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The Revolutionary Alternative to Left-Wing Politics

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The Left has not failed. And that is one of the greatest disasters ever to befall the working class.

Most people think that the Left is the movement of the working class for socialism (albeit riven by opportunism and muddle-headed interpretations on the part of many in its ranks).

Nothing could be further from the truth.

We in Subversion (and the wider movement of which we are a part) believe that left-wing politics are simply an updated version of the bourgeois democratic politics of the French revolution, supplemented by a state capitalist economic programme.

Consider:

In the French revolution, the up and coming capitalist class were confronted not only by the old order, but also by a large and growing urban plebeian population (the working class in formation, artisans, petty traders and the like), who had their own genuine aspirations for freedom from oppression, however incoherent.

Bourgeois democracy was the device that enabled the capitalist class to disguise their own aspirations for power as the liberation of **everyone** outside the feudal power structure.

The notion of the **People** (as though different classes, exploiters and exploited, could be reduced to a single entity) was thus born.

The notion of **Equality** and the notion of **Rights** possessed by all presented a fictitious view of society as a mass of **individuals** who all stood in the same relations to the **law** – completely ignoring the difference between the property owners and those whose **labour** they exploit.

And, above all, the notion of the Nation – that the oppressed class should identify with those of their oppressors who live in the same geographical area or speak the same language, and see as **alien** those of our class who are on the other side of "national borders".

By means of this **imaginary** view of society, capitalism was able to dominate the consciousness of the newly forming working class. Bourgeois democracy is the **biggest con in history.**

Consider also:

As capitalism developed more and more, the material position of the working class forced it to engage in struggle **despite** its bourgeois consciousness – thus enabling this consciousness to be undermined.

The existing capitalist regimes often came to be **hated**. Thus there was a need for a more radical version of bourgeois democracy with a more specifically **working class image**. Left wing politics fulfilled this role in the 19th and 20th centuries, first in the form of **Social Democracy** or **Labourism** and then in the form of **Bolshevism**: Both of these variants managed to dress up support for capitalism in working class language, and became major players in the full development of capitalism (this was especially true in Russia, where **State Capitalism**, introduced by the Bolsheviks, a supposedly working class party, was the only way capitalism could be developed.

So what does leftism consist of?

At first blush it seems to be about supporting the struggle of the workers, but when you look more closely everything is on the terrain of capitalist politics. The main features of Leftism are:

Support for radical capitalist parties

Such as the Labour Party in this country and the ANC in South Africa (precisely because its goal is to widen **bourgeois democracy** – the vote etc.), and support for **Parliament**. Some "revolutionary" groups who don't support the Labour Party nevertheless **still** support participation in **parliament** – thereby helping in **practice** to uphold the ideology of bourgeois democracy.

Support for state capitalism

Already referred to above, State Capitalism (a term with various meanings, but here we mean the form of society that developed in Russia and its imitators) collects all property into the hands of the state. And this is a **capitalist** state, not a "workers' state" because capitalist property relations still exist – wage labour, money, the market – and of course the workers do not control the state. The state, indeed, confronts the workers as the "collective capitalist", extracting surplus value from them for the ruling bureaucrats, who are themselves the "collective bourgeoisie".

Let us be clear about this: the only way capitalism can be dismantled is for the working class to **immediately** abolish money and the market, and distribute goods according to need (albeit with scarce goods being **rationed** for a time if necessary). Those who argue that this cannot be done immediately are in fact arguing for retaining the very core of capitalist social relations – if that is done the revolution is as good as dead.

The idea that state capitalism is not capitalism doesn't merely justify support for anti-working class dictatorships like Russia, China, Cuba etc., but creates the very real danger of such a society being created in any future revolution.

Support for Nationalism in its "radical" form

Left wing groups routinely advocate support for weaker, e.g. "third world", nation states – meaning the **governments** of nation states, against stronger ones (Iraq in the Gulf War, etc.). This is described as **anti-imperialism** (!) as though the victory of the weaker country would do more than slightly alter the ranking of states within the world imperialist pecking order. Imperialism is a historical stage of capitalism

and opposing it, as opposed to opposing capitalism itself via working class revolution, is **meaningless**.

The most common form of this "radical" nationalism consists of so-called "national liberation movements", such as the IRA, who don't **yet** have state power. As soon as they do come to power they **always** crush the working class – that is, of course, the **nature** of bourgeois state power.

Often the line will be used that, even if one disapproves of nationalism, that nevertheless nations have a right to self-determination, and one must support their rights. A purer example of bourgeois democratic double-talk could not be imagined: Rights are not something that actually exists, but are a bourgeois mystification (see above). The **working** class should not talk about its **rights** but about its class interest. Talking about a right to national "self-determination" (as though a geographical grouping of **antagonistic** classes can be a "self"!) is like saying that workers have a right" to be slaves if they want to, or a "right" to beat themselves over the head with a hammer if they want to. Anyone who supports the "right" to something anti-working class is actually helping to **advocate** it, whatever their mealy-mouthed language.

Siding with the working class against all capitalist factions necessitates opposing all **forms of nationalism whatsoever**. Any wobbling on this will lead the working class to defeat yet again.

Support for Trade Unionism

Seemingly the most working class activity of all, Trade Unionism is above all a movement to **reconcile** the workers to capitalism. Its stated aim is to get workers the best deal within capitalism, but it's not even that:

The mass of workers have bourgeois consciousness, but because capitalism forces them to struggle, they can resist **despite** that consciousness and thereby **begin** to change that consciousness.

Struggles of the working class are the seeds of revolutionary change. But because Trade Unions are made up of the mass of workers (with bourgeois consciousness) and exist all the time, i.e., when there's no class struggle (and although the day-to-day life of workers can well be called a struggle, we are of course talking about **collective struggle**) the said Unions inevitably fail to challenge capitalism, and furthermore become dominated by a clique of bureaucrats who rise above the passive mass of workers. These bureaucrats get their livelihood from the day-to-day existence **within** capitalism that is Trade Unionism. They are thus materially tied to it. That is why when struggle breaks out, the Union machine sabotages it and stabs workers in the back in the time honoured tradition. **This will always be the case** – the workers can never seize the unions. The **very nature** of Trade Unionism produces anti-working class bureaucratic control.

We believe the workers must create new structures, controlled from the bottom up, to run every struggle that occurs, outside and against the Unions, if the struggle is to go forward. Left wing groups' support for Trade Unions is just one more way in which they help shackle the working class to capitalism.

And last but certainly not least, advocacy of the Leadership of "revolutionaries" over the working class

This division between a mass of followers and an elite of leaders mirrors the divide in mainstream capitalism (and indeed all forms of class society) between rulers and ruled, and serves well the project of constructing state capitalism, after the future

revolution.

None of this means that all workers will come simultaneously to revolutionary ideas, because to begin with only a minority will be revolutionaries, but their task is to argue their case with the rest of their fellow workers as **equals**.

What the left do however, is to perpetuate the sheep-like mentality workers learn under capitalism and harness it to their aim to be in charge after the revolution. **We say** that if **anyone** is in charge, if the working class does not **lead itself** and consciously build a new society, then it will fare no better than in Russia and China and all the rest.

We believe that all left wing groups, whether Stalinist or Trotskyist (or Maoist or Anarchist or whatever they call themselves) are merely radical capitalist organisations who, if they ever came to power, would erect new state capitalist dictatorships in the name of the very working class they would proceed to crush.

This is not a matter of the subjective intentions of their members, whose sincerity we are not questioning here, but the *objective result* of their policies.

This is why the Left has not failed. Its aim was never more than to save capitalism by disguising it as something it was not – just as the original form of bourgeois democracy did in an earlier age.

In opposition to the Left there exists a political movement, consisting of both groups and individuals, some of whom might call themselves Communists, while some might call themselves Anarchists (the Marxist-Anarchist split is an outdated historical division that bears no relationship to the real class line, which cuts **across** it), but who all stand united **against** the fake radicalism of the Left, and for a genuinely communist alternative. We in SUBVERSION are a part of this movement.

What is the Alternative?

We believe that, despite the obstacles put in its way by both Right and Left, the working class has the power to destroy capitalism for real, and create a society without classes, without the state, national boundaries, oppression or inequality. A society not based on money or other forms of exchange, but on collective ownership of, and free access to, all society's goods on the part of the whole of humanity.

This society, which we call Communism or Socialism or Anarchism interchangeably, will be the first truly free society ever to exist.

The social movement that will create this society will grow from the existing struggles of the working class. As part of this process, our class must surmount the barriers put in its way by bourgeois ideology, **including** left wing ideology. Our task in SUBVERSION is not to be leaders (see above), but to be part of the process of creation of a revolutionary working class movement that will put an end to our world's long history of oppression and exploitation, and begin the long history of the free, world human community to come.