

WOT: Eight Theses on the Destiny of the Concept of Workers' Rule

Ben Seattle (reposted by Marik) 2006-07-10 03:23

These eight theses are the first installment of "Seventeen Theses on the Destiny of the Revolution in Communications and the Concept of Workers' Rule". ... brought to you by the "Weapon of Transparency" channel.

===== What is the "Weapon of Transparency" channel? ===== We (ie: Marik and Ben) are posting a series of articles as part of our effort to create an interactive digital distribution channel that can help build a discussion (and an international audience) that is focused on political and theoretical principles which we believe are essential for the development of a powerful antiwar movement -- and a revolutionary movement with the power to overthrow the existing political and economic system of imperialism.

We make additional comments (in the "Afterword" following the article) for readers who: (1) would like their replies to be visible to the international audience or (2) would like to see Marik or Ben give a public response to their questions or criticisms

===== Eight Theses on the Destiny of the Concept of Workers' Rule =====

1. The necessary and inevitable result of the class struggle will be the overthrow of bourgeois rule and its replacement by workers' rule (and, later, by a classless society).

2. The goal of workers' rule is the goal around which, eventually, the left and all progressive humanity will unite.

3. The concept of workers' rule is central to the development of a progressive movement which is conscious and organized. The power of this concept to clarify our tasks is fully equivalent to the power of Darwin's theory of evolution to understanding biology or the theory of plate tectonics to understanding geology. Without this concept, we are reduced to feeling our way forward (and sometimes backward) in the dark. With this concept--the lights are on.

4. With rare exception, all political trends in modern society oppose placing the concept of workers' rule at the center of the progressive agenda:

(a) The strata of trade union hacks, poverty pimps, liberal media personalities, opinion makers and the like (sometimes referred to as the "labor aristocracy" or the political trend of social-democracy) oppose the concept of workers' rule because it threatens fundamental bourgeois interests which they are, essentially, paid to defend.

(b) Numerous small, "hard-core" formations on the left oppose the development of a realistic understanding of workers' rule within the context of modern conditions--because such an understanding will tend to shatter the special "sectarian glue" (ie: special beliefs, tribal totems and taboos) that define their organizations and hold their organizations together. These sectarian groups often carry out a great deal of useful work but have an internal life similar to that of a cult and, essentially, conceive of workers' rule as a society based on thought control: a police state where a monopoly of political thought is enforced by a single-party regime that rules like feudal lords and suppresses all serious opposition. History proves that such societies:

.....(i) tend to be politically inert(ii) fundamentally undermine the initiative of workers and(iii) have such a low productivity of labor that they cannot exist under modern conditions (ie: the fundamental reason for the collapse of the Soviet Union).

(c) The overwhelming majority of leftist or progressive activists either (i) oppose placing workers' rule at the center of the progressive agenda, or (ii) are highly uncomfortable with the concept. This opposition/discomfort is a product of items (a) and (b) above. Specifically:

.....(i) the immense ideological influence (which saturates the left) of the labor aristocracy (with which most of the left is allied) and(ii) the extreme confusion about workers' rule created by the sectarian "cargo cult Leninists"

5. Of particular note in relation to this question, is the identity of interests (ie: the mutually beneficial relationship) between the social-democratic trends, on the one hand, and the sectarian trends on the other. The social-democrats, who oppose

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placing workers' rule on the progressive agenda, are eager to find "supporters" of workers' rule who, in the context of the theoretical struggle, act like buffoons. And the sectarians are more than happy to perform this service. The social-democrats, in return, assist the sectarians to hold their organizations together by providing an example of "the alternative" which, on the question of workers' rule, serves bourgeois interests and acts like spineless cowards.

6. Despite opposition from treacherous/cowardly social-democracy and clueless sectarians, the concept of workers' rule is bound to emerge from "the grave" and take its rightful place at the center of progressive thought and of humanity's aspirations. Workers' rule corresponds to the objective material interest of billions of people--the overwhelming majority of humanity. The efforts of its opponents to keep the concept of workers' rule out of sight and out of mind have less chance of success than the efforts of the Vatican to suppress the theory of Copernicus, championed by Galileo, that the earth moves around the sun.

7. Some consideration must be given to the tactics aimed at accelerating the emergence of workers' rule as the guiding aspiration of progressive humanity. At a minimum, there must be web sites and email discussion lists which maintain a strong focus on workers' rule in the context of modern conditions--and which can serve as a pole of attraction for serious thinkers struggling to discover the fundamental way forward for humanity. Such websites and discussion lists will also serve as public arenas of calm and scientific debate which will establish which ideas can be defended with scientific argument--and which cannot.

8. Ultimately, the concept of workers' rule must be taken directly to the masses. While efforts must be made to take the concept of workers' rule to forums where progressive people hang out, it is the destiny of this concept to emerge as the "ultimate virus" which will ride the splendid digital communications infrastructure the capitalists are rapidly building for us--and implant itself in the consciousness of hundreds of millions.

-- Ben Seattle, July 2001

This essay is posted at <http://struggle.net/17> together with a web-based public forum where anonymous, unregistered readers can post public questions and criticisms.

----- Appendix by Ben Seattle -- July 9, 2006 -----

My essay discusses the need for workers' rule. Some readers appear to believe I am advocating a corrupt police state such as existed in the Soviet Union and which still exists in China, North Korea, etc.

This demonstrates that we need a movement which can create clarity on these kinds of topics.

The ruling bourgeoisie (ie: the class of big-time capitalists) who run this country promote the idea that our only choice is between currently existing imperialism (or hopeless and doomed attempts to reform it) and a police state.

We must be clear that we reject: (a) currently existing imperialism, (b) futile attempts to reform imperialism and (c) police states such as existed in the Soviet Union and still exist in China.

This is why theory is important.

The former Soviet Union and the current China are not societies which were or are run by workers: they are class-divided societies in which a ruling class exploits the overwhelming majority of society and suppresses the independent political voice and independent political life of the working class.

The confusion is created because the Soviet and Chinese leaders claimed that their societies were run by workers. The confusion is amplified because many supposedly "socialist" groups in the West echo this nonsense.

We must clear this kind of nonsense out of the way and toss it into the trash -- so that we can build a movement with a clear goal and a clear focus -- on a society and a world that is not run by either (a) the capitalist bourgeoisie or (b) a new exploiting class of bureaucrats.

Such a society will be, for the first time, a genuine mass democracy -- in which democratic rights are universal and the masses actually run society. Such a society has never existed (except for very brief and chaotic periods -- before being crushed or suffocated).

That is a big part of the problem -- there are no successful models to which we can point.

And that, my friends, is one very important reason we need real theory that clears this garbage out of the way.

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We can never create a mass movement aimed at the overthrow of bourgeois rule -- until we can create a minimal amount of clarity concerning what will come afterword.

===== Afterword (by Marik and Ben)

Contents of afterword: ----- 1. Who are Marik and Ben? Why are they reposting this? 2. We are Live and Anti-Spam 3. How to get a public reply to questions or criticism 4. What is the Media Weapon community?

----- 1. Who are Marik and Ben? Why are they reposting this?

We (ie: Marik and Ben) are two activists who work together to build a regular channel of communication to activists (using Indymedia sites and progressive email lists) for anti-imperialist and revolutionary politics.

From time to time we will distribute articles or leaflets which we believe serve the movement. Sometimes these will be articles we have written. Sometimes we will post articles by other people or groups followed by our own comments or criticisms. We intend to make this distribution "live" (ie: interactive) so that activists and readers will know how to get a public response to criticism or questions from us (or from the original authors).

----- 2. We are Live and Anti-Spam -----

"Useless information supposed to fry my imagination" -- Mick Jagger, "Satisfaction", 1966

We believe that many activists understand the need to build a syndication channel for anti-imperialist and revolutionary politics. The antiwar movement in most cities is stalled while the war in Iraq has entered its fourth year and U.S. imperialism is threatening to extend the carnage to Iran.

In this situation there is a need for a steady and consistent two-way flow of news and analysis that cuts through the bullshit and takes aim at the political trends (mostly centered around the "left wing" of the imperialist Democratic Party) which work to siphon off the militancy and independent spirit of the antiwar movement into useless, dead-end, reformist schemes. Moreover this stream of information must give every activist the right (and the practical ability) to publicly challenge anything about this stream which they believe is either mistaken or corrupt.

One of the biggest problems in making use of existing Indymedia sites and progressive email lists, however, is that these sites and lists are often already overloaded with a fair amount of political spam (much of it mindless). Individual activists may have different opinions concerning which posts are useful information and which posts are spam. But most everyone agrees that there is too much useless information.

We believe that to build a channel that connects with other activists -- we must avoid making this problem worse. This means we must develop the ability to give an intelligent response to serious questions or criticisms. We therefore intend to start our distribution in a modest way -- and to expand our channel as we develop the ability to respond.

We need your help to do this.

We need you to let us know if you find our reposts useful -- or useless. We need to know if the depth and timeliness of our responses are sufficient.

If you have an opinion on these questions -- we need to hear from you -- and we would like to know a little about your experience in the movement -- so that we can better understand how our work to build a channel connects (or fails to connect) with activists who have different background or experience.

----- 3. How to get a reply to questions or criticism -----

Here is what we recommend:

1. Post your considered question or criticism as a comment where this essay is posted at: <http://struggle.net/17>
2. If you want a response (ie: as opposed to simply making a comment) then be sure to make that clear in what you post.
3. You may also want to add a sentence about your experience in the movement and/or the class struggle.
4. It would be helpful (although it is not necessary) for you to mention the Indymedia site where you saw this posting.

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Either Marik and/or Ben will respond (hopefully with something that you will consider to be thoughtful and intelligent) within TEN DAYS.

If your question or criticism is good and/or you make it clear that you have experience in the movement (ie: you march in antiwar demonstrations, etc) then you are likely to get a response with greater depth.

Why can't you simply get a response to what you post here on Indymedia ? -----

(1) Intelligent replies take time -- and we need the time.

Anyone can write _something_ quickly. However our experience is that thoughtful responses require thought .. and real thought takes time (ie: more than the day or two that a posting will stay on the front page of an Indymedia newswire).

We don't have all the answers. We are activists just like you. We make mistakes and need criticism. And we need intelligent questions that can help us to better focus on the kinds of issues that practical experience throws up.

(2) There is another reason also. Activists from all over the country face similar problems. We think it is useful to have a common place where activists can post their questions and/or criticisms as well as see what questions and criticisms are on the minds of other activists.

Note: We may post a few of the better comments which we find in the comments section of this Indymedia posting to the page listed above. But we cannot guarantee that it will be answered unless you post your comments there yourself. The reason for this is simple. Activists who post to the page are more likely to come by later and read the answer. And we want to prioritize answers for those activists who are likely to read our replies.

----- 4. What is the Media Weapon community? -----

Isolated from one another we are easily defeated. Connected to one another no force on earth can stop us.

Marik and Ben work together as part of the Media Weapon community -- which, at this time, is more of a community-in-embryo than a real community. The community's email list includes activists from a variety of backgrounds: reformists and revolutionaries -- anarchist and "authoritarians" -- and a good number of young people who seem to hang out just to see what is going on. But we have not yet developed a practical program of work of the kind which is needed to attract and hold the attention of serious activists.

We hope that building this channel can be a step in this direction.

We want to see our community attract talented and dedicated activists who recognize that the progressive movement needs an open community in which different currents of thought and political trends will openly compete with one another as well as cooperate on many kinds of projects.

More about the Media Weapon community (and our pof-200 email list) can be found at: <http://MediaWeapon.com> . Ben Seattle also has a website at: <http://struggle.net/ben>

Check out our work. We need your help.

<http://nyc.indymedia.orgen/2006/07/72695.shtml>