

Workers, Students! - Paris (May 1968)

The red flag of the working class floats over the faculties and the factories. Millions of workers occupy businesses. The working masses who were said to be “apathetic” have been set into movement.

May 13, 1968 they became conscious of the immense force they represent at the same time that they took the measure of the real weakness of the power structure. During the ten years of the Gaullist regime they were able to sense the total ineffectiveness of the traditional forms of struggle inherited from the Fourth Republic: the parliamentary battles, rolling strikes, unenthusiastic marches, “National Action Days;” all of them smashed up against the buttresses of the police state.

Only direct and resolute action is capable of making the Gaullist state bend. This is the lesson that millions of workers have drawn from the students’ victorious combat. They spontaneously and massively applied this lesson in order to resolve their own problems.

Today the center of gravity of the struggle has moved from the faculties to the factories. The contesting of the bourgeois university has been transmuted into the contesting of capitalist society. For let us not be fooled: if the workers occupy businesses in their millions it isn’t simply to obtain satisfaction of their salary demands. The question of power is posed, in the company and in society. It is the fate of the regime that is at stake.

The bosses and the state have been struck dumb. The bourgeoisie, confused, calls on the “representative organizations of the working class” to take things in hand. It knows that in a period of profound social crisis the reformist leadership of the working class constitutes the best and last rampart of the capitalist regime: encrusted in parliamentarianism, scrupulously respectful of bourgeois legality, this leadership knows

how to channel the combativeness of the masses and will manage orient it towards objectives compatible with the survival of the system.

In order to preserve its power the dominant class is ready to make temporary concessions. It knows how to wait for the ebbing of the movement so as to take with one hand what it had to concede with the other.

The young workers, the students who are at the spearhead of the combat don't want their movements to end up like the movements of 1936 and 1945. The movement "of unequalled breadth" that today is unfurling across France must not give birth to a mouse!

We must continue to the very end!

We occupy the faculties, the offices, the factories!

We will stay there!

– Don't allow the bourgeois or social democratic politicians, the Mitterands and the Guy Mollets, to negotiate the return to order in exchange for a ministerial chair.

– Don't allow the union leadership negotiate the return to work in exchange for advantages that are perhaps considerable but which will be rapidly be gnawed away by inflation and work speed ups.

LET US PROFIT FROM THE RELATION OF FORCES WE HAVE ESTABLISHED, TAKE GUARANTEES!

We will constitute at the base in factories Strike Committees; in the faculties and neighborhoods action committees bringing together workers in struggle.

We will impose the nationalization of the big occupied enterprises and their democratic management by Workers Committees.

We will institute workers control over professional education, the organization of work, the management of companies.

We will take the ledger books

We will construct at our work places, independently of the apparatuses of the state and the bosses, organs of popular counter- power!

We will impose the departure of De Gaulle and the establishment of a workers government.

The power we want is not that of a government of the left succeeding a government of the right.

The power we want has nothing to do with the parliamentary bargains of bourgeois and reformist politicians!

The power we want must establish the direct democracy of socialism, founded on the authority of base committees in the companies and the neighborhoods.

The power we want must be the emanation of the strike committees and action committees of the workers and students.

WORKERS, STUDENTS, A UNIQUE CHANCE IS BEING OFFERED US; LET'S NOT LET IT PASS!

Jeunesse Communiste Révolutionnaire.

(May 21, 1968)