

AGAINST THE CAPITALIST USE OF THE CRISIS: THE AUTONOMOUS POLITICAL INITIATIVE OF THE WORKING CLASS!

Despite its seriousness, the present financial and industrial crisis unfortunately does not announce the end of the domination of capital and wage labour. The bosses of the world and their states are only concerned that the bill should be paid by the exploited. The G20 showed that when it is a question of defending the system, the competition between them disappears, giving way to an energetic common action.

China provides the essential ammunition to the USA so that it can continue to get into debt so as to support the global capitalist system.

The revival plans mobilise trillions of dollars. The balance sheets of the banks, many of which were brought close to collapse by the failure of many of their juiciest financial products, are from now on *de facto* guaranteed by public debt.

The companies which profited during the years when cheap credit fell like manna from heaven from the financial institutions and allowed them to escape from the serious industrial crisis of 2000-2001, will also benefit from the colossal results of the public expenditure reinforced by the bail-out plans put in place by the states.

This is not the end of the crisis, but, clearly, the capitalists seem to foresee the end within a few months.

Without taking their predictions at face value, the chances that the gigantic operations put in place by governments to bring the crisis to a halt will succeed are not small. Certainly, there's been a nasty accident, but the capitalist class is showing that it learnt a lot from its past mistakes.

This is why, for proletarians, the after crisis period is very likely to be harder than the crisis itself.

The bosses manage their current difficulties with great efficiency while shouting from the rooftops that the crisis is terrible, on an almost unprecedented scale. Amongst themselves they show a great creativity in imagining viable solutions to their problems and in public they say they are in despair, helpless in the face of unforeseen circumstances.

The truth is that they take advantage of the crisis to reduce even more the initiative and the power of the workers over working conditions and the labour market. The bosses are undertaking a veritable psychological war against the working class to gain even more positions, to reinforce their dictatorship in workplaces and in society.

The capitalist utilisation of the crisis is translated for proletarians into a massive wave of "preventive" redundancies, a fall in real wages, the tightening of the bosses' authority in the factories and offices and by bringing the most recalcitrant sectors of the workforce, with or without employment, to heel.

If the workers let it go on this offensive will not stop with the end of the crisis. After having dealt with the most urgent cases, it will still be necessary to make up for the enormous budget deficits accumulated following the reflation plans and bail-outs for companies. Inflation will begin again, gnawing away at the purchasing power of wages. Well before they start to invest again the

bosses will try to increase the productivity of labour and cleanse the balance sheets of their companies by speeding up work, increasing working hours, imposing more flexibility and lowering the wage bill.

Attacked at work and outside it, proletarians will be the major losers of the crisis, the only ones to pay for it completely, if they don't react quickly and strongly against the plans of capital.

Calling for a relaunch of the economy by raising household consumption and wages, as the unions have done, shows a willingness (deliberate or not, it doesn't matter) to pull the wool over the workers' eyes.

The capitalists know very well what is good for them and for their economy. Their project is to restore health to their businesses by squashing the wages and the energy of the workers. It is not for us to explain to them how to restore their profits. It is not for us to save their economy and their states. On the contrary we must defend inch by inch our wages and our working conditions, even if this comes into conflict with the survival of such and such a business, such and such a state or with the capitalist economy in its entirety.

Workers must not be afraid of their own strength. Isolated struggles, even where the workers quite rightly fight very hard (with occupations and boss-knapping) to get better treatment, are not enough to hold back an attack on such a scale. It is only by starting out from the full exercise of this unified force that the bosses and their states will be made to lower their sights.

For now it is necessary to work towards a common way forward for the specific struggles which are carried out in the factories and offices where there are redundancies, and for them to link themselves as far as possible with the struggles for wages in other companies. The means to reach that point are to be decided by the workers but nothing should be ruled out.

To get to that point the workers can only count on themselves, turning their backs on their false friends and defenders that are the unions, the parties of the left and the far left and other associations of that kind.

The autonomous organisation of the workforce comes about through the constitution, in the heat of combat against the capitalist crisis, of a capillary network within work-places and neighbourhoods of base structures capable of uniting the most combative and lucid proletarians around a perspective which does not confine itself to the simple defence of workers' immediate interests.

It will also be necessary for collective intelligence to concern itself with thinking about a future without bosses, exploitation and capitalist states. That is the only way that working class politics can get back in touch with its past glories and approach the future with the confidence necessary to rid itself of capital.

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Communist Movement