The Real Power Is Not in Parliament

Some people still argue that we should “use our vote” since our ancestors fought for it. But we don’t live in Chartist times any more. Today capitalism has lost its progressive role. The working class cannot push back the attacks of an entire system in crisis by putting a piece of paper in a ballot box. Winning “the battle for democracy” in the nineteenth century was different in an age when the capitalist press could not reach the working class and the state did not have other media at its disposal. It’s no accident that the vote was only granted to all workers [1918] after the Russian Revolution struck fear into the hearts of our capitalist rulers and when a “popular” press had already been established. Far from universal suffrage being a stepping stone to the working class seizing power “defending democracy” has become the biggest weapon for keeping workers loyal to a parliamentary façade which disguises the real rule of capital. Under capitalist democracy some (owners and controllers of the means of production) are freer than others. And it’s as in 1933 – capital was not happy with the result: Well, it could just print lies to reverse the story like the fake Zinoviev letter printed in the Daily Mail showed a year later. In fact, though, they need not have worried about the Labour Party which long ago showed it was only interested in the parliamentary game and has never had any intention of going against the interests of British capital... And they wonder why workers are so apathetic about elections!

The Alternative ...

So what is the alternative? There is no short answer to that question since it depends on the working class waking up and recognising that these attacks will not end. We are in a class war and currently we are losing. At the moment resistance is scattered and episodic even if anti-capitalist ideas are rising. They have not yet been translated into an anti-capitalist movement for a whole variety of reasons. One main reason is the glaring absence of an alternative. Even the word “communism” is discredited and the idea that the working class holds the key to a civilised future in place of capitalist barbarism will never be peddled in the media. So instead, workers turn a blind eye and deaf ear to news of wars, and economic crisis throughout the wider world and content themselves that “things could be worse” whilst hoping that the crisis will soon go away so that austerity will be a thing of the past. Even amongst its greatest victims some fear to fight. Others are waiting for someone else to lead the way but even amongst the resistance to austerity we are divided up between those fighting this battle and those fighting that. In fact it is all the same fight but most have yet to grasp the big picture. This cannot go on forever. The contradictions of capitalism don’t go away. They are gradually becoming more extreme. Eventually there will come a trigger when workers can no longer carry on living in the same old way. Those who have followed our argument this far have got to prepare for that time.

Organise Politically

The fact is that the fight against declining living standards is only possible through a determined fight against the system that breeds it. Even the most militant struggles can only hope for short-term success since the capitalists will regroup and take back the concessions they have made. Those who see this as a political duty to explain the vital goal and the steps needed to make any difference.

In conclusion we can only echo the words of our Italian comrades:

We internationalists are active in the working class and in its communities to develop this revolutionary programme, we work with other sections of the Internationalist Communist Tendency to build and strengthen an international party of the proletariat, able in the future to act as a rallying point for the working class, to push it and direct it toward the revolutionary transformation of society. Without the political organisation of revolutionary forces – in a word the party – even the most widespread movement of rebellion is destined to be reabsorbed by the system, or will be crushed without hope of victory. We invite you to visit our website, to get in touch with us, and – perhaps – to start to give us a hand.

We have a world to win.
Against Nationalism in All its Forms
Against Capitalist War

This in turn provoked anti-

austerity movements which culminated in the Spring of 2011. The outcome was not the victory of “democracy,” as Western imperialists originally believed. It was a reawakening of imperialist rivalries which have now torn so many of these states apart. Millions of people who wanted no part in these wars have been driven from their homes, raped and injured or have had their deaths dismissed as “collateral damage”.

Everywhere the ruling classes feign moral disapproval (at the actions of other rulers naturally) and for many conflicts they claim that there are “peace processes” in operation. At best these produce ceasefires but the wars still go on and on and increase in number. The number of places hit by war where people are fleeing from the world goes up every year. And what of those that flee? They too partake in a version of real-life “Hunger Games”, crossing deserts to reach coasts and then trusting their savings and their lives to people traffickers and unscrupulous boats in an attempt to get to (the same) north. The “winners” of these “games” get to “enjoy” a low paid, insecure existence faced with racist attacks. The response of the main imperialist perpetrators of their misery is not to stop plundering them but to drive them from their homelands simply to make it harder for them to get to the north.

Can anyone doubt that this is a picture of a global system in crisis? Capitalism has created the possibility of a world of abundance yet continues to inflict misery on millions, if not billions. The fundamental reason for this is to be found in the laws of capitalist production themselves. The same laws which drive capitalism on are also the ones which reproduce its crises. The law of the tendency of the rate of profit to fall pushes capitalism continually to “expand or die”. When the rate of profit is no longer sufficiently high to encourage investment the crisis kicks off. This happened before the First World War and before the Second World War. The destruction produced by this crisis, but the massive devaluation of capital which allowed for a new round of capital accumulation to begin. The capital destruction of the Second World War was so great that it produced the longest boom in capitalist history. But this ended in the early 1970s. The system lurching from one expedient to the next in order to keep going. Thus far the capitalist states have managed the current crisis, culminating in the massive banking bail out through a fiction of creating money from nothing. They have increased sovereign debt to levels which are unlikely to ever be repaid but they have reduced spending on wages, welfare and social provision in order to claim financial orthodoxy. They have no real solution to this crisis but their one consistent answer is to step up class war against workers everywhere.

This warfare takes both material and ideological forms. Health and social security spending have been slashed. The only alternative is a job with low wages, zero hour contracts and no security. This is accompanied by media accusations that it is all the fault of “foreigners”. Either they are the bearers of any special moral virtues but because we are the one producer class which has the means to confront capitalism in the same way everywhere, and to surpass it. It is not yet immediate but humanity is approaching a decisive choice. Either we follow the logic of capitalism towards more and more warfare and the ecological rape of the planet or we reconstitute society anew on the basis of a common ownership of the world’s resources. We call this communism but it has nothing in common with the state capitalism of the old USSR. In order to get there we are working to create a world proletarian political organisation: a “party” for want of a better word. The CWO is not a government in waiting. It does not rule but it does lead and guide the struggle for a new world. The CWO by no means claims to be that party but only one of the elements which will come together in its formation. As the working class is more and more faced with the consequences of a crumbling capitalist system it will have to unite and confront fascist power. We are all those who seek to end the misery of capitalist existence. Our aim in the International Communist Tendency is to be part of that process. Join us.

International Communist Tendency

May Day Statement 2015

The Only Perspective is International Class Struggle

The situation is different today. The end of the boom years in 1973 showed that capitalism’s cyclical crisis had returned. It led to increased tensions and a racking up of the arms race in the 1980s. This in turn brought the economic implosion of the USSR which had been devoting 25% of its GDP to maintain an unsustainable arms race. It was not the “end of history” but as history never stands still, it was the beginning of US hubs. The unilateral arrogance of the wars the US (and its allies) unleashed on the Middle East have today reaped their reward in the increasingly brutal and bitter conflicts which are spreading from Syria and Iraq to Libya and Yemen, as well as much of Africa north of the Congo. The situation worsened after the collapse of oil price financial markets in 2008 and the subsequent austerity policies inflicted on populations around the world.

May Day this year falls close to the 70th anniversary of the end of the Second World War. In Western (May 8 1945) and Eastern (May 9) Europe there were joyful celebrations by those who survived 6 years of massacre in which perhaps 100 million died around the world. Despite the fact that there has been no outright confrontation on the same scale as 1939-45 the world has not endured a moment’s peace since. A post-

war boom, dominated by two rival imperialist powers who got what they wanted out of the war, ensured that proxy wars in Korea, Vietnam, Angola etc never became global. Even the Cuban Missile Crisis (1962) found neither side ready to plunge humanity into oblivion. But then the post-war boom was still in play.

What We Stand For

The Communist Workers’ Organisation stands for a global society in which production is for need and not profit (and it is the working class who will decide). National frontiers and money have been abolished, where power is exercised through class-wide organisations like workers councils. It is a society which can only be created through the activity of millions of human beings. Only such a society can rid us of the capitalist offspring of poverty, hunger, oppression and war. We call it Communism but it has nothing in common with the Stalinist state capitalists of the old USSR.