

15 October: day of intercontinental resistance

Break the power of the banks and big business

Fight capitalism – for a socialist alternative to the failed profit-driven system!

On 15 October, all around the globe, the “enraged”, the “indignad@s”, the “occupiers of Wall Street”, took to the streets to challenge the power of big business. The magnificent movements of young people and workers, with common causes, methods and

demands, instinctively reach out to each other across borders and continents. Below is the statement from the Committee for a Workers’ International (CWI), the democratic world socialist organisation to which the Socialist Party is affiliated.



The protest outside St Paul's in London photo Paul Mattsson

After more than three years of ongoing capitalist crisis, the capitalists and their politicians show their inability to offer any way out of ongoing misery for the vast majority, (called the “99%” in the movement in the US). Instead, the ruling elites want to make workers and youth pay for the failure of their system, to continue to bail out bankers and millionaires. That's what this rebellion is against and where the demand for fundamental change, the demand for “revolution” as the youth movement for example in Spain puts it, comes from.

But the resistance is developing, with occupations, tent cities, protests spreading from one continent to another. The methods which have been popularised by the international indignad@s have been powerful, a breath of fresh air capable of drawing a whole new generation into activity. The square occupations and camps stood as reminders to all in the centre of some of the world's major cities of the opposition and resistance to the misery of the crisis.

The mass assemblies in squares and neighbourhoods allowed a glimpse of real democracy and structures in which all could participate and have their say.

These methods, while pioneered and pursued by the youth, drew massive support from other sections of society hit by the savagery of the crisis who then, as in Egypt, moved into action.

This has included the working class, who in country after country have seen the road to a real struggle partially blocked by national trade union leaders who refused to lead a serious fight to the end.

For more reports and analysis go to:
socialistworld.net

In Greece, the “enraged”, in occupying the squares, inspired working people, leading to a new upturn in workers' struggles, with leaders forced to organise 24 and 48-hour general strikes.

In the US, even in the early stages of “Occupy Wall Street”, unions began to declare their support for the movement, sending delegations to their protests. In

New York, tens of thousands of young people and trade unionists marched through the city last Wednesday in a united demonstration.

In Chile, where students will be continuing their tremendous movement with mobilisations on 15 October, workers have joined their mobilisations, including a 48-hour general strike this week.

This support must become the basis for these movements to move onto a higher level. While indignation can shake society, there comes a stage when effective action must be taken. The working class holds the reins of the economy and produces the profits of the billionaires.

Our movements must seek to mobilise this potential power, through industrial action and general strikes. It was the development of such action which was key to the success of the Tunisian and Egyptian revolutions in toppling dictators, and must also be key to our struggle against the dictatorship of markets and profit.

Mass assemblies, built in communities and workplaces and linked together democratically, could come together to plan and control such mobilisations. In this way, the policies of the pro-capitalist trade union leaders could be cut across, and action can be forced on them, as in Greece.

But as part of a serious and sustained programme of action, democratically agreed and controlled, such actions can be part of a consistent strategy that can

The working class holds the reins of the economy and produces the profits of the billionaires. Our movements must seek to mobilise this potential power, through industrial action and general strikes.



A poster in Newcastle, where another protest started on 15 October photo Elaine Brunskill

paralyse society and force change.

Workers and youth are repelled by all the rotten parties representing the interests of big business.

Right-wing trade union leaders block the power of these organisations. Many young people view these apparatuses with disgust.

To challenge all these parties, to prevent them using the power of the movements in their interests, the movements need to develop key demands to fight for and stop those forces from hijacking the

protests.

As the events from Egypt and Tunisia to Greece and Spain have shown, without a clear force representing the interests of working-class people and youth that is capable of offering an alternative programme and strategy to the capitalist misery, the old elites will try to stay in power and sit out the protest in their cosy positions.

The CWI argues for building new, genuine forces representing working-class people and youth.

**For system change
Join the organised struggle against capitalism**

At the moment 500 companies dominate the economy of the planet. Directly and indirectly they control 30% of the world's gross domestic product. The struggle starts here and today to fight against the disastrous policies they enforce. The CWI fights for every immediate reform to save the living standards of workers and youth, to stop this system destroying the environment through global warming or nuclear power catastrophes.

However, for us this is linked to the fight for the overthrow of capitalism in general. In a new society, where this power of the multinationals would be transferred democratically to working people, beginning with the nationalisation of the banks and major corporations under democratic control, our fundamental problems could be solved.

The CWI argues that the movements internationally must link their radical demands together in a comprehensive programme to transform society along these genuinely socialist lines.

The CWI has parties, groups and individuals in over 40 countries around the world. We stand shoulder to shoulder with workers and young people internationally in struggle against the attacks of the bosses and their politicians. We are part of the fightback which is developing internationally as millions have taken to the streets saying “we won't pay for their crisis!”

To be successful, the struggle against capitalism requires ideas, a political programme, and an organisation that is able to unite workers and oppressed people across the globe. The CWI aims to build such an organisation. We think that organised workers and youth in their millions are stronger than the millionaires. That is why we need more people to join us in the struggle for socialism!

If you want to join us or want more information, contact us via socialist-world.net or send us an email to cwi@worldsoc.co.uk
PO Box 3688, London E11 1YE ●
Tel: 020 8988 8760 ● Fax: 020 8988 8793 ● Email: cwi@worldsoc.co.uk
● Web: socialistworld.net

Reports of protests in Europe

London

Up to 3,000 people gathered at St. Paul's for the beginning of the Occupy London Stock Exchange. Occupylsx, as it has become known on Twitter, was part of a global protest movement inspired by events in the North Africa, southern Europe and more recently the epic Occupy Wall Street movement in the USA.

Despite the seriousness of the protest, there was an overwhelmingly positive mood amongst the diverse protestors. Humorous and playful hand written placards were easy to spot. Many of the protestors I spoke to repeatedly pointed out that they were part of a global movement. Interestingly, opinions on what the global movement represented were as diverse as the crowd.

The most common response was that the march was about reigning-in the greed of the banks or about a more fair and equal taxation system. Many protestors were quick to point out the blatant unfairness of companies like Vodafone paying little or no corporation tax while savage cuts in public spending were forced through in the name of reducing public sector debt. Other people on the demo talked about the need for tighter regulation of the banks.

There was also a large contingent, particularly of young people, who openly said the capitalist system itself was broken and needed to be replaced, however in keeping with the theme of diverse ideas, the proposals as to what should replace it were many and varied.

On one issue there was complete agreement. The slogan from the Occupy Wall Street movement, “We are the 99%” has also been taken on here in London. While it would be an exaggeration to say this is a sign of full blown class consciousness it is a decisive rejection of the Con-Dem's mantra that “we are all in this together.”

After assembling for an hour, the procession set off for the centre of the City of London. However, in a blatantly undemocratic move, protestors found all avenues blocked by police. At this point the protest split in two, with a bigger section staying in Paternoster Square while a minority tried to get past police at Panyer Alley, beside St. Paul's tube station.

When both of those attempts proved fruitless people drifted back to the courtyard in front of the cathedral. At this point a clearly well prepared trap was sprung. Police swiftly kettled a large proportion of the demo. This had the effect of pushing the crowd outside the kettle onto the street causing huge traffic disruption. Unfortunately a couple coming from their wedding ceremony were also caught up in the jam.

The success of the police in containing the demo illustrates one of the weaknesses of “non hierarchical organisation”. The police were able to kettle protestors with relatively little force (although there were a few scuffles as police manhandled those who refused to move quickly enough) primarily because they were organised and the protestors were not.

An elected body of stewards could have helped coordinate the movement

of the crowd, making it more difficult for the police to contain the demo.

Despite the thwarting of the original aim of occupying the streets of the nearby Stock Exchange there is now a vibrant occupation going on in front of St Paul's. On Monday evening (17 October) there was roughly 100 tents pitched in the courtyard, with general assemblies twice a day. The mood of people at the assemblies is determined with many pledging to stay for the foreseeable future.

Neil Cafferkey

Spain

In Puerta de Sol, in Madrid, the birthplace of the ‘indignad@s’ movement, saw a powerful demonstration on ‘15-O’, when 500,000 people flooded the streets. In Barcelona, organisers counted 400,000, in Sevilla 60,000, with tens of thousands more in Valencia, Bilbao and towns and cities around the country. The indignad@s (“angry ones”) were back, and still with much to be angry about.

As elections approach on 20 November, Saturday's massive demonstrations were a reminder of the multitude of workers, young people and the unemployed who feel unrepresented by the establishment parties.

After the explosion of the movement following the Democracia Real Ya demonstrations on 15 May (the high point of the movement, with the square occupations and mass assemblies in cities and neighbourhoods), the 15-M movement, as it is known, has managed to sink roots in Spanish society.

From the massive protests in May and June, the movement orientated towards local campaigns, for example organising the stoppage of hundreds of evictions, with mass blockades. Last Saturday saw the movement prove that it can still mobilise hundreds of thousands, with a turnout rivaling that of 19 June, when over one million marched, only this time joined by hundreds of thousands more on five continents.

Young people were joined by many older workers and anti-cuts campaigners, with slogans emphasising the movement's opposition to this savaging of public spending and demanding free and quality health and education services.

Such demands will be key to the movement being capable of developing further, as a mass force capable of uniting the opposition in society into a mass struggle capable of fighting for an alternative to austerity and mass unemployment.

Socialismo Revolucionario (CWI in Spain) participated in the demonstra-

tions, arguing for the movement to move forward from 15-O to mobilise for even more effective action, building from below for a general strike.

The 15-M movement can be a powerful instrument for working people in helping to drag the union leaders into action in defence of the majority in society. The assemblies must now be “filled up” again, and extended into workplaces to begin to build for a paralysis of the economy to make the real power of the majority felt. Armed with an alternative political programme, calling for democratic public ownership of the banks and the main pillars of the economy, this movement could move to make history all over again, raising the possibility of a successful struggle to end this rotten system and to establish real democracy.

Socialismo Revolucionario (CWI Spain) reporters

Portugal: 100,000 in Lisboa

An estimated 100,000 protesters marched through Lisboa, with another 20,000 in Porto and thousands more in various other Portuguese cities and towns. The campaign to mobilise people for ‘15-O’, in which activists from Socialismo Revolucionario (SR - CWI in Portugal) were deeply involved, had been underway for weeks. Tens of thousands stormed past riot police to occupy the steps leading up to parliament in Lisboa, in scenes not seen since the Portuguese Revolution in 1974.

Over 10,000 attended a mass assembly after the march in Lisboa where decisions to camp overnight in the city centre, and organise a further mass protest on 26 November, were accepted.

Rank and file trade unionists, including SR members, also addressed the assembly, where huge support was given for the call for a massive, democratically-organised general strike, as part of a mass movement to fight the austerity.

Reflecting the pressure from youth in revolt, the CGTP union leaders announced, the day before the demonstration, that their plan of struggle would include a general strike. Even a declaration from the ‘sergeants' association’ informed the government that these military personnel took the side of the people in their struggle against austerity, and warned of a ‘revolution’.

This movement, which must now go and build assemblies and mass occupations and draw the mass of working people into support and action, can be a key part of the fight against the destruction of the economy, living standards and futures of Portuguese workers and youth.

Socialismo Revolucionario (CWI Portugal) reporters

The CWI fights for:

- An end to the dictatorship of the markets; break the power of the tycoons! Massive taxation of the rich and their profits!
- Massive investment in jobs, free and decent education and public services! Stop the cuts and austerity!
- Nationalisation of the banks and the major companies that dominate the global economy; bring them under workers' and public control; for a plan to use the resources in the interest of working people, not leave them under the rule of profit and big business!
- A joint fight back against national divisions, racism and sexism.