

The riots of the marginalized in Sweden highlight the bankruptcy of capitalism

Only class struggle can offer a perspective for the future!



Internationalist Voice

E-mail: contact@internationalistvoice.org

Homepage: www.internationalistvoice.org

Those marginalized by the scrapping of the welfare state, marginalized by the Swedish capital, in whose lives unemployment, poverty, misery, racism, systematic humiliation and oppression are a daily part, and for whom a longer life in such hellish conditions means nothing, have, in desperation, become rebellious. The events are the same as in other European countries: the police provokes the people, which leads to an escalation from simmering anger to outbursts of violence and rebellion.

In 2005, in France, the cradle of the bourgeoisie, policemen brutally chased down youths. Two young people, while trying to escape, ran into a power transformer; as the police were not obliged to help them, they died. This incident was the beginning of a three-week uprising, during which tens of thousands of vehicles and tens of shops, public buildings, schools, etc were set on fire. For the first time since May 1968, a state of emergency was declared. The chain of events was repeated in August 2011 in the UK. The police shot dead a young black man called Mark Duggan. Duggan's murder sparked a youth rebellion which resulted in hundreds of cars and shops being set ablaze.

On the 19th of May this year, the same events were repeated in Sweden, in an impoverished area called "Husby", home mainly to immigrants, located to the northwest of Stockholm. A 68 year-old man, who was challenged by a security guard, displayed his knife from his apartment balcony. Shortly afterwards, police violently broke into the apartment and threw smoke grenades or tear gas into the house before firing four bullets and killing the 68-year-old. Police allege that the man had threatened them with a dagger.

Lies told by the police concerning the death of the man, which one of the neighbours captured in a photo, gave rise to protests among the residents of the surrounding areas. The police often insult young people, are disrespectful, calling them "nigger", "monkey", etc, as well as resorting to violence. This gave the young people incentive to rebel. Subsequently, over the past week, hundreds of cars have been torched, shop windows smashed and police cars, a fire truck and even a police building attacked. Like his British counterpart, the Swedish Prime Minister denounced the "acts of violence" and described the acts of the young people as vandalism.

What is the background of such revolts? The Swedish government played a hypocritical role during World War II: on the one hand, Sweden provided iron and steel to Nazi Germany, and on the other hand she had a close relationship with America and Great Britain, did not enter the war and played an important role in the reconstruction in the aftermath of the Second World War. To fulfill this role Sweden was heavily reliant on foreign labor. Foreign-born workers were assigned to work in factories like "Volvo", "Saab", "SKF" and so on. Sweden's contribution to the reconstruction after the war led to Sweden's prosperity, and, with the help of Social Democratic ideology, the welfare state was created.

With the failure of the Eastern Bloc and the successive crises of capitalism, the welfare state was scrapped in the early 1990s. The gap between the social classes in the Paradise of Capitalism revealed its ugly face, like in other capitalist countries. With the scrapping of the

welfare state, foreign-born workers were blamed for unemployment. Racism became a monster in society. Some members of the community were actually reduced to second-class citizens.

The younger generation of this part of society live with the hellish conditions that the dirty capitalist system has provided for them. Young people are unable to enter the labor market (a cycle of exploitation), and experience discrimination and systematic humiliation as a daily part of their lives. Police provocation has increased and become routine. Young people do not entertain any hope for their future; they have been overcome by nihilism, and they rebel.

The mercenary and dirty bourgeois ideologues and journalists are already taking action to complete the scenario. They are scrambling to pretend that the riots of the marginalized are not rooted in the problems of the upside-down capitalist system, not in the bankruptcy of capitalism but rather in the fact that the protesters are criminals.

One of the popular Swedish newspapers, called “Dagens Nyheter”, announced that necessary studies had reached the conclusion that the young protesters were criminals who had committed crimes previously, who suffered from family problems, drug abuse and psychological problems. A large part of the community live through selling their labor, but apparently the bourgeois ideologues and journalists earn a living through selling their “conscience” and their “honour”.

Unfortunately, the young people’s protests against their hellish lives are not anti-capitalist orientated, but are rather a blind revolt. Although these youths are society's poor and come from working-class families, they are targeting themselves. The target is not the capitalist class. Youths from poor neighbourhoods and disadvantaged communities do not go to the upper-class districts to set fire to the vehicles, but rather burn down their neighbours’ and their parents’ cars in their own neighbourhood. These are vehicles that workers from the neighbourhood need to go to work. Attacking firetrucks and fire fighters is an act of desperation against their class brothers and sisters. In other words, the victims of these youths are not the upper stratum of society, but rather the working class and the other impoverished layers of society.

Individual violence directed towards the poor layer of society is an alienation of the interests of the working class. Only collective violence that is directed against the state of capital and the organs of capitalism is in the interests of the proletariat. Social revolution is not the destruction of physical facilities, but rather the destruction of the social relations of capitalism's production chains. Such rebellion not only contributes to the development of “class consciousness” but also contributes to community policing. It gives the police a free hand to carry out further repression. It strengthens the anti-foreigner, racist and Nazi forces. For example, a Facebook page was created with the title “We support the Husby police - stop the madness right now”, which now has nearly one hundred and twenty thousand fans; its real role is supporting the police and the anti-foreign and racist forces.

Unfortunately, because of the illusions of the Swedish working class about social democracy, Unions and the poisonous propaganda of the bourgeoisie, the working class of Sweden actually

plays the role of an observer. The working class and its political currents should be responsible for these events.

Pacifism in the face of these events means a lack of a sense of responsibility towards the poorest layer of society. Internationalists and revolutionary currents should try to orient this blind anger towards class rage. It is part of the duty of the working class and its political currents to orient these young people's protests towards the class struggle and prevent their destructive behaviour, and try to draw them towards the reactionary movements.

Capitalism is the source of all the injustice and inequality in society and its stench and filth has spread everywhere. Capitalism is the cause of our hellish life. Instead of blind protest directed towards the poor and disadvantaged neighbourhoods, our attack should be directed towards the filthy capitalist system and its organs. Our protest should be in solidarity with the working class and the other poor layers of society and it should strengthen the spirit and solidarity of the classes.

Only class struggle can offer a real vision for the future of humanity. Class struggle through neighborhood committees, strike committees, factory committees, etc. (who are elected by the general assembly of its members that can be dismissed at any time), can give a revolutionary dynamic to the class struggle, give it a clear direction to finally challenge capitalism.

Internationalist Voice

27 May 2013