

Editorial

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This issue of Fifth International concentrates on several aspects of the deepening worldwide crisis of globalisation and imperialism. Despite the last four years witnessing the recovery phase of the world economic cycle and renewed media propaganda for free market capitalism as the only way forward, despite constant harping on the remarkable growth rates in China and India as proof of neoliberal capitalism's unbeatable dynamism as a system, this has failed to convince millions to stop the fight against it.

In Latin America regimes, which supported the Washington Consensus, have toppled like ninepins. In Venezuela for the first time in a quarter century a government, backed by huge mass mobilisations, claims it is undertaking a transition not to capitalism but to socialism. The unchallengeable superpower of the years following the downfall of Communism, the world policeman has been challenged by guerrilla resistance fighters and order it tried to introduce has turned into bloody chaos.

Though in defiance of the wishes of the US electorate Bush in sending more troops into Iraq, threatening Iran and Syria it is likely that 2007 will see a bloody collapse of the Empire's project of conquest in the Middle East. In *Cracks in the American World Order* the League for the Fifth International looks at the last six months since its Seventh Congress and concludes that development on all continents have signally confirmed these perspectives and our contention that the world is in a pre-revolutionary period.

Chavez's sharp left turn, at the pressure of the masses on him and his need of them to maintain himself in power in the face of fierce opposition from the bourgeoisie and middle class.

At the World Social Forum, in Porto Alegre in January 2005 Venezuela's Hugo Chavez identified the Bolivarian Revolution as a socialist one. Since his re-election in December 2006 he has talked of a transition to socialism within eight years, claimed he is setting out to destroy the bourgeois state and replace it with a socialist one based on municipal councils. He has described himself as a Trotskyist, a supporter of the theory of Permanent Revolution.

In *Hugo Chavez- Populist or Revolutionary Socialist?* Simon Hardy looks at the reality behind these claims. He goes on to look at the revolutionary opportunities and dangers of the current conjuncture in Venezuela; its consequences for anti-capitalist radicals the world over, outlining a programme for victory, based upon a genuine understanding of Trotsky's theory of Permanent Revolution.

In *Uneven and Combined Development; Marxist Theory and Globalisation* Luke Cooper looks at Trotsky's theory, which underpinned his strategy of Permanent Revolution. He shows that it is firmly rooted in Marx's historical materialist method, defends Marx against the claim that he envisaged a rigid stages theory of development, with revolutionary strategy following mechanically from it.

He shows, with Trotsky, how the uneven development of the early twentieth century, how backwardness in a country like Russia, made possible a forward leap to proletarian revolution. He then goes on to show how

Trotsky's theory must be a starting point for examining the unevenness of the world today under globalisation and how the contradictions of unevenness can give rise to a combination of struggles which lead to the revolutions of the Twenty First Century.

Sweden appears to be the country that bucked the trend towards neoliberalisation, the degrading of the welfare state, the end of the Social Democratic dream of a humanised and tamed capitalism. Gunnar Westin shows how the election of the Moderate Party in Sweden in 2006 has started, even if cautiously at first the neoliberal 'counter-revolution' against the social state and the widespread class peace it led to. He shows the unpreparedness of the trade union bureaucracy and the social democratic leaders for a fight back and indicates the new leadership and the new (old) methods of struggle Swedish workers will have to adopt if they are to avoid the fate of their British and North American brother and sisters in the 1980s and 1990s.

In a world where once again socialist revolution has ceased to be unthinkable, where mass movements have erupted not only in Latin America and the Middle East but also in Asian countries like Nepal, the lessons of an almost forgotten revolutionary situation that turned to counterrevolution need to be remembered. In Indonesia the largest non-ruling Communist Party in the world, the PKI, was massacred on a scale that dwarfs similar disasters in Europe and South America.

Yet whilst Hitler's crushing of the German Communists and Social Democrats in 1933, Pinochet's coup in Chile in 1973 and the Argentina's Dirty War in 1976-80 are reasonably well known the coup and massacre of 1965 is little discussed abroad and still the subject of a complete taboo on discussion in Indonesia. Natalie Sedley looks at how the PKI's Stalinist strategy of the revolution by stages and a bloc with the 'national' bourgeoisie led to disaster.

In next issue of Fifth International, due out in May, we shall be looking at the history of the World and Continental Forums and the crisis of direction and leadership afflicting them, the conflict between Marx and Michael Bakunin in the First International (1864-72) and the birth of Anarchism. We shall be commencing a series of articles on Lenin's Theory of Imperialism in the age of Globalisation. We shall carry a major article on China; its role in stabilising the world economy over the past decade and half, its potential for destabilising it in the years to come, the class struggle in its cities and the countryside.

For issue number four of the present series, due out in September a major piece on Marxism and the Environment is planned. We urge those of our regular readers who have not yet done so and new readers interested by this issue to take out a subscription immediately.

Dave Stockton, editor

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