

Nation or Class

A revolutionary perspective

#FW Murneau

November 30, 2014

Contents

RATE OF PROFIT	3
RUSH FOR VOTES	3
NATION TRUMPS CLASS	4

There were working class demands from the start of the Scottish independence referendum and these demands only continued to grow as it neared to the time of the vote. Many parties of the so-called left began to appeal to these demands and desires of the working class. But why was this and why now?

To answer this, we have to look at the wider picture of the current period of capitalism. At the moment, we are in the death agony of capitalism as the crisis 2008 continues from its source in the 1970s, when we had our first independence debate. This appeal to the nation-state is an effect that capitalist crisis generates. A crisis in capitalism leads to a crisis in the state, and this is what has spurred on these events.

It was plainly evident that appealing to the fears and dreams of the working class was one of the main tactics in this whole campaign. The people most likely to have voted Yes were those of the lower income brackets, and those who voted No the inverse. Both Glasgow and Dundee were Yes voters, areas of poverty and traditionally home to the most militant and class conscious sections of the proletariat.

RATE OF PROFIT

The problem for these parties is that the time of welfare states has long since eclipsed in the face of the continuing international capitalist crisis. Ever since the late 1970s capitalism has been in a deep decline as the post-war reconstruction period ended, a period when the rate of profit was high enough to allow for concessions to the working class in the form of a welfare state. The rate of profit since the ending of this period has declined, in part due to the increasing efficiency of production with the resultant increase in costs of constant capital in the most advanced capitalist states.

This crisis of capitalism in the 1970s resulted in the eventual collapse of the soviet union because it could not transition quick enough in an effectual way to the new demands being placed upon the economy, and started the collapse of traditional welfare states in western Europe. Capital had to be free to move abroad to find new areas of investment where the rate of profit was higher. But we have reached a point where even capital movement and financial concealment is no longer a solution. The financial crisis of 2008 only revealed that capitalism has been stuttering along on fictional profits. Everywhere across the board traditional capitalist welfare states austerity programs are being enacted, not because of some ideological reason, or because bankers are greedy, or corporations are bad, or because politicians are corrupt, but because this is the only way for capital to continue to function.

RUSH FOR VOTES

While these “socialist” parties and groups were already far from the communist movement and of working class struggle, they more openly abandoned all pretences of revolution and succumbed out right to opportunism. For most a slightly better form of capitalism is preferable than for arguing for the abolition of capital itself and the chance for a real solution. Some groups, such as the International Socialist Group’s (ISG) and its front organisation, the Radical Independence Campaign (also the Scottish Left Project) followed this model by succumbing outright to the SNP and bourgeois democracy. This trend continues in the wake of the failed Yes campaign, and all

those “socialist” parties who were in tow of the SNP, such as Tommy Sheridan outright telling people to just vote the SNP over his own party and over any working class autonomy. Now that the Labour party are predicated to collapse in Scotland, all of these groups are now be vying for the lucrative position as the party of the working class, the SNP included.

NATION TRUMPS CLASS

The subsumption of proletarian struggle to bourgeois parties and bourgeois political activity will, and has many times in the past, lead to a negation of any real possibility of revolutionary activity by the working class for the working class. If the working class wants to have any changes in it's own condition then it has to carry these out themselves. Participation in the bourgeois political system only legitimatises said system and obscures the real nature of bourgeois politics.

These parties are the dead weight to any real change and improvement in the lives of those who demand it. These parties and ideologues seek only to chain the working class to the same bourgeois political system that has consistently failed to provide any meaningful change.

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