Long Live May Day? Long Live Revolution around the World

League for the Fifth International Fri, 29/04/2011 - 13:14
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May Day Statement of the League for the Fifth International

Forward to a Fifth International

Since its adoption by the Second International in 1889, May Day has always been linked to working class struggles for democracy and against dictatorship, exploitation and war. It raised the slogan of the 8-hour day, yet the struggle against long hours and sweatshop conditions, child and even slave labour is a ceaseless one as long as capitalism exists.

Above all, May Day is a celebration of internationalism - uniting workers around the world against all attempts to divide them along lines of nation, gender, language, race or religion.

This May Day we turn our eyes especially to the Arab countries in the middle of a historic revolutionary upsurge; to Egypt and Tunisia where young people and workers played a vital role in bringing down the dictatorships which had oppressed them for decades. The role of women in these revolutions holds the potential for a major advance for their rights, too.

The struggle - against economic hardship and for full democratic rights - is far from complete with the new regimes trying to ban strikes and the military still in power.

We especially express our solidarity with all those in the other Arab countries still battling to bring down their repressive regimes - in Libya, Syria, Yemen, Bahrain and also in Iran. We totally condemn the military interference by the imperialist powers in Libya in the name of humanitarianism. Their real motives are to plunder even further the oil riches of the region and to halt the advance of the revolution towards social and anti-imperialist goals.

The last year has seen massive marches and protest general strikes in many European countries? notably in Greece, Portugal, Ireland and Britain, where governments are trying to unload the cost of the great crisis which started in 2008 onto the backs of the working class, slashing education, healthcare, public services of all sorts, and driving up the millions of unemployed.

However, their official leaders, the trade union bureaucracy and the reformist parties, have all too often robbed these struggles against austerity of their decisive impact. Militant tactics and an organised movement of the rank and file must oust these saboteurs and open the way to all out general strikes that can bring down these governments that are seeking to destroy the social gains made by generations of workers,

In the USA, the trade unions have been awoken from a long slumber by savage attacks on their rights to
organise and massive cuts launched by right wing state governors. The mass occupation of the state capitol in Madison, Wisconsin, and weeks of demonstrations in Ohio, the solidarity strike of the West Coast dockers, all indicate that US workers are at last saying enough is enough. To take a major step forward US workers will have to break from the Democrats and unite - white, black and Latino in a new anticapitalist working class party.

The underlying spur to these struggles around the globe is the historic crisis of the capitalist system, with mass unemployment, especially for the young, soaring food and fuel prices and attacks on social gains and union rights. Another part of it is the increasing rivalry between the imperialist powers for the natural resources and the exploitable labour of our planet. Their rivalry threatens more invasions and occupations beyond Afghanistan and Iraq. The years and decades ahead will not only see wars and revolutions but also increased numbers of so-called natural disasters. Many of these are, in reality, the result of capitalism?s destructive effects on the environment and even where that is not the case it is always the poor and the oppressed who suffer most in their aftermath.

May Day reminds us that that the working class and its allies amongst all the impoverished and oppressed classes and peoples are the only force that can, by means of its resistance, turn these crises into revolutions that can resolve these dangers hanging over humanity. It reminds us, too, that women, the half of humanity that is doubly oppressed in the home and in the workplace, can and must play a role in the front ranks of these revolutions.

But, to achieve its liberation, the world proletariat needs to build new revolutionary parties. The League for the Fifth International, with our sections in Asia, Europe and the USA, appeals to all those fighting around the world not only to unite all our struggles but to join us in creating the organisational expression of that unity, a new, Fifth International, a world party of socialist revolution.

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