

THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

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What perspective does the European Parliament offer to the masses? In it, the European capitalists meet, negotiate and decide what is good for the capitalists. The EEC is a capitalist office with a boardroom called 'European Parliament'. The idea of the 'snake' was hatched at one of its meetings.

The actual voice of the workers is never heard in the national parliaments. Do you think it will be heard in this European one? The European parliament will get busy with EEC matters, and the 'full rights of expression' will be for the European capitalists. The working class MEPs¹ do not expect Soviets to grow out of this parliament, certainly, but they tend to forget that the aim of this parliament is to control their struggles. The European Parliament has been put in place to divert and blunt the struggle of the Communists and Socialists, the Left and the Trade Unions.

It is to keep the European masses hoping for better things that the promise of "a social Europe" re-surfaces from time to time. To the leaders of the European Trade Unions and workers' parties, this slogan gives an argument to keep the workers waiting. The 'social Europe' is still on the agenda, you know. Just wait. Expect social change within the next 500 years.

The United Socialist States of Europe:

Sectors on the European Left say that the European Parliament gnaws at the principles of national sovereignty in their own countries. This consideration must not become central, because of much greater concern is the reason why the European Parliament was created. The European Parliament and EEC blunt or attenuate the worst aspects of class struggle and inter-capitalist competition, but these do not go away. They are

¹ Members of the European Parliament.

forced to attenuate some of their sharpest aspects, but this does not make 'Europe' any 'fairer'. It only means that 'Europe' is aiming at a single European capitalist structure.

The comrades are wrong who believe that the European Parliament can be pressed to support the struggle of the European workers and masses. Wrong! Instead of believing that this can be done, those comrades must formulate aims, programmes and means of struggle that trust in perspectives like the *United Socialist States of Europe*. Lenin was the first to propose this. He saw the need for a United Europe long before the bourgeois politicians did.

The position of the Communist parties on the EEC and the European Parliament is incorrect. Europe needs to be unified for a thousand reasons: Geographic, economic, scientific, technological, cultural, etc. In this mix, the scientific and cultural is incomparably superior to the technological. Technology lessens the time socially necessary to produce, but this gain must assist intelligent development. And intelligent development can only take place where technological rationalisation improves the human condition. Performance in production must not be the only way to assess technology. The creation of a machine in 10 minutes is only an asset if the machine elevates the human relations instead of destroying them. Technology has no value if it helps to create objects that destroy the human relations.

Use the European Parliament as a tribune:

Some Communist parties are getting ready to stand candidates for the European Parliament. This is not wrong as long as the comrades realise that the European Parliament is a swindle. The European Parliament is an extension of capitalist power. Although this is already true of the national parliaments, it is even truer of the European Parliament because it represents the biggest multinationals.

The problem is not that the Communists and the Socialists stand candidates, but that they do so in the belief and illusion that they can advance in that way. But they will not advance in

that way. They will not be able to do it. The European Parliament was created to stop them advancing! This must be discussed in all the workers' parties.

Through the European Parliament and the EEC, capitalism creates new power instruments. As far as human organisation is concerned, and socially speaking, these instruments represent a retreat of historic proportions. Germany, France and Britain will soon be the absolute bosses of the EEC. The power they are building makes collective assassination systematic and legitimate. You see it through unemployment, but also through the trashing of culture, knowledge, science and even technology. Most of technology is now being used to write people off.

Technical and scientific knowledge increase in capitalism, but not the scientific knowledge of life. The latter does not grow in capitalism; it is not interested in this branch of science. The Communist and Socialist comrades must pose the question: Where exactly are the EEC and the European Parliament driving to? The comrades must look behind the EEC bodies as they stand, and wonder what they are for. What are they for? Can power be taken through them? Can capitalism be thrown out of them? Can the EEC develop each one of its member countries?

The "Single Market" of capitalism can only be the rule of the strongest. The rule of the mightiest. Historic reason says that all the countries must be allowed to develop, but capitalism is deaf to historic reason. It is preparing for war, not preparing to listen. Its crisis is of a kind that can only lead to war. It is aware of having become an unnecessary regime. It is to stop itself being removed from history that it has armed itself to the teeth.

As a form, the European Parliament is part of the system of the multinationals. We know this is the case, but we still agree with the principle of the workers' parties sending deputies to it. This does not contradict the analysis we made of the European Union. The principle of having delegates there is no different from that of having delegates in the national parliaments.

The Bolsheviks participated in the Czar's Duma. They were present when the Duma discussed whether to opt for peace or continue with the war. When they eventually gained a majority, they refused to be bound by the Duma's discipline. They intervened in the Soviets instead, and when they had a majority in the Soviets, they sent the Constituent Assembly packing. The Soviets set out to take power, and they took it.

Throughout all these changes, the Bolsheviks remained loyal to the working class and true democracy. They allowed themselves to be guided by the correct historic evaluation of their own advances. Through their political preparation, the Bolshevik leaders had become able to do that. They knew that the Constituent Assembly would let them go so far, and no further. They took part in it, but with no illusions. They could do that because their aim was not power for themselves. Their aim was the working class in power. This kept them practically on the same road as the one that historic progress was opening.

The European Parliament is an office where the capitalists sort out their contradictions. It never follows up on the demands of strikers, demonstrators and workers' parties. Its actions amount to funnelling, separating and deflecting the energy of the protests. It wants to give the impression that the peoples are represented. Haven't they got MEPs? Aren't they better off than the ordinary folk in the Workers States? Although this is a trick, it also shows capitalism on the defensive.

Without making it central to our activities, we too want to send delegates to the European Parliament when we can. We will use it as a tribune, and from that tribune, we will explain that this parliament is a fraud. We will explain that no progress can be made through it. We will expose the way it manipulates, deceives and corrupts the workers' leaders. Many workers' leaders let themselves be fooled by the European Parliament. The Socialists and the Communists overrate the European Parliament and they do not want to admit it!

Social transformation does not strictly depend on the number of MPs:

The Communist and Socialist comrades go to the European Parliament with the idea of eventually eliminating capitalism, and of using that parliament for human progress. But this is a false hope. The multinationals decide in that parliament. Should this be any other way, the multinationals would break it up. They have the means to do this. See how the various parliamentary elections never fail to return the representatives of the multinationals! And if, by some miracle, the working class were to change this fact, why, the capitalist class would make a *Paris Commune*². The ruling class has the weapons, atomic included.

The EEC is a monument to capitalist relations. The European Parliament takes the teeth out of the struggle of the working class and its parties. It encourages them to believe in transformation through parliament. Everyone knows that this is a lie. It was always a blatant lie, but it is more blatant now than ever. The brutal crisis of capitalism has become the executioner of human progress. It is absurd to believe in the European Parliament. Apart from regulating inter-capitalist competition, the role of that parliament is to encourage workers' careerism, reward Communist and Socialist reformism and feed the many sources of parliamentary illusion.

Human progress requires more than better ways to produce. Science and culture must elevate the human relations too. This feat demands the *Soviet Socialist United States of Europe* because nothing else will do this. Production and the human relations are not separate spheres. The human relations are involved in having things produced, of course, and production generates human relations. Society does not just produce goods, it produces human relations. The human relations are not only a form of production, they are the most important part of it!

The masses are collective. This makes them objective and permanently ready to embrace progress. Since they are humanity, they cannot be wishing for any progress that harms

² Refers to the violent repression of the 'Communards' in Paris, in 1871. Editorial.

humanity. As soon as they manage to be heard, they insist on their experience and their intelligence serving the greater good. They do this collectively, not individually. And it is collectively too that they express their immense aspiration to progress. In the estimation of the capitalists, 'progress' means 'profits'; in that of the masses, it means 'a better life for everyone'. This discord slices through everything. It is the essential source of fracture in contemporary thought.

From the podiums of the European Parliament, the working class' comrades must denounce the bourgeois class. They must also seek to stimulate ideas, analyses and debates. It is not so fundamental to have a lot of MEPs. More fundamental is to address the masses of Europe and the world from those podiums. From there, one must speak about State ownership and economic planning too. The Party of Lenin did this. Social transformation is not strictly dependent on having many MPs. It depends on one's ability to create situations favourable to social change.

One must constantly reiterate that the working class is the sole representative of the progress of society. Governments come and go, but no government of the Left will last long if it stays on the side of capitalism. The capitalist system is rotten and finished. Corruption is now its entire character.

The Trade Unions exist because capitalism keeps killing:

In the 'great United States of America' there was a demonstration of grandparents – mostly over the age of 50 – demanding human rights. It is necessary to create similar social organisms of women, pensioners, children and everyone, to struggle for the defence of science, education and culture. This has already started because human progress is accelerating. In the past, the grandchild depended on the grandparent, the grandparent on the son, and the son on work. That was, roughly, the chain of dependency, with economic necessity at its base. People still face economic necessity today, but they are socially emancipated. They have stopped feeling socially dependent.

The masses are always fair and just. They do not make mistakes, historically speaking, because they have no individual interest. When they can decide without impediment, they seek the common good. This is not a mystical statement; it a dialectical and materialistic conclusion based on the evidence of historic experience.

It is necessary to let people intervene directly. The traditional Labour leaders do not do this, be they of industrial or of political origins. They lack the preparation, the confidence, the organs and the political structures to think in those terms. Those who wish to reverse this situation find it hard because most people have learnt to mistrust the structures of their parties. Don't these structures almost always exploit the militants? Reversing this situation demands the most complete determination to let people intervene.

Capitalism only improved the life of the workers when it could not avoid it. And it always retook with one hand more than it had conceded with the other. It is to compete better between themselves, and against the Workers States, that the capitalists allow for improved standards of science and culture. They make the masses pay, but these eventually forced them to reduce the working week. There was a time when a shorter working week was needed improve life. Today, it is needed to preserve life itself.

The reduction of the working week improved human health enormously, but capitalism went on killing. If it does not kill more workers, it is only because the workers keep struggling for better means, conditions, safety, hygiene, etc. Capitalism has no time or money for any of these things! It is the Trade Unions that impose them.

Control committees inside and outside the enterprises:

Do not expect capitalism to give more than it has given already. Unemployment is now reaching 15 million in Europe (1978) and can only increase. Technological advances leap ahead, causing unemployment to grows all the more. Technology is introducing cheap substitutes into the food. The

workers' health is attacked not only by the technologies applied to the machines in the workplace, but to the products they consume. People are being poisoned! This is why there are *Greens* and *Ecologists*. This is why these people are right. They may not be right in everything, but they are right to oppose the adulteration of products and the general poisoning of people. They would not need to exist if the workers' parties and the Trade Unions were doing their duty. The Greens, the Ecologists and others exist because the Trade Unions and the workers' parties do not organise the overthrow of capitalism.

This is why we say that the Ecologists have a logical reason for being. The same goes for the *Feminists*. These social formations exist because the workers' parties and the Trade Unions do not have anti-capitalist programmes. No programme is anti-capitalist that leaves out the demands of the Ecologists and the Feminists. The Ecologists win up to 5% in some elections. Those who vote for them can be bourgeois, petit bourgeois, scientists and technicians, but they too reject the behaviour of capitalism.

Among those who vote Ecologist, many are sympathisers and friends of the anti-capitalist struggle. Some come from quite well-off sectors of society. They have opened their intelligence and, in this manner, they accept that capitalism needs overthrowing. When capitalism is brought down, they will be the allies of the working class.

The European Trade Unions must discuss all these questions. Such are the problems of today. It is wrong to say that Trade Unions must not intervene in politics. Those who want this separation defend sectional interests, or electoral interests. The Trade Union leaders who take that view do not want the workers criticising them when they (leaders) strike agreements with the capitalist class. And where the Trade Unions do not intervene in politics, the workers have less means in society to impose changes.

It is necessary to call for *factory committees*, and for the organisation of the working class on a European scale. *Trade Union and Workers Parties' United Fronts* must be set up in

Europe, to defend jobs, wages, purchasing power. The Unions must not deal just with the wage, but with the purchasing power of the wage. They must denounce the constant reduction in the quality of the food, of transport and of life. Workers' militants must defend the sliding scale of wages and of hours³: No redundancies! Work sharing without loss of pay! If the capitalists cannot afford it, well then, let the State expropriate them and take charge.

Capitalism objects vehemently to these ideas, but the continuation of life needs these ideas. They must be discussed in the workplaces. We are told that discussing creates dissensions; but the daily political experience of the masses imposes debate anyway, and change is pressing. The question of Trade Union democracy is not about the right to speak. It is about the right to speak in support of the progress of life.

If the various left-wing groups want to have a say in the Labour Party and the Trade Unions, let them! Let them contribute their ideas. The working class will know how to assess, consider, accept or reject. The working class is not without its own ability to persuade either! And what it knows best is how to concentrate the will to struggle which it finds within itself, and around itself as well.

In the workplaces and beyond, it is not enough to insist on democracy. Democracy must be used to create organisations that defend the workers' demands. The workplace organisation, or committee, will then discuss the programme that guarantees the job, improves the living standards, organises production and organises society.

This is the way it happened in Russia with the committees they called 'Soviets'. The Cubans did not make Soviets, but they made social organs of mass power.

It is necessary to discuss all these matters, and on the scale of Europe.

³ The sliding scale of wages and hours means more money and less hours. This way the profits of automation go to the workers. Editorial.

(Extracts)

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