovo, October 2, 1920).

Faced with the accusations of not using the public force to prevent the occupation of the factories, Giolitti's attitude was marked by an apparent neutrality, but one carefully evaluated on the basis of political factors, in collaboration with the union leaders, and with the specific goal of avoiding a civil war. Later the union Pie Cards will have claimed credit for not having caused the revolution to break out.

In "Memoirs of My Life" Giolitti recalls:

"The occupation of the factories, in the way it had taken place, presented the government with a whole series of problems, both immediate and distant; from those of simple police to those of social policy."

"The workers who had carried out the occupation, in every part of Italy, but mainly in the industrial zone of Lombardy, Piedmont and Liguria, were no less than six hundred thousand; and the occupation, provoked by an untimely threat of lockout on the part of some industrialists, who had not properly measured the situation and its dangers, was based on the concept that the mass of workers could manage and operate the factories without interventions by capitalists and bosses.

"I had, from the first moment, the clear and precise conviction that the experiment could not [do] without demonstrating to the workers the impossibility of achieving that goal, as they lacked capital, technical education and commercial organization, especially for the purchase of raw materials and for the sale of products that they had managed to manufacture.

"In this respect, therefore, this episode represented for me, in other forms and conditions, the repetition of the famous experiment of the general strike of 1904, which had produced so much fright, only to prove its inanity; and I was firmly convinced that the government should conduct itself again this time as it had been then; that is, to allow the experiment to take place up to a certain point so that the workers would have the opportunity to convince themselves of the impracticability of their intentions, and that the bosses would be deprived of the way to shift the responsibility for the failure onto others.

"This wider and more distant political convenience coincided, moreover, with the immediate convenience of the police.

"I was then accused of not having resorted to the use of public force to enforce the law and prevent the violation of private law; to have, in short, neither prevented the occupation of the factories by the workers, nor proceeded to drive them out in any way after the occupation had taken place.

"But even assuming that I had managed to occupy the factories before the workers, which would have been at least very difficult given the breadth and universality of the movement, I would then have found myself in the very uncomfortable position of having almost the totality of the public force: police, Royal Guards and Carabinieri, closed in factories; without therefore the means of maintaining order outside the factories, that is, in the streets and squares where the workers would have overthrown, and in this way I would have played precisely into the hands of the revolutionaries, who would have asked for nothing better.

"If then, later, I had resorted to public force to force the workers to leave the occupied factories, a vast and bloody conflict would have arisen, and in all likelihood the working masses who occupied them, before giving them up to the public force, would have devastated [the workshops]. Therefore, for both political and economic reasons, and for immediate and future conveniences, events would have coincided so that I should recommend the line of conduct that I then followed."

What a beautiful lesson for revolutionaries!

The government supervised from the outside (inside no damage was intended to be inflicted on the occupants of the factories), and it did not hinder the passage of workers coming to and from work. Giolitti was not impressed by the defensive systems prepared by the workers at the entrance and on the roofs of the factories: he knew well that behind those barricades, those bags of sand and fences and Friesland horses there was a mass of workers voluntarily made prisoner.

Guaranteed Reformism

The government worked toward the movement deflating on its own.

"The economic situation of many families was beginning to worsen. It was then that the Internal Commission decided to break through the safes in order to meet the needs of the workers. The funds found were limited and were soon distributed. The production of automobiles was still sold in order to face all the difficulties and the needs of families" (Prometeo, n.7, 1 October 1928).

But this kind of remedy could not last long. The growing weakness of the movement and the disorientation of the masses made the situation on the ground favorable for opportunism. "Through their agents the bourgeoisie injected the poison of reformism into the Italian workers' organizations, especially the trade unions [...] The reformists who headed the Italian trade unions carried out the slogan of commissions made up of representatives of the " leaders " workers and capitalists on an equal basis to elaborate the principles and methods of controlling production. This was the luxurious funeral arranged by the reformists" (Appeal of the Executive Committee of the Communist

International to all members of the PSI and of the Italian trade unions of November 1920, in *Comunismo*, n.30).

Also in *L'Ordine Nuovo* of 2 October 1920 we can read a condemnation of reformism: "No 'state socialism,' no socialization born of Giolitti or the Confederation" on the ground of legality "will move us from the concept expressed also by the majority of the Commission of socialization in Germany that "an isolated nationalization of the mines that allows the capitalist economy to persist in other branches of the economy cannot be considered socialization, but would only mean the replacement of one entrepreneur for another. 'And this could be repeated in our case as well, if all the metallurgical plants were ever taken over by the state. As long as the proletariat does not hold power in its hands, with all the means of production and exchange, it is necessary to be a reformist and to speak of "socialization, greater production, etc.'"

When the betrayal of the D'Aragona and the Buozzi was complete, Giolitti himself would clarify and claim his defensive maneuver. We report from *Azione Comunista*, September 11, 1921 the speech he gave to the Senate on September 26, 1920 as president of the council of ministers: "Should I have the factories evacuated by force? Evidently I had to start the fight, the battle, the civil war in short. And this after the General Confederation of Labor had solemnly declared that it excluded any political concept from the movement, that this movement had to be kept within the limits of an economic contest. The General Confederation of Labor, in which I had confidence at the time, has shown that it deserves it because the great mass of workers approved his proposals."

However, we must not forget that the real traitor was the Socialist Party which, in declaring itself "in favor of the revolution," agreed to put it to the vote, ensuring that the agenda of Aragon had a majority. What was missing was a revolutionary party to give the working masses under attack the right direction for revolutionary action.

We cannot fail to resume the evaluation of the phenomenon of the occupation of factories, and the address of the Communist Abstentionist Fraction:

"[The workers] have understood, and with their action of taking over the factory and continuing to work rather than strike, they want to show that it is not that they don't want to work, but that they don't want to work under the bosses direction. They... no longer want to be exploited. They want to work on their own, that is, in the interest only of the workforce. This state of mind that is becoming more and more precise must be taken into the utmost account; we just wouldn't want them to be misled by false assessments....

"We would not like the conviction that by developing the institution of factory councils it is certainly possible to take over the factories and eliminate the capitalists. This would be the most damaging of illusions. The factory will be conquered by the working class – and not only by the respective workers [in each factory], which would be too sparse and non-communist – but only after the whole working class has seized political power."

Without this conquest, the royal guards, the carabinieri, etc., will take care of dispelling all illusions, i.e., the mechanism of oppression and force available to the bourgeoisie, its political apparatus of power, reveals itself.

"It would be better if these endless and useless adventures that are daily exhausting the working masses were all channeled, merged and organized into one great, comprehensive upsurge aimed directly at the heart of the enemy bourgeoisie.

"Only a communist party should and would be able to carry out such an undertaking. At this time, such a party should and would have no other task than that of directing all its activity towards making the working masses increasingly conscious of the need for this grand political attack – the only more or less direct route to the take-over of the factory, which if any other route is taken may never fall into their hands at all." ("To take the factory or to take power?", *Il Soviet*, February 22, 1920).

After The Betrayal Of Social Democracy

Just as it written in our weekly paper, the defeat of the factory occupations was inevitable. Giolitti was happy that the workers had voluntarily locked themselves up inside the factories, leaving him, with the public force at hand, control of the streets, squares and institutions.

The defeat of the occupation of the factories and the unrest of that period allowed the formation of the fascists. Having made the working class retreat once again by intrigue, Giolitti and the bourgeois government, fearing a revolutionary renewal of the class struggle, welcomed the deployment of the White Guard corps that the capitalists demanded, providing for their armament and military education.

The Duke of Aosta, certainly for personal reasons as well, was the zealous master of these developing nuclei. He undertook a tour of local victory celebrations of the Piave and each of these, methodically prepared, consecrated a fascist handful by handing them a pennant.

We quote the manifesto launched on September 2, 1921 by the Communist Party of Italy, titled: "On the Anniversary of the Occupation of Factories: the Lessons,"

"Thousands of workers and peasants massacred by the police and the white guard; hundreds and hundreds of Chambers of Labor, People's Houses, Cooperatives, sections of the Communist Party and the Socialist Party looted and destroyed; dozens of communist, socialist, republican and popular newspapers burned down; tens of thousands of workers and peasants beaten to blood, tortured, maimed; entire regions, inhabited by millions and millions of agricultural workers and poor peasants, Emilia, Tuscany, Umbria, Polesine, Lomellina, permanently subjected to a barbaric regime of white terror; thousands of workers and peasants banished from their homes, forced to abandon their old people, their women, their children in desperation and misery and to wander, half mad by torture, in the national territory, without asylum, without resources, without guarantees of personal freedom and security; the overflowing prisons of the best elements of the working class, of the generous

ones who had offered everything to the cause of popular emancipation; half a million unemployed as a result of the accelerated process of decomposition of the capitalist economy.

"Here is the sad balance of this year which has passed since the day of the occupation of the factories The official leaders of the proletarian movement retreated from the struggle. They feared a 'slaughter'; they feared a crisis in production; they feared the foreign blockade and the need for war. Today even the most backward, most ignorant worker is able to judge, to understand the events. The political conception of the reformists has clearly shown itself unable to dominate the development of events; it has proved absurd; it has proved to be a danger, the most threatening danger for the future of the working class."

After A Hundred Years

The workers' defeat came at the hands of reformism even before fascism. During the occupation of the factories, "the glorious party of the flag that never folded," the Italian Socialist Party, represented a colorless jumble of inept leaders and corrupt parliamentarians who did not understand and could not understand the laws of class struggle.

Today, although the big opportunist parties have largely disappeared, the plague of reformism and collaborationism persists. It domination plagues the proletarian movement. The leaders of the trade union organizations remain servants of the bourgeoisie. As long as the proletarians allow themselves to be guided by opportunistic trade unionists and ambitious politicians, who dream of finding spaces for dialogue in bourgeois institutions, they will always be defeated.

It is not without importance that in the referendum of the capitulation, 100 years ago, the Chambers of Labor voted for Communist measures, while the representatives of the Federations and the trade union bureaucracy voted against. This fact confirms the correct approach of our trade union work today . Today, as yesterday, we claim the importance of organizing the proletarians on a territorial basis as in the old Chambers of Labor. As before, we remain intransigent in conducting a struggle inside trade unions to denounce operational decisions unrelated to the base and to the members, imposed by local, regional or national leaders, as well as by an apparatus of salaried workers who live off the union. Today, as yesterday, we denounce the use of trade union referendums in which the vote of a scab has the same weight as that of those who sacrifice themselves for collective struggle.

The union bureaucracy of 100 years ago tried to circumscribe the proletarian forces so that they remained, according to the union leaders, on the level of demands made only within the framework of legality and bourgeois respectability. The Communists attacked this syndicalism which only wanted to be economic and not political, a position, however, which unmasked a purely political position: bourgeois and opportunist collaboration.

Today, 100 years later, in full counter-revolution, and with a trade union movement reduced to historical lows, they accuse us of being "economists" – of setting union work only on the level of demands – without the slightest hint of irony. But these political

unionists, what policy are they professing in claiming the right to be involved in industrial planning? What policy do they make their own when they claim the inheritance and nationalization of industries in crisis? It is the same policy that the Buozzi and D'Aragnones of the time wanted to pass off as an economic struggle!

The Communist Party must point out, as the Abstentionist Communist Fraction did long ago, that the occupation of the factories as such was doomed to defeat.

Fundamentally it was a Councilist error, an ideology widespread in Piedmont at the time, according to which the proletariat, having conquered and defended the factory with weapons, could free itself from the "exploitation" of the bosses and manage production autonomously, creating islands of socialism in a capitalist economic and political regime.

The workers prepared for an armed defense of the occupied factories. In his "Memoirs" Giolitti continues: "After the occupation, many of the occupied factories were seized throughout the country. Several thousand rifles, revolvers, hand grenades and sidearms of all kinds were confiscated as well as one hundred tons of cheddite and nitroglycerin. Since it must be assumed that a large part of the weapons and explosives were taken away in the evacuation, which was carried out by the workers voluntarily and without conflict, that considerable residue so abandoned can give the measure of the size."

The crucial error lies in the conception of the factory to be "defended" as an occupied fort. Giolitti had seen well: "The situation could not continue, and the workers' leaders themselves took the initiative and took steps to find a solution, with the evacuation of the occupied factories. Negotiations for this purpose were conducted between the representatives of the Confederation of Labor on the one hand, and those of the Confederation of Industrialists on the other; and they were initiated in Turin personally by me ... and were then concluded in Rome."

The real betrayal was made by the Socialist Party, with a "revolutionary" leadership which had also joined the Third International. He did not fail to launch revolutionary declarations to the workers and peasants to "be ready" as needed, or to threaten to pass from the "occupation" to the "invasion" of factories. But, apart from the empty declarations, he wanted nothing to do with a mass proletarian movement that had the potential for a revolutionary direction and outlet.

Between the Socialist Party and the Confederation of Labor there was a debate as to whether it was an "economic" or "political" movement and who should have taken the lead. The Maximalist leaders were happy to conclude that it was essentially a movement "of a trade union nature," and that therefore it should be led by the Confederation.

A "revolutionary" party that admits that it is unable to establish a genuine proletarian movement and needs the opinion of the union Pie Cards! And asks the union for permission to make the revolution!

The truth is that the Socialist Party was happy to hand over the management of the movement to the union pie cards.

On 19 September, Giolitti convened the trade union and industrial confederations in

Rome. The latter not only accepted the trade union proposal not to punish or dismiss the participants of the occupation, but forged the famous agreement on "workers' control in factories."

Following the referendum called by FIOM between September 25-30, the factories were returned to their legal owners. On the subject of the return we hear a memory of Luigi Longo's: "When it came to clearing the factories there was, by the Works Council, a regular delivery not only of the building, of the offices, of the machinery, but also of the production that it was inventoried and paid to the workers." He goes on that "[t]he delivery to Fiat took place with a certain solemnity, by Parodi, president of the Works Council, to Giovanni Agnelli, president of the company's board of directors, with an exchange of even brief speeches. In his, Agnelli had words of appreciation for the order maintained in the wards" (L. Longo, *Between Reaction and Revolution*).

But that famous "workers' control," which naturally remained a dead letter. Even if it had been realized, what would it have actually represented? The union Pie Cards conceived of it as a more advanced form of class collaboration, so much so that Giolitti himself then proposed it as a solution to the dispute. The industrialists had no difficulty in accepting it, confident that nothing truly dangerous would come from it.

GERMAN FLOODS...

such flooding, through systems of underground canals, which were introduced in the city of Grimma in Saxony following the floods of 2002 and 2013, as well as a change in farming methods and accelerated reforestation. According to research in the UK, water sinks into the soil under trees at 67 times the rate at which it sinks into the soil under grass. The roots of the trees provide channels down which the water flows, deep into the ground. The soil acts as a sponge, a reservoir which sucks up water and then releases it slowly.

However, in regions like the Eifel, such measures produce little or no benefit for the bourgeoisie. Federal and state resources for hydrology projects have constantly been focused on building flood defenses for the major rivers, which are important arteries of the national economy, for the transport of bulk solids such as fuel, building materials and chemicals.

Smaller communities simply don't generate the profits and taxes required to take the necessary measures locally. The causes of this latest flood disaster are therefore clear. First, and most obviously, because of climate change. It is not simply that the capitalist class is "unable and unwilling" to tackle this challenge, as some claim. The very system itself is a monster that escapes human control. It must keep expanding production, and it must keep encouraging us to consume, because without it, the whole rotten system would collapse. And this means more and more dangerous emissions, and more and more waste.

Second, the competitive nature of the capitalist system means that enterprises – and nations – must invest more and more resources in profitable economic investments on the one hand, and the military machine on the other.

Just as we have seen with the coronavirus pandemic, public health and safety must therefore take a backseat as we hurtle from one catastrophe to the next.

for the class union

news and interventions of the class struggle

Frito Lay Strike

Over 500 workers at the Frito-Lay plant in Topeka Kansas have been on strike for more than two weeks now. The strike started after a failed contract negotiation where workers were offered a 4% raise over 2 years. Along with low and stagnant wages, other issues workers are striking against are forced overtime with no days off, and "suicide shifts". Shifts that require workers to work 12 hours on 8 off and then right back for 12 more. Frito-Lay calls these shifts "squeeze shifts" which is quite an apt name for the process of squeezing every last drop of surplus labour from its workers in their endless search for profits.

In the process of fighting for better working conditions, these united workers have garnered a footing in national headlines and with that support from other workers. Members of the UAW Locals 31,710, and 249 have come out in solidarity with the strike which is an encouraging step towards the further development of the association of workers.

As of July 21, the union leadership at the BCTGM Local 218 has concluded negotiations with Frito-Lay management. The new contract is said to include some enhancements to guaranteed time off each week and a 4% raise over 2 years. Eerily similar to the concessions that the previous contract promised and that workers rightfully went to bat against.

USA Fast Food Workers

Fast-food workers across the US went on strike for a \$15 Federal minimum wage and union representation on July 20th. Workers came together from the states of Missouri, North Carolina, South Carolina, Michigan, Texas, and Minnesota, to protest deteriorating working conditions and abysmal wages in a time of a so-called "labor shortage".

Interviews with workers from Missouri and North Carolina shed light on the miserable condition of being a "low-skill" worker even in the event of a national labor shortage for these positions. Workers cite having to choose between having a roof over their heads, having their kids eat, or paying their bills as just some of the driving factors for their strike on Tuesday the 20th. These positions workers find themselves in typically have no vacation, or sick days and no health coverage.

For all the noise being made in the American Media about the importance of essential workers, and the necessity of keeping America running, neither members of the big or petite bourgeoisie are interested in giving any concessions whatsoever to the American proletariat.

The walkouts, strikes, and mass quitting of positions demonstrate a newfound militancy blooming within the American working class. A militancy that can hopefully be used to grow the labor movement as a whole, and with this brings the issue of class struggle to the forefront of the American proletariat's mind.

GKN... continued from page 1

A general dispute in the Stellantis group should demand, against redundancies and closures of factories in the group and in the allied industries, a reduction in working hours and an increase in the redundancy fund to 100% of the salary, since a large part of the workers in all the factories work only a few days a month and receive miserable salaries, which prevents them from participating in strikes on the few days they are at work.

It is this kind of union action that the workers of GKN, Gianetti, Timken - all factories in the automobile sector - need, not the fake solidarity of institutions, church and bourgeois parties, or two hours of strike action proclaimed by the regime's unions to save face.

But the struggle of the GKN workers must also be linked to the struggles against redundancies in all other sectors. The closure of the GKN plant, even though it was fully operational until the very end, is also a consequence of the crisis of overproduction in the world capitalist economy: increasingly asphyxiated markets lead to increasingly fierce competition between industrial groups and an exasperated search for cost savings, which presumably led Stellantis to prefer other suppliers of components that were produced by GKN.

For years, companies have been closing factories in industrially mature countries and relocating them to young capitalism, where wages are lower. But overproduction is a process that is inexorably advancing in the world economy and is already beginning to affect even those capitalisms that are no longer so young, that have matured early, starting with China.

In this situation, trade union defence of workers cannot be conducted company by company: it is a matter of defending the entire working class from the economic crisis of world capitalism.

The CGIL, CISL and UIL refuse to do so, and for decades have instead refined, together with bosses and governments, a sophisticated mechanism of 'company crisis management', aimed at resolving each dispute for itself, isolating any fight against redundancies within the factory walls. There are more than a hundred company crisis tables open at the MISE, where workers' anger and hopes are withered away.

That is why it is necessary to support and fight for the unity of action of conflictual unionism - grassroots unions and combative union fractions in the CGIL - so that it can really stand as a candidate to replace the regime unions in the direction of the trade union struggle. There is still much to be done in this area.

Finally, this year, a few days ago, a national general strike of all grassroots trade unions was called for 18 October. It will be necessary to work for its best success and the widest adhesion of the groups of combative workers still within the regime unions.

This first important result in the battle for the unity of action of conflictual trade unionism

has certainly not been definitively achieved, with the leaderships of grassroots trade unionism that for years opposed it by promoting divided actions, and that only contingently changed course. Only the pressure from below of groups of combative workers can allow this unity of action to become a stable and organic factor, which is deployed at all levels of trade union action - company, territorial, category, inter-category - leading to the formation of a unified class union front, a further step towards the rebirth - outside and against the regime unions - of a large class union.

The occupation of the factory by the GKN workers is a confirmation of their combativeness. But in the context of the crisis of overproduction, the fight against redundancies cannot stop at the factory gates, only by opposing its closure. Even if every factory is occupied and production is carried out by the workers, what is the point of producing goods that have no market outlet? Moreover, competition between companies, in which the bosses try to involve the workers by instilling a corporatist spirit in them, in order to squeeze them better, would become a problem for the workers themselves.

The same applies to the suggestion of nationalisation of the big companies: the workers in state-owned industry would also be in competition with other companies on the world market, they would also have to sacrifice themselves in order for 'their' state-owned company to win in the arena of the international market, which is increasingly clogged up with overproduction, and, in all of this, the nationalist ideology, rather than that of the international workers' union, would be fostered in them.

What workers need in order to live are primarily wages and time off from exploitation. The fight against redundancies, against the closure of factories, is the first necessary step. Uniting these struggles is the next step, but it can only be completed with common demands that unite all workers, without divisions between large and small companies, without binding them to corporatist and nationalist views, without dividing them along national borders. These demands are full wages for redundant workers and a reduction in working hours and working life.

The workers' struggle to defend themselves against the effects of the crisis of the capitalist economy must not be confined to the fortresses of a few factories, but must go out of them and into the streets and squares, to involve and join the hundreds of thousands of workers who have already been made redundant despite the blockade.

The world capitalist economy, due to its inexorable contradictions, has been in decline for years and will collapse in the near future. Workers must be organised to fight not for its impossible maintenance, keeping open factories that the capitalists want to close, but in defence of their needs, demanding satisfaction. It is these trade union demands that are likely, because of their class characteristics, to take the trade union struggle to the political terrain, finally making concrete the motto taken up by the GKN workers: Let's rise up!