

On reformism and the struggle against capitalism

The latest political events in parts of Latin America, above all Bolivia, has given us the opportunity to very clearly highlight the political role and function of reformism under capitalism. The situation that the Bolivian people find themselves in cannot be separated from the role that the Latin American left parties play.

The capitalist order can fit a variety of political solutions and it can accept everything from parliamentary democracy to fascism. Within this span, we can find reformism. It never challenges capitalism – its objective function is rather the strengthening of capitalism. It is the left-wing of capitalism.

Reformism always presents itself as something that it is not. With radical rhetoric reformism claims to represent the working class but in practice it always serves capitalism – the fact that it to some extent has made life better for the working people does not change its basic relationship to capitalism.

This role is played by the reformist parties all over the world, also by the parties in Latin America, which in one way or another has shouldered the responsibility of administering capitalism in their respective countries. This is the case in Venezuela, Mexico, Nicaragua, Argentina and a number of other countries.

The reasons that capitalism has tolerated these political solutions are many, but can be summed up by the fact that these parties guarantee social peace and stability. This manifests itself both indirectly and directly in a number of calls for social peace.

At the same time, reformism in Latin America has opened the door to a capitalist expansion and growth. The expansion of the infrastructure is a precondition for the effectivization of capitalism and repeated compromises with the local bourgeoisie has allowed for the rapid expansion of private mining, to take one example from Bolivia.

For the achievement of social peace, capitalism has also been forced to certain concessions in the form of welfare for the people. This has gone beyond what the local bourgeoisie has been willing to accept. The struggle of the people and labor unions has been the guarantee for this. In doing this, these movements also create a need for the bourgeoisie for political reformism, which can suppress the threat of revolution that lies latent in the movement of the people.

The situation brings with it another positive aspect for capital: the reformist policies has created a trust in capitalism and for the capitalist state, which has bound the working people closer to capitalism. That the reformist leaders has administered capitalism but proclaimed socialism in the end risks to push the people away from socialism.

In the end, the political result of all these reformist movements is a catastrophe for the people: everywhere, reformism paves the way for fascism and all the improvements in the lives of the working people that reformism has achieved within the framework of capitalism turns out to be temporary and elusive.

This kind of policy is dangerous. In Bolivia, the people find themselves without neither a political nor practical possibility to answer the offensive of capitalism in a coordinated manner. They are armed neither with revolutionary ideology nor with weapons, with which to answer their attackers. It is the working people that now face the full consequences of the reformist policies. This paves the way for fascism as the only ones that would have been able to stop fascism have been robbed of the possibility to do so.

The purpose of the reformist policies is the reducing of the role of the working people. For reformism, the working people are needed as a means to achieve a parliamentary end – they become dangerous if

they are recognized as the motor for change that they actually are. All popular activity is turned towards parliamentary work, which always risks to create a working population without experiences or confidence. That reformism has succeeded in this in Sweden is clear, but it has not yet reached as far in Bolivia and other Latin American countries.

On the communists, the greatest of tasks fall: to lead the people in opposition against capitalism and all of its political expressions. The communists must show the political dead-end that reformism constitutes and reveal its function and role as the left-wing of capitalism.

The political struggle must break the framework of the capitalist system and not settle for changes in the capitalist administration – if it does not succeed in this, the movement will inevitably be fought back with full force. That is why an opposition to neo-liberalism is not enough – regardless of how well-meaning it is. In the end, the opposition to neo-liberalism amounts to changes in the capitalist administration if it is not brought together with the total opposition to capitalism and all its political expressions. A one-sided opposition to neo-liberalism maintains the source of the working people's problems intact – it never challenges capitalism.

It is with both sorrow and hope that we see the situation in Bolivia unfold. We feel sorrow for the enormous blows that are directed towards the working people and we mourn the victims of fascism. At the same time, the people are organizing themselves in defense of what has been achieved and in struggle for new victories. To us, this confirms that in the end, all hope lies in the people!

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