

STATE OF THE WORLD COMMUNIST MOVEMENT

NOTES FOR DISCUSSION

The following is the first of two sets of notes for a follow-up discussion on the state of the world communist movement, held in July 2000.

We are not the only conscious element that understands that the ongoing destruction of old institutions and ideologies presents historic opportunities. A whole set of elements are now in play, reconfiguring themselves to capture the masses in order to advance their own agenda. Into this breach have plunged the neo-fascist and elements of the 'left' who are tied together by populism, their pro-capitalism and their nationalism.

Laying the foundation for fascism

The situation today is the same and not the same as in the period of rising fascism in the 1920s/30s. All forces had to confront an expanding and increasingly powerful imperialism. The ideology of social democracy that helped the fascists come to power still exists today and continues to play a crucial role in defending the interests of capitalism. On the other hand, a world communist movement existed that stood against nationalism, imperialism and fascism and stood for international communist revolution. Today, this movement essentially no longer exists.

Today we see the rise of a global economy presided over by various groupings of globalists ranging from free trade purists to Third Way disciples, a whole spectrum of national-based interests who are either painfully merging with or are being destroyed by the global economy and fighting it every inch. We are seeing the rise of a 'mainstreamed' fascist movement, elements of which are increasingly either in power or being encouraged in its activities in order to accomplish the broader agenda of those who are cohabiting these forces and by those of a section of the left on the common ground of nationalism and pro-capitalism.

This ranges from social democracy playing out its role of 'loyal opposition' to the capitalists, a role made possible by the bribery of imperialism to the so-called Red-Brown alliance of fascists and so-called communists.

All these forces differ on the various elements of a solution to the preservation of private property in the age of electronics and the polarization of wealth and poverty it creates. Taken together they form a varied and supple package of solutions to which to offer the rising social response against globalization and its effects. All of these, however, direct the discontent back toward a defensive struggle for reform, national all class unity and ultimately, support of the capitalist system.

Populism, nationalism, anti-Americanism and anti-westernism are all part of the same continuum of ideas and serve many masters. It articulates a defense of national markets; it is a sop to the national sentiments of workers who are daily feeling the brunt of the effects of globalization. It even helps to justify the use of the nation-state to protect the interests of global corporations. But using this ideology, the ruling classes of the various countries can mobilize the masses against their competitors without challenging capitalism as a system.

The uses of nationalism

The success with which the bourgeoisie and its representatives are able to mobilize the masses behind these ideas illustrates the power of national identity and culture on the peoples of the world. The ideology of nationalism takes, among other things, the culture of a people, that is, something that is historic, and grafts it on to the economic and political interests of the bourgeoisie, making it appear as if one is synonymous with the other. The spread of imperialism and the bribery of a section of the workers in the capitalist countries cemented this connection. In this way, the capitalists have been able to mobilize 'their working class' to fight against their battle against the ruling classes of other countries.

Nations, as understood as part of the development of capitalism, and nationalism, are recent in historical terms. Yet such sentiments of the love of place, of culture, the sense of belonging — particularly in a time of terrible turmoil — the forms and symbols associated with that belonging are historical, and among some peoples of the world, older than that.

All these are manipulated and shaped by the ruling class to its own ends. They simply adopt it or ridicule it. Yet, as Marx wrote, revolutionaries must be alert to how the forms can serve the

purpose of 'magnifying the given task in imagination, not of fleeing from its solution in reality, of finding once more the spirit of revolution, not of making its ghost walk again.'" (18th Brumaire).

While this overall political realignment, and particularly the coming together of left and right, is taking place in different forms in different places, it has the same political meaning. The ground is being cut away from any alternatives to the preservation of private property because of the qualitatively new means of production and the rise of a new class outside the existing productive relations. The imposition of a fascist state is intended to protect private property.

There has been a groundswell of warnings and attempts to counter this juggernaut of political realignment. Yet, however well intentioned those raising the alarm the solutions with which they counter these forces — a range of anti-'isms' and a fight for reforms — can do little but redirect their efforts back into the capitalist system. It is clear that while they fight from this position out a sense of justice, a growing section of those who are waking up recognize that new approaches and new solutions are needed.

For many years now, we have understood that a new communist movement must arise on the basis of the qualitatively new conditions, one that is based on a new, objectively communist class.

Indeed it is these qualitatively new conditions which have led to the destruction of the old communist movement, in fact of all past movements as people become unhinged from past relations. Our role is to reattach them to a vision of the future.