

The Communist Party

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The Struggle of the Cadiz Metalworkers Shows The Way To Fight Attempts At Further Exploitation

Since Tuesday, November 16, metalworkers in the Bay of Cadiz, in the south of Spain on the Atlantic coast, have been on a major strike, one of the toughest in recent Spanish working class history.

A bourgeois commentator, in the editorial of a local newspaper in the city, compared it to the strike in the shipyards that took place 45 years ago, lamenting – according to the silly ideology of his social class – how the city would be stuck in the 19th century.

The bourgeoisie is lulled into the illusion of an eternal social peace and cannot admit that the class struggle arises from the social relationship between Capital and wage labor, does not belong only to the past of capitalism but to its present and will determine its future fate. It is enough to observe the wave of strikes that has crossed the United States in recent months to deny the thesis that the most advanced national capitalisms have definitively overcome the class struggle.

The strike originates from the loss of purchasing power of workers' wages in the last ten years, aggravated by the rise in inflation in recent weeks, and in this context from the negotiations for the renewal of the provincial collective agreement, expired December 31, 2020, between the employers' association of small and medium companies – the Femca – with the regime unions – the Comisiones Obreras (CCOO) and the Union General del Trabajo (UGT) - broken by the employers at the end of October.

Of the approximately 27,000 metalworkers in the province, 70% work on temporary contracts. These receive a salary on average 1,500 euros less annually than workers with fixed, permanent contracts.

The former work mainly in small and medium-sized companies that work as contractors for large companies in the area, such as the three Navantia shipyards in Cadiz, Puerto Real and San Fernando, Airbus, Dragados, whose direct employees are instead mostly hired on permanent contracts, with relatively better employment conditions, defined in company contracts. Negotiations for the renewal of the provincial contract therefore involve only the employers' association of small and medium enterprises – the Femca – and not the large companies involved.

A first demonstration was called by CCOO and UGT on October 21 in front of the Femca headquarters.

A few days later a minority union present among the metalworkers in Cadiz, the

Coordination of Metalworkers (Coordinadora de Trabajadores del Metal – CTM) - formed in March 2020 – denounced the exploitative conditions in the Navantia shipyards in Cadiz and Puerto Real, which in recent months have resumed work at full capacity acquiring orders for the repair of large cruise ships, employing about 1400 workers, most of them employees of small and medium-sized companies, many of them working up to 12 hours a day, seven days a week. The labor employment system appears similar to that of shipyards in Italy, where most of the workers are not direct employees of Fincantieri which, like Navantia, is a state-owned company. This should dispel any doubts about the presumed goodness of the claim of nationalization, in Italy contested by the majority of conflictual unionism.

CTM also denounced the employers' black list, i.e., the list of workers undesirable because of their union militancy, with dozens of expulsions from their jobs, forced to emigrate, with the hiring supported by the CCOO and UGT, and claimed to oppose this a Labor Exchange, i.e., a list of workers to be hired according to non-discriminatory criteria managed by the unions.

At the end of October, the employer Femca broke off negotiations for the renewal of the provincial contract. CTM – which claims to be fighting for class unionism – called for a general assembly of metalworkers by the unions CCOO and UGT, in order to let the workers know the progress of the negotiations and not conduct it behind their backs. Also according to the CTM, the CCOO and UGT organize less than 20% of temporary metalworkers.

CCOO and UGT, in response to the breakup of Femca, have called a two days-long strike on October 9 and 10, which CTM, without obviously revoking its criticism of these regime unions, has correctly indicated to adhere to, as a sign of the unity of action of the workers in the union struggle.

Another minority union active among metalworkers in the province of Cádiz is the General Confederation of Labor (Confederacion Generale del Trabajo – CGT), a historically anarcho-sindicalist's organization present because of its presence, for example, in the Airbus plant and in a contractor company of Dragados.

The two-day strike was a success, with thousands of workers crossing Cadiz in a compact and fierce procession. The strike also affected Algeciras – another town in the

province of Cadiz, on the Strait of Gibraltar – stopping companies in the port and the Acerinox steel mills, which employ about two thousand workers. This showed the degree of the workers' anger and their willingness to fight.

It was this pressure from below that led CCOO and UGT to call an indefinite strike, as mentioned above, starting on November 16, the course of which confirmed its inevitability, which the regime's unions went along with in order to avoid losing control of the workers.

The claims made by CCOO and UGT were for a wage increase of 2% for 2021, 2.5% for 2022 and 3% for 2023, against the bosses' proposal of 1.5% for each of the three years and only with an increase in productivity.

From the first day of the strike and for the next ten days, the workers had to face the action of the police who attacked the workers on the picket lines in front of the factories and even in the workers' quarters, firing tear gas, rubber bullets and using an armored car to break through the barricades set up by the workers.

This is the response of the Spanish center-left government, formed by the Spanish Socialist Workers Party (PSOE), Podemos, the Socialist Party of Catalonia and the United Left, and which has called itself "the most progressive government in the history" of Spain.

Evidently it is the response of a bourgeois government in defense of the interests of the bosses threatened by an actual strike and terrified by the possibility that the workers' struggle could spread to the other provinces and autonomous regions of the country.

For his part, Enrique Santiago, Secretary of State for the "Agenda 2030" and Secretary General of the Spanish "Communist" Party (PCE) – which is part of Podemos and is therefore in the government with two ministers, including that of labor – had the gall to ask the workers to return to work and to "have confidence in the work being done by the government"!

Among the various factors that contribute to the division of the working class in Spain, it should be noted that in this country, unlike in Italy – where for years there has been an effort to empty them out – there are no national labor contracts, but rather provincial contracts. Which is to say, not even regional contracts, as happens in federal Germany, in the various Länders. Employers and trade

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

Strike at the Container Port of Piraeus/Athens

In 2009, taking advantage of Greece's financial difficulties, in order to repay its debts and avoid default, the Chinese state-owned group Cosco obtained a 35-year concession from the government to manage two of the three terminals of the Port of Piraeus (Athens). The Port Authority, which is publicly owned, continued to ensure the operation and management of Terminal I.

In 2016, under the Syriza government, Cosco purchased 51% of the entire Piraeus Port Authority (PPA), for €280 million, thus taking over the port; in 2021, under the New Democracy government, it purchased another 16% of the PPA.

The Chinese government thus secured control of the port until 2052. Beijing is intent on further expansion and aims to build a fourth container terminal, even if the local authorities show a certain impatience with these increasingly invasive projects, such as the one for the construction of four luxury hotels within the port area.

The arrival of Chinese capital has led to a remarkable development of the port: in 2009 it handled less than 700,000 20-foot containers (TEU); in 2014 it handled 3.6 million, in 2019 4.9 million and in 2020 5.4 million.

When Chinese President Xi Jinping visited Athens in 2019, along with Greek government head Mitsotakis, they celebrated the collaboration between the two states and declared that the project would lead to the creation of thousands of jobs; in fact, Cosco already employs 2,500 workers but plans to hire, both directly and through subcontractors, another 3,000 each year for a total of about 10,000.

However, behind the official toasts, the harsh reality is that the new bosses have invested capital to increase the port's activity, but not so much in the safety of the workers, aiming instead to increase their exploitation, often subjected to blackmail of precarious work or subcontracting to force them to accept extremely harsh working conditions.

A death foretold

On October 25, at Pier II, a 46-year-old dock worker was cut in two by the movement of a bridge crane. According to the Container Handling Workers' Union (ENEDEP), the accident tragically demonstrated the shortcomings in safety precautions and a strike was immediately called.

The next day the workers, gathered in a plenary meeting, called a new 24-hour strike, demanding a meeting with the bosses of China Ocean Shipping Company. But, arriving at the COSCO Offices, they found the gates closed. The fence did not stop them. Shouting "enough with the blood of workers shed for the profits of shipowners", "we have lost a fellow worker not an animal", a gate was torn down and the dockers, increasingly determined, gathered in the courtyard in front of the building until they were received by representatives of the Company. The meeting, however, served no purpose other than to put down on paper the simple and more than legitimate demands of the workers:

- an increase in personnel: teams of six dockers instead of the current four;
- an end to 12-hour shifts and double shifts, i.e. two full shifts with only eight hours rest in a single day;
- the conversion of all fixed-term

contracts into open-ended contracts;

- the creation of a workers' health and safety monitoring body that includes the workers themselves.

After the meeting, reaffirming the complete success of the strike and the decision to continue the struggle until their demands are fully achieved, the union president added "It is our duty to continue the struggle. We warn the employer and the government that if they send repressive forces and touch a striking worker, they will see containers floating in the Gulf of Thessaloniki."

Recall that the Greek government only a few weeks ago passed a new law against trade unions and the right to strike ("Passes also in Greece, in the impotence of trade unions, a new serious attack on the working class").

Our struggle is for all workers

On Thursday, on the fourth day of the strike, there was a large motorized march of the strikers that crossed all of Piraeus and reached Korai Square where hundreds of workers, including those of other categories, were already waiting. Again the president of the ENEDEP union spoke, saying that the death of their comrade was foreseeable given the complete lack of the most elementary safety measures in the port. He denounced how the bosses, shipowners, businessmen, and political authorities, who fight and compete with each other when it comes to sharing profits, in the face of this murder have all united to cover up the responsibility, in defense of their common interest, which is the exploitation of workers.

On Saturday, the Union sent a message to the crews of the ships anchored in the port waiting to be unloaded: "The striking port workers turn to you. Six days ago, one of our comrades was killed in a work accident. This happened because of the lack of safety measures. We are on strike for our right to work, for safety measures and for a collective agreement. Your solidarity is our most important ally in our struggle. Ours is a struggle for all workers."

The union, after several meetings with the Company and government representatives, decided to resume work on Monday, November 1, but maintained its mobilization and declared a 48-hour strike for Friday, November 5 and Saturday, November 6.

COSCO is forced to come to terms.

At this point, in the evening of Thursday, Cosco, faced with the firmness and determination of the workers, changed its mind and came to an agreement: in a letter to the union it declared itself willing to accept the increase from 4 to 5 of workers on the loading and unloading groups, the abolition of double shifts, the establishment of a joint committee for health and safety with the participation of technicians and doctors, workers' representatives and a European certification body.

Cosco's acceptance of a significant portion of the union's demands, after its initial total closure, allowed union leaders to cry victory. The 48-hour strike already called has been withdrawn. The mobilization continues to force Cosco to adhere to the national labor contract and transform temporary contracts into full-time contracts.

It is interesting that these workers, who belong to a trade union and not to a company

union, a union that is therefore more prone to express corporative positions, have instead conducted the struggle in an exemplary manner on a class level, without giving in to nationalist or racist temptations, like some self-styled extreme left wing party that had called for the "expulsion of the Chinese" and the nationalization of the port!

The head of the ENEDEP union reiterated in his speech in front of hundreds of striking workers that the bosses are all taking the same approach towards the workers, and are all united in the defense of their profits. The workers must do the same, always seeking maximum unity in their struggles for the defense of their living and working conditions, opposing the conciliation policy of the leadership of their unions with the State and the bosses.

This strike had a partially positive outcome not only because of the determination of the workers, exasperated by particularly harsh conditions, but also because they are located at a strategic point for the functioning of the apparatus of capitalism and the bosses evaluated that it was less costly to give in to part of their demands rather than risk seeing port closures at Christmas time.

Workers do not always fight under these conditions and often do not receive the solidarity of other companies and other categories, which is essential to ensure a successful outcome of the battle. This coordination, this search for unity in the struggle is the task of the confederal union. That is why it is so important for workers to be able to equip themselves with union organizations devoted to the defense of their class interests.

Even port workers, despite their crucial role in the capitalist system of production, are increasingly competing with workers in other ports, both national and from neighboring countries. For this reason, even for this category, it is urgent and necessary to weave an international union network, to unite them between different ports and countries, and prevent them from being divided by capitalist competition for the sole benefit of corporate profits.

For this reason, dockers should avoid the trap of opportunism, which locks them into a national vision of their problems, deluding them into thinking that they can find protection from exploitation under the umbrella of the bourgeois state, invoking the defense of "national ports", perhaps through nationalization. This is a bankrupt path, an economic nationalism that paves the way for political nationalism, and it is a path that goes in the opposite direction to that of international workers' unity.

A fourth dock

After the strike, however, Cosco went on the offensive immediately trying to create rumors of a crisis in the port: "The numbers of October are indicative - writes the website Capital.gr - according to Cosco, terminals II and III only moved a total of 364.4 thousand containers, compared to 407.2 thousand containers in October last year, a decrease of 10.5%. But this decline is due to the six-day strike! "When 11,000-12,000 moves are made on a daily basis, even one day of inactivity creates serious problems," they observe.

Karachi: A capitalist hell

The new agreement with China

In the increasingly close synergies between Chinese imperialism and Pakistan, a memorandum of understanding was signed for the development of the Karachi port, Capital of Sindh province, in the south-east of the country, along the eastern coast of the Arabian sea. Chinese firms are to build new berths, a commercial area in the port and a bridge connecting the city to the nearby Manora Islands. These projects are part of the China-Pakistan Economic corridor (CPEC), which today represents the most important plan of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), the new strategic Silk Road, vital for Chinese imperialism, an access point to the Indian Ocean which provides an alternative route circumventing that of Straits of Malacca and the Sunda, garrisoned by the United States. Chinese capital invested in the Pakistani metropolis would create the premises for a new route, which would add to or replace the current one, which today connects the Chinese region of Xinjiang to the area of Gwadar, in Balochistan, though today considered a region of problem by Beijing for having inadequate infrastructure and political instability.

In a message circulated on social media, the current prime minister Imran Khan commented: "This project will cleanup marine habitat for fisherman, develop low-income housing units, present opportunities for investors and bring Karachi on par with developed port cities". The truth is, if there will be benefits, it will be only for the bloodsuckers of capital, for the dominant Chinese and Pakistani classes, all on the backs of the exploited classes in a city that is already battered by the vicious effects of capitalism.

Capitalism dominates in Karachi

Karachi, Pakistan's first port, is its largest city, among the most populous in the world. For decades, having a fairly well-developed industrial sector in various areas, which includes textile, automotive, energy, pharmaceutical and steel sectors.

In 1947, the year of the independence of the Islamic Republic and the division of the Indian Republic, the city had 450,000 inhabitants, a census conducted in 2017 revealed a population of 16 million, growing at a dramatic pace and today probably close to 20 million.

Ever-increasing skyscrapers and minarets are surrounded by an immense series of shantytowns, about 600, which make up a large part of the city. According to a recent international study, more than half of Karachi's inhabitants reside in katchi abadis, chaotic clusters of buildings, illegal, unauthorized by the local administrations, made up of bricks, rarely cement, which have partly replaced the Jhuggis, houses made with mud, make-shift materials, sheet-metal and plastic. Millions of people live in these slums, which cover a huge portion of the city, in overcrowded, suffocating circumstances, surrounded by violence and crime. Waste-water often flows openly, there is no access to sanitation services and drinking water. The water provided to these settlements is often contaminated with fecal matter, toxic agricultural chemicals and industrial waste. Every year water-borne diseases kill tens of thousands of people in Karachi alone, particularly infants and children, in extreme poverty and glaring malnutrition.

However, because the city is industrially

developed, it continues to attract a great number of rural people in search of a salary. Arriving from nearby abandoned villages or the less capitalistically developed areas of the country. Those arriving in the city are often destined to magnify these shantytowns.

The problem of housing in the city was striking after the independence, with the arrival of hundreds of thousands of Muslim refugees from the new India. But, especially during the 60's the katchi abadis would skyrocket, when the Ayub Khan military regime sought to throw the working class to the periphery of the city.

Those who arrive in the city today and can't find work, go to enlarge the lumpenproletariat, which survives by searching inside garbage that invades drainage channels, others by begging for rupees on pavements. But most join the ranks of proletarians, offering themselves as laborers for low-wages or in industry or the service sector. Some move to Gadani, a few kilometers from Karachi, where, in a hellish landscape, decommissioned ships from all over the world are demolished, pushed onto the shore, with mutilation and daily deaths.

Just as has happened in other Asian metropolises, which massively increased in size in the last three decades, Karachi has been incapable of solving the housing demand. Some studies estimate that the demand for housing in Karachi's urban areas is three times the supply. The enormous growth in population has made building space scarce and very expensive. This is the scenario, filled with the internal contradictions of the capitalist system.

Expropriation

Some areas are expropriated to extract surplus value for the lucrative real-estate and infrastructure sector.

It is estimated, that in all of Pakistan half of the peasants are landless. The proletarianization of the peasant class is still progressing, in a slow process, as it has happened in various regions of India. Modern agriculture often exists next to enduring class relationships and archaic methods of working, peasants owning small lots, settlers, sharecroppers etc.

This is in part, a consequence of the conditions in which the bourgeoisie of the nascent independent states found themselves in after taking power, having primarily put financial resources to develop the national industrial sector. There was however a pressing need to provide subsistence for the enormous peasant population. In a delicate balancing act, the national bourgeoisie, if on the one hand issued reforms to the agricultural sector in order to modernize the countryside so as to make it attractive for capital, on the other could not attack the landed-aristocracy, which arose with the arrival of the British, as it kept the endless peasantry in submission and maintained social peace, thanks to the old but useful caste, ethnic, tribal, and religious superstructures.

The uncontrollable growth of Capitalism therefore poses increasingly contradictory issues, what we describe well in our article crisis and pandemic-ridden India- between peasant protests and workers strikes Nell'India flagellata dalla crisi e dalla pandemia - Tra proteste contadine e scioperi operai, in il Partito Comunista n.407, which describes the current peasant revolts in India.

As the city has continued to develop, recently, there has been an intensification in expropriation for real-estate development, of land that is already in agricultural use. For this, small land-owning peasants are forced to sell their lands, often by intimidation from thugs, but also with the complicity, and sometimes help of the local government and police. The landed-aristocracy which exploits and oppresses the peasant work force, controls The People's Party, which today is in power in the city and all of Sindh. Most of these lands are villages destined to be demolished having been given the green light to evictions.

The composition of those that work on these lands is varied, there are seasonal laborers, often migrants, but especially middle-classes, share-croppers, settlers, tenants of landowners, who generally demand more than the 50/50 ratio: more than half of the harvest is delivered to the land-owner, with the tenant, hari, bearing the costs of providing the machinery, planting, irrigation and more, for which loans have to be taken, which are often taken from the land-owners themselves, putting them in a never-ending cycle of debt.

The usual scenario looks like this. The village is visited by officials and engineers from the real-estate companies, accompanied by squads and the police; the peasants are informed that their lands have been acquired and that they must leave; immediately they are threatened, any resistance is dealt with brutal violence, those who continue to resist are imprisoned and frequently killed. Soon the machinery arrives to flatten everything and make place for new construction. All taking place under the watchful eye of the local police.

One case of police brutality belongs to the name of Rao Anwar, ex-chief of police of the Malir district in Karachi, in cahoots with the real-estate companies, on the payroll of the underworld, accused of ordering the murder of 444 people between the period of 2011 and 2018 in 745 "interrogations" during which small salaried peasants and the petty-bourgeoisie were tortured and subsequently killed. All over Pakistan, workers and poor peasants are abducted by the police for the purposes of extortion, blackmail, intimidation or simply to restore class order.

Besides the destruction of entire rural villages, huge amounts of sand and gravel are taken from riverbeds for the construction of real-estate property units, transforming the surrounding lands into monstrous wastelands, with devastating effects on some "national parks" as that of Kirthar. These excavations have reduced the water-table, worsening the conditions of many peasants, dependent on the monsoon rains and tightly squeezed by debt.

It is in this situation, Sindhi nationalist parties have found fertile ground, managing to mask these needs of capital as a war between Sindhi locals and Mujahirs, the Urdu-speaking migrant population which arrived from India after the independence and the partition.

The destruction of proletarian neighborhoods

Urban areas are also destined to be expropriated, where not only the lumpen-proletariat and the petty-bourgeoisie live, but also the proletarians that work in large industry or service. The gutting of entire neighborhoods has been underway for several decades. Already in 1975 4,200 houses were demolished, with no compensation. In a suburb of Karachi - Bahria - the state had permitted the Bahria town society group to acquire 16,000 acres of land, but then "realized" that 46,000 acres of land had been occupied under "irregular" purchase conditions.

It is however; from the new millennium that this process has accelerated. From 2002 to 2008, 77,000 housings were destroyed to make space for the construction of the Lyari expressway, of which only 30,000 were compensated with the meagre sum of 30 thousand rupees. In 2014 more than 14,000 homes were demolished in Gujjar nala under the pretext of reducing risk of flooding.

Finally, the on-going demolition of housing in the famous Orangi district. Formed during 1947 with the arrival of refugees from new India, when the government permitted groups of emigrants to settle freely on some state-land. Today, this massive informal settlement is a beehive in which over a million people live, extending to an area of 22 kilometers. It is Karachi's largest slum, as well as Asia's largest and most densely populated.

As the years passed, a part of this area was recognized as an administrative district. With

the arrival of refugees from Bangladesh in 1971, year of independence of the former East Pakistan, and the subsequent uncontrolled growth of the city, Orangi town grew astronomically, with no administrative approval. Today, many workers live there, providing cheap-labor to the industrial districts of the city.

The whole city is suffering

Real-estate development is currently underway on a hilly part, in the north of the city. Reckless demolitions have attacked geological formations crossed by natural drainage canals, channels and water collection depressions. When it rains, downstream areas, like the district of Saadi, are flooded by the water that runs off the hills and, in the event of heavy-rainfall, is channeled into the precarious sewage system, flooding the streets with sewage. Last year in August, three days of monsoon rains flooded majority of the metropolis, cars and houses were carried away by flood water, there were many landslides, over a hundred drowned or electrocuted, thousands displaced. Protests were carried out in various parts of the city.

In 2003, 484 died throughout the province. These tragedies occur in various neighborhoods but particularly where the poor-classes reside, where outlets to the sea for water to dispose have been interrupted or greatly reduced.

A city as huge as Karachi only has two authorized landfills operated by the city administration. The greater part of garbage is thus placed in numerous areas of unofficial garbage collection, which have supplied a recycling industry where contractors hire youth, primarily of Afghan origin, for collecting all recyclable material. The rest is either burned or abandoned waiting for the next flood.

All the bourgeoisie parties nested in the local administrations, territorial appendages of the administrative structure of the state, if they are ever occupied with the floods affecting the metropolis for decades, it is only during

elections, with lies and phony promises.

Partial urban reforms, even if put into practice, would solve little; being unable to confront the root of the problem: The social relation of capital with terrain. Capitalism will never be able to definitively solve problems of such magnitude, which are obviously not only exclusive to metropolises.

The necessity of Communism

Capitalism is a catastrophe for a large part of humanity and Karachi is a crystalline example. A senseless capitalist urbanism where overcrowding and the impossibility of living are a given, a constant general for this social system which no longer has any progressive role for history, a tentacular monster that suffocates mankind in an oppressive grip.

Karachi, like other metropolises, expresses the urgent need of the post-revolutionary communist program, which will provide for the gradual elimination of the antagonism between the city and countryside by creating a uniform network of connections on a world level with a re-distribution of the population throughout all territory. Certainly, not a simple work, it will be up to the future generations, which will however be made easier for them by living in a world free from profit, permanently restoring a healthy and organic equilibrium between land, water, animals and man, today widely altered and violated.

This is how we concluded our article – Space versus cement – which appeared in our journal then, the Communist Program (Il Programma Comunista), n.1 of 1953:

"Urban and productive agglomeration thus persists not for the sake of the best possible way of producing things, but to maintain the profit economy and the social dictatorship of capital. When it will be possible, after having forcibly crushed this dictatorship which becomes more obscene by the day, in order to subordinate every solution and every plan to the improvement of the conditions of living labor, creating for this purpose what is dead labor, constant capital, the furnishings that the

human species has given over the centuries and continues to give to the crust of the earth, then the vulgar verticalism of the concrete monstrosities will be derided and forcibly repressed, and for the immense horizontal expanses of space, once the gigantic cities have been dispersed, the strength and intelligence of the man-animal will progressively tend to make the density of life and the density of work uniform on less hospitable lands as well, as they would then be equals and not, as in today's deformed civilization, fiercely hostile to one another and only held together by the specter of servitude and hunger".

Karachi is there to describe to us that in the world of capital, there exists no limit to the exploitation of man on man and that in the kingdom of the market, useless and harmful abuse of natural resources is a cornerstone of the structure of capitalism and its blind drive for profit.

But it will not be the men of good conscience who can solve these terrible infamies. Only the proletarian class, united above religions and races, will have the possibility of standing against the ruling classes. Only the proletarian classes of Pakistan and India, China and America, standing above nationalities, can prevent the course which today is heading towards a new world war catastrophe. Only the proletariat of the entire world, directed by their revolutionary party, will be able to fight for a new form of social organization – Communism – a classless society, without the separation between means of production and land from work, a society of the species, actually capable of solving the needs of man.

But the proletariat can never be ready for this final goal without adequate training in the struggle between the classes. Becoming more and more autonomous, it will have to go back to recognizing itself as a distinct social class, equipping itself with sincere and combative trade union organizations, the only ones which will be able to start defending it from the continuous attacks of the bosses and all their states.

Communists must be unwavering internationalists. We must demand the immediate and unconditional admission of all migrants workers appearing at any national borders with the full legal rights afforded to citizens. We must also actively oppose all militarization of the borders in our own countries, and any imperialist efforts to impose such measures abroad. We must organize to interfere with any police efforts to harass, arrest, or deport any fellow foreign worker in our country.

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ONLY WORKERS' STRUGGLES CAN FREE NATIVE PEOPLES FROM OPPRESSION

THE CLASS ORIGINS OF THE MAPUCHE INSURGENCY IN CHILE

The Mapuche are the biggest indigenous group in Chile, with around 1.7 million Mapuche in the country, comprising 84% of the Chilean indigenous population and around 9% of the country's population of 19 million. Most Mapuche people have moved to the cities, mainly Concepción, Temuco and Santiago, but they originate from the Southern Zone of Chile, especially Biobío and La Araucanía, where many live in poverty. These zones are known as hotspots of political violence between Mapuche guerrilla groups and the terrorist forces of the bourgeois regime.

The Mapuche insurgency, which has been going on for a while, has once again exploded in a shocking way, escalating to gun battles for the first time amidst the general background of State terrorism on the behalf of the farming and logging companies which systematically take land from impoverished Mapuche laborers in their lands.

Economic Origins of the Conflict

Never subjugated by the Incas, the tribal society of the Mapuche remained independent right up to the late nineteenth century. War and trade were the main relationships between the Mapuche and Chile and Argentina. Acquiring horses, the Mapuche resisted conquest and raided Hispanic settlements. They also traded horses, cattle, textiles and silverware. Silversmithing, a male occupation, developed from an older tradition of working in copper once silver was obtained through trade.

In 1881 the Mapuche were “pacified” by the Chilean army and confined to reservations like many other indigenous people in bourgeois regimes, but even then, reservation land continued to be held communally, rather than private property. This changed as powerful landowners expropriated more land from them. From the 1930s, land hunger led many Mapuche to migrate to the cities.

The bourgeois Popular Unity government of Salvador Allende passed an Indigenous Law and began restoring Mapuche lands, but this stopped with the Pinochet coup. During the regime, alongside trade unionists, leftist party members and militant workers, many Mapuche rights activists were killed and tortured.

But despite the change from open dictatorship to a democratic facade of bourgeois dictatorship, nothing has changed, least of all exploitation – Chilean forestry companies now own and exploit most of the Mapuche land, a monopoly they enforce with the aforementioned ruthless terrorism, while the Mapuche themselves live in incredible poverty, earning around 60% less than the average Chilean, and often without access to potable water or electricity. As such, this is not

a “racial”, “indigenous” revolt as the bourgeois media likes to paint it in order to hide any class character out of the events, but a revolt of impoverished rural laborers against capital and the bourgeois State.

According to the provisos embedded in Decree 701 (introduced by Pinochet in 1974) forestry companies today enjoy state subsidies of up to 75%. It is no coincidence then that two of the biggest forestry corporations, CMPC and Bosques Arauco, own by themselves over two million hectares while the Mapuche hold less than 500,000 hectares (and these statistics are based on conservative estimates).

To keep the bourgeois dictatorship, hidden behind a democratic facade, safe from attacks, the State has turned these areas in the Southern Zone into an outright militarized area: kilometers of eucalyptus and pine plantations are surrounded by frequent carabinero checkpoints, as well as army tanks and heavily armed riflemen.

The Course of Events

The insurgency is not new – the most militant of the Mapuche rights groups (whose demands range from the return of their ancestral lands to a fully independent Mapuche state) began a guerrilla campaign of violently destroying company property back in 1997. The bourgeois regime naturally calls this “terrorism” and uses the Pinochet-era Anti-Terrorist Law to allow its terroristic forces, the heavily militarized Special Forces police, to kill unarmed Mapuche, torture, abuse, fabricate evidence, detain without trial for months on end, etc. The guerrilla groups, for their turn, tend to avoid straight gun battles, and tend to stick to the destruction of company vehicles by lobbing molotov cocktails and sabotaging machinery. But things have escalated, and are escalating even now.

The conflict has moved onto a new stage in 2021: in July there were clashes between the police and members of the Coordinadora Arauco-Malleco (CAM), a typical indigenous guerrilla group that fights for an independent Mapuche state, not unlike the EZLN in Chiapas, Mexico.

In July, a group of CAM militants set fire to three vehicles belonging to the company logging on their land – the police answered with fire and killed one of their militants. According to a CAM member, he was “executed on the spot”. Rebellion broke out soon afterwards with armed clashes, and in October the Chilean government declares a state of emergency to restore “order” in South after serious gun battles, which had been a rarity up to this point.

In early November there were reports of Mapuche being shot by army-backed police, as well as reports of a dead child.

The Weichán Auka Mapu (WAM), a more radical split from the CAM, releases videos of its militias decked out with full armor

and military-grade weaponry such as assault rifles and semi-automatic pistols.

On 6 November, the police open fire on unarmed Mapuche, injuring a child and killing a 23 year old man, which led fighting out of the rural south and into the cities, particularly in Santiago where clashes occurred in protest over his death.

The CAM and WAM have upped their armed campaign against the State in the increasingly violent and still developing insurgency – there are dead on both sides and the conflict has reached an intensity as of yet unseen.

Foquismo Has Done Nothing For Native Workers

Foquismo, or focoismo, a small concentration or vanguard of guerrilla cadres engaged in rural paramilitary struggles and inspired by Che Guevara's insurgent tactics, has become a mainstay in Latin American struggles since the victory of Che Guevara and Fidel Castro in Cuba; however, it has brought absolutely no successes – neither the urban guerrilla revolts in Brazil, nor any of the Guevara-inspired insurgencies (indeed Guevara himself died on one such insurgency in Bolivia) nor the “native revolts” that followed guerrilla lines have led to gains.

Focoism in this context has taken the role that Bakuninism had in the 19th century European workers' movement. To quote Lenin: “What is missing is 1) an understanding of the causes of exploitation; 2) an understanding of the development of society, which leads to socialism; 3) an understanding of the class struggle as the creative force for the realisation of socialism [...] Anarchism is a product of despair. The psychology of the unsettled intellectual or the vagabond and not of the proletariat” (Lenin, Socialism and Anarchism, 1901).

Focoism is likewise a product of despair, of the exploited, crushed by exploitation and seeing no way out due to the tragic lack of an organized working class, to take up arms at once, as the main form of struggle. Knowing that they are unable to take on State forces, the groups limit themselves to the forest, to small attacks, not hoping to take down the State that backs their exploiters but rather engaged in endless hopeless skirmishes, desperately trying to hold back their exploiters by means of violent but small attacks, to no avail.

It has not emancipated native people – it cannot. The supposed “success” of the Zapatistas in Chiapas is a prime example – in trying to protect the Tzotzil, who have been exploited and repressed violently for centuries, all it did was lock itself in the most remote parts of the jungle engaged in a sterile struggle with its opponent while allowing the Mexican State to lead its death squads right onto Acteal

Mapuche (continued)

and execute its horrendous massacre that left 45 dead, while the EZLN remained barricaded and impotent to help.

After such a loss, all that came from the naive reformist group was, essentially, municipal self-management for Chiapas, which does not harm the bourgeoisie or ease the exploitation of the natives any less and it's something that the experienced Mexican government knows full well it could end at any moment should it so choose to. And they have.

The Increasing Militarization of Police Against "Native Rebellions" Is Not Limited to Chile

The increased militarization of the security forces fighting against the Mapuche insurgents is not exclusive to Chile, but rather an example in a general trend in South America.

On October 18 the Ecuadoran government decreed a 60-day state of emergency, ostensibly to combat drug trafficking, in reality to repress the ongoing protests and strikes. The Government deployed the Armed Forces in the streets to support the police. Indigenous organizations, which have led to the collapse of two governments this century, carried out protests, including

roadblocks. Skirmishes between the natives and the police ensued. The President called for dialogue and rolled back the increase in fuel prices in reaction to the native and proletarian unrest, which for the moment is still rooted in class demands.

In Guatemala, on the 17th of November, the police set fire to homes of Maya Q'eqchi' families in El Estor, as part of a State siege targeting indigenous communities resisting palm oil plantations and a nickel mine. This was after the heavily militarized police carried out more than 40 raids and 60 arrests and the government declared a 30-day state of emergency.

Everywhere the struggle is the same – that of native laborers who need their land to work and live off of, and who know that exploitation of their lands by capital can only bring unbearable exploitation. Just as the struggle is the same everywhere, so is the enemy – Capital and the bourgeois state, and their repression and exploitation of workers.

Only Workers' Struggle Can Free the Native Laborers from their Oppression

It can never be on the terrain of democratic compromises, no matter how many acts of guerrilla violence are backing it, that the oppressed and exploited will liberate themselves, and this is true of Latin American natives, violently exploited for centuries, as well.

The Mapuche people, as well as all who are exploited, can not put their hopes for

liberation on small armed struggles and even less on the opportunists that court democracy, but only on a truly revolutionary party that organizes the workers and exploited on all levels, which can link up the urban workers' struggles with the rural workers' and natives' struggles in order to bring down the bourgeois dictatorship that oppresses them.

In the 2019 protests, the rioting and striking Chilean proletariat managed, through its own hands and violence (rather than democracy!), to wrest significant concessions from the government: an increase in the minimum wage from 310,000 to 350,000 pesos, 20% increase in basic retirement pensions allowance, and the cancellation of the recent increase of 9.2% in electricity tariffs. The government had acted in the same terroristic way it does towards the natives. It did this by fighting for classist demands.

During the protests, many protesters flew the Mapuche flag as opposition to the government. But while the urban Mapuche workers certainly scored a victory by acting along with the entire working class, no concessions were made to the rural natives in the Southern Zone. This is because the Mapuche movement does not have any links to the workers' movement. From this, the path to take is clear – uniting the rural and the urban struggles as one single workers' struggle, rather than on either a "racial" or "national" basis. Only the revolutionary party can and will link together the forces of the proletarian class.

CADIZ (continued from 1)

unions of the regime take care to conduct negotiations, and strikes, for the renewal of provincial contracts with a time lag, in order to avoid the risk of workers' unity.

This territorial division – into provinces – of the working class, is reinforced by the historical regionalist division of the Iberian country, sanctioned by the 1978 constitution that gave rise to the autonomous regions.

Autonomism, regionalism and localism are the workhorses of the radical bourgeois left and Spanish opportunism, which they counterpose against the centralism of the bourgeois right, in a game of parties in which the interest of the working class, which is to unify its action, its organizations, its working conditions, at the national and international level, is lost.

For example, in the face of the repressive action of the Spanish bourgeois state, the mayor of Cádiz – elected in the lists of Adelante Cádiz, a political formation of the radical left – has defended the strikers, as an enemy of the central government in Madrid, taking advantage of the opposition between the territory of Cádiz and Madrid, putting in the background the social reality of the opposition between the social classes, working class and bourgeois, for the one between the central state and the local population. They were careful not to point out the only way that could help the metalworkers in their struggle is, in fact, not solidarity in words calling for an end to police repression, which in fact continued, but the

extension of the strike to other working class in the rest of the province and the throughout the country.

Even the alternative unions, such as CTM and CGT, do not seem to have freed themselves from these ideological shackles of opportunism, if their common manifesto for a demonstration in support of the strike on Saturday, November 19, called for participation in the name of the "Defense of the Industry of Cadiz", instead of in defense of the working class and its unity, in Spain and internationally.

One of the weaknesses of the strike, in addition to the fundamental one that it was not extended to other sectors of workers and provinces, was that the direct employees of large contractors did not join the strike. CCOO and UGT were careful not to promote such actions, always hiding behind the fact that the conditions of employment of these workers are not defined in the provincial contract but in company contracts. In other words, they sanctioned the divisions among workers, a benefit to the bosses, with their union action.

A strong point of the strike, however, was the solidarity received from the working class in the city and the province – with demonstrations in Seville as well – which could not materialize in a city or regional general strike because of the lack of a sufficiently strong class union organization.

The pickets and clashes between workers and police were joined by young proletarians and the unemployed, in a province with one of the highest unemployment rates in the country, about 23%. The contractual precariousness, which as mentioned concerns about 70% of the metalworkers in the province, a powerful weapon of blackmail by the employers in order to better exploit the

workers, in the strike turned into a factor in favor of the workers' struggle, leading to the involvement of not only of the contingently employed workers but also of those temporarily unemployed, all aware of the fact that precisely because of the uncertainty of employment, and therefore of wages, a strong increase in wages is even more necessary and vital for the survival of working class families. The contractual precariousness, in perspective, will end up giving strikes the character of a revolt, as we have seen in the 10 days of proletarian struggle in Cadiz!

On the 10th day of the strike, Thursday, November 25, in a meeting that began in the evening and ended at night, CCOO, UGT and Femca finally reached an agreement for a 2% increase for each year. Without waiting for it to be presented and sanctioned or rejected by workers' assemblies, they called off the strike the next morning. The CMT and CGT were immediately opposed and called for the continuation of the struggle, but this only happened in a couple of companies. They then denounced how in many companies there were no votes to approve the agreement, due to the simple fact that the two unions of the regime have no affiliated workers.

The agreement signed is a middle ground between the initial proposal of the employers (1.5%) and the demands of CCOO and UGT. It is a small breath of fresh air for the workers but does not appear satisfactory given the strength of the struggle.

The strike was in any case a great example for all workers, it gave morale to the forces of confrontational unionism in the struggle to free the working class in Spain and in every country from the control of regime unionism and to rebuild the class unions!

FOR A CLASS UNION

STEELWORKERS (Continued)

contributory system pensions will be more and more miserable. For years, workers have been pushed to make up for this misfortune with supplementary pensions; the trade union federations of CGIL, CISL and UIL are the first to promote supplementary pensions among workers, including them in contract renewals (presenting them as contractual increases!), and they manage pension funds together with the bosses. It is against the interests of these tricolor unions to oppose the impoverishment of workers' pensions.

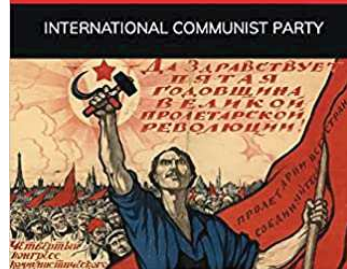
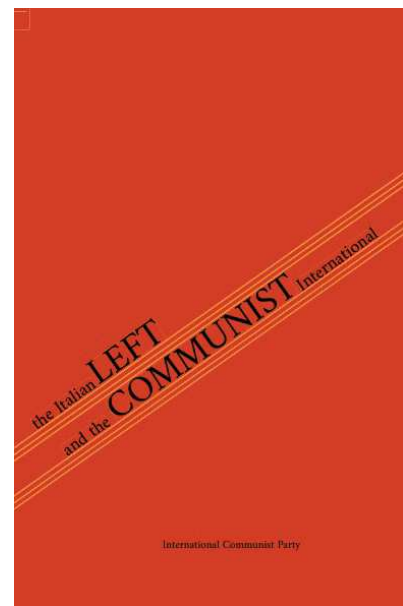
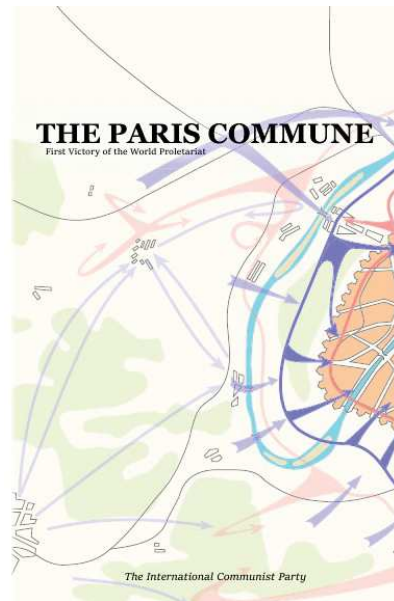
Only confrontational unionism - grassroots unions, confrontational union areas within the CGIL, groups of combative workers within each union - can take on the task of calling workers to a general struggle in defense of their immediate, economic, basic interests, but it can only do so by acting in a unified way. A class union line can be affirmed only in the unity of action of conflictual unionism, freeing itself from the straitjacket of the unity of CGIL CISL and UIL regime unionism.

A first step in this direction was taken with the general strike of basic trade unionism last October 11, which saw more than 4,000 workers marching in Genoa, and which was joined by workers and unions of some large metalworking factories, even if they are part of CGIL (GKN in Florence, Perini in Lucca, Piaggio in Pontedera ...). It is in this direction that every area and union fraction, group of workers and individual workers must march, regardless of the union organization to which they belong, to be consistent and consistent with the defense of the interests of the working class!

Unfortunately, the leaderships of most of the grassroots unions, instead of promoting a new general strike, have decided in recent days to organize anti-government, political and popular demonstrations, not class and union demonstrations. A step backwards.

This swinging behavior of the current leadership of the conflictual unionism is not surprising because it is characteristic of opportunism to divert the workers' movement from the path necessary to its strengthening, slowing it down and pushing it in pursuit of illusory reformist policies.

This confirms that the affirmation of the class union movement is a battle that must be waged on several fronts, against the unions of the regime and against the opportunism of the leadership of the conflictual unionism.



New Books from the ICP and Communist Left Publishers

The Paris Commune: To commemorate the 150th anniversary of the Paris Commune we have published a book length study of the heroic efforts of the first Dictatorship of the Proletariat.

The Italian Left and the Communist International: A Study of the Italian Communist Left's interventions in the founding of the international communist movement and the Third International.

A Revolution Summed Up: An assessment of the impact of the Russian revolution, written 50 years later (in 1967-68), reasserting the international nature of the movement that made it possible and refuting the Stalinist doctrine, still prevalent at the time, that socialism can be built in one country.

Factors of Race and Nation: This text is the written report of a meeting on the topic that took place on August 29-30, 1953, in Trieste, and which appeared in issues 16-20 of Il programma comunista ("the communist programme"). At that time the destiny of the "Free Territory" was still uncertain, one of the many political and economic monstrosities of the post-war "settlement" in Europe and the world.

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The National strike of ex-ILVA and Piombino steelworkers:

- for a class union line - for united action by the combative unions

FIM FIOM and UILM have called for Wednesday, November 10, the national strike of steelworkers of the groups Acciaierie Italia (former ILVA) and Acciaierie Piombino. They improperly, and equivocally, defined it as a "general" strike - a formula used when all the categories of the working class go on strike together - despite the fact that it was neither a strike of the category of metalworkers - whose national collective contract includes the steelworkers - nor of the steel sector alone, since the workers of the other industrial groups were excluded: Marcegaglia, Thyssen Krupp, Arvedi, Dalmine...

In Genoa, the previous day, a paid assembly had been held outside the entrance to the Cornigliano steel plant, attended by about 150 workers. The three provincial secretaries of FIM, FIOM and UILM, and a FIOM delegate from the plant were present. The USB representative, who had been in the factory for only a few months, did not attend. The next day, in the presence of the three national secretaries, a small demonstration took place in Rome, under the Ministry for Economic Development (Mise). About ten people from Genoa were present. In the Cornigliano plant, the strike adherence was about 40% on the first shift, 30% on the second, and almost 50% on the night shift. On the whole, it was an undertone, but a highly publicized action by the Italian unions.

The main claim of FIM FIOM and UILM is a "national plan for the steel industry": they ask the state machine of the bourgeoisie to defend its industry.

These unions of the regime, in fact, believe in the principle - proper to union corporatism - according to which industrialists and workers do not form social classes of capitalism with opposing and irreconcilable interests, but, in concert with the government and the state, could contribute to the alleged superior and common good of the "country", which is the fable as old as capitalism with which the bourgeoisie try to make the proletariat work to their advantage.

The union - if it is a class union and not a regime union - defends wages, fights to reduce working hours, for health and safety in the factory, in short, for the elementary and immediate interests of the workers, not for the satisfaction of these needs through different phantom "industrial policies".

The class union therefore also fights

FOR THE CLASS UNION

news and interventions of the class struggle

against layoffs, but this fight is not in defense of capitalist industry - whether private or state - but against it: it seeks to impose, to the detriment of corporate profits, the maintenance of all workers.

If instead, as CGIL CISL and UIL do, the struggle against layoffs is made to coincide with the defense of the industry of a given sector, or of the company, the workers are brought to an inclined terrain all in favor of the bosses, which makes them slide towards the acceptance of ever greater sacrifices: reduction of wages, increase of rhythms, in short, keeping a low union profile, which is limited to "defend the place" by defending the company.

The blackmail of unemployment is a product of the crisis of overproduction of capitalism: it is from the late '70s that, in capitalistically mature countries (so-called Western), factories close, are downsized and transferred to countries where the lower cost of labor ensures a higher profit rate. This process has been going on for decades and continues to worsen.

So that the threat of unemployment does not annihilate the struggle to defend the living conditions of workers, authentic class unionism - based on the awareness of the incompatibility of the needs of the working class with the interests of the company and the capitalist economy in general - counteracts it by seeking to raise union action above the narrow confines of the company.

If the fight against layoffs is to be waged, and waged tenaciously, thinking that it is enough to stand in this trench is a losing line of defense. In capitalist competition, losing companies close down and lay off workers. Winning companies often do so by virtue of investments that involve new plants and fewer workers. These normal processes of capitalism become more acute as the economic crisis progresses.

"We are entering a new era characterized by hypercompetitiveness," European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen pronounced in her State of the Union address on September 15. The fact that a bourgeois politician affirms what for Marxism is a truism, is a consequence of the fact that the crisis of overproduction is beginning to manifest itself even in the hitherto "young" capitalisms, which have allowed world capitalism not to collapse in recent decades, thanks to their very high growth rates, which however have led to their premature aging: the failure of Evergrande in China is a clear manifestation of this.

Faced with a process of historical significance such as the decline and global crisis of the capitalist economy, if a national bourgeoisie - like the Italian one - succumbs to international capitalist competition in a given sector - as happened in the civil aviation sector with Alitalia - can and should the trade unions prevent it, invoking a stronger bourgeois state to defend national industry?

A class union, in order to deal with the

rising threat of unemployment, would have called at least all steelworkers to strike, not only those of the groups affected by state intervention (through Invitalia), and not for a "national plan for the steel industry" but to reduce working hours with equal pay, to increase the redundancy fund to 100% of the wage, and to unite the struggle of steelworkers in Italy with their class brothers in France, Spain, Germany, in short, internationally.

Defending the "Italian" steel industry goes in the opposite direction, of course: they should close the steel mills and lay off the workers in other countries, not in Italy! Regardless of the contortions of opportunism to justify and deny that this union line feeds nationalism, this is exactly what the workers are led to think.

One must also ask why these collaborationist unions organized a mobilization of a fraction of a single productive sector at a time when it is the entire wage class that is under attack.

In the face of the new attack on pensions and other anti-worker contents of the budget law, in the face of the decline in wages since 1990 as recently certified by OECD data (-2.9%), in the face of the further decline in wages as a result of inflation in recent weeks, what is needed is a mobilization of the entire working class.

The action of the steelworkers of FIM FIOM and UILM, partial, weak, in defense of national industry, is motivated at least in part by the concern to fill, in this context, the void of mobilization left by the Confederations CGIL, CISL and UIL, in the face of the, albeit small, step forward of grassroots unionism made with the general strike of October 11.

In order to defend itself from the crisis of capitalism, the working class must be called upon to fight united beyond the divisions between companies and categories. To resist the growing pressure of unemployment, from the necessarily initial factory-by-factory reaction against layoffs, union action must be elevated into a general movement to demand

- strong wage increases, more for the worst paid categories and qualifications;
- Reduction of the retirement age, abandonment of the contributory system, pension allowance equal to full wages;
- generalized reduction of working hours;
- Single redundancy fund for all workers equal to 100% of the salary, paid by the employers (not paid with the workers' pension contributions paid to INPS);
- full wages to the dismissed workers paid by the bourgeoisie and its state.

CGIL, CISL and UIL, who do not want to start a battle even for the misleading goals they proclaim, will never organize the struggle for these class claims, which they have repudiated forever.

It is enough to look at what they have done with pensions: against the Fornero reform they did not move a finger and by virtue of the