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Anarchism and Class Struggle

Anonymous

04/03/2023

The Polar Blast supports class struggle anarchism. By calling ourselves class struggle anarchists we make it clear who we are against and what we are for. Class struggle anarchism firmly continues the traditions of anarcho-communism with its focus on class against class, and its support for the whole working class.

Workers have a special relationship to the means of production (and distribution and social services), which are owned by the minority capitalist class. Workers lacking access to land and capital only have the ability to sell their labour to survive. This is how surplus value is created, as we produce more in value than we receive. This is the basis for the capitalist's profits, and it is how we are exploited, not just individually, but as a class. Saying that, it is important to note that we consider the working class to be broader than those immediately employed and includes the unemployed, the retired, the disabled and those who are home-makers and care-givers.

We oppose all exploitation, the alienated work that goes with it, and the poverty created by it. Our aim is a classless society, and we maintain that it is only those who are exploited who have an interest in ending their own exploitation, and the capability to do

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Retrieved on 30/11/2023 from <thepolarblast.wordpress.com/2023/04/03/anarchism-and-class-struggle>

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so. Having their hands on the means of production, transportation, distribution, communication, and service, the working class has a potentially enormous power, which could transform all society.

So, as class struggle anarchists, we see the working class as being central to the fight against capitalism. Yet we are not class reductionists, as so many people accuse us of being. We see the relationships between class and other sections of society and their systems of oppression. We say that all oppression is wrong and should be resisted. Furthermore, we do not believe that non-class oppressions will be resolved once a classless society is reached. Nor do we just see issues like racism and sexism as problems only because they divide the working class, rather than separate issues in themselves. Instead, we see all oppressions as being intertwined and not consisting of distinct groups of workers – over there, Māori; over there, women, in yet another place, the disabled. Society can be examined in terms of class (workers and capitalist), race/ethnicity (Māori/Pakeha), etc. but these groups consist of the same overlapping groups of humans, they can be looked at in terms of their identity, but they can also be looked at in totality and with their relationship to the means of production.

For example, Māori are overwhelmingly in the working class, most being in the poorest sections. Their oppression serves two class purposes- it creates a pool of workers who can be exploited at low wages, and it weakens the overall working class, due to racial divisions and the white workers' belief in their superiority linked to capitalism and the era of imperialism to build support for colonialism. Another example is patriarchy. Patriarchy coerces women into a specific caregiving/reproducing role within the nuclear family, which under capitalism is a centre of consumption. It is where the labour power is re-created through coerced reproductive labour. It is where the culture of our society is passed on to the next generation. Again, this directly affects, and is affected by, the class structure and all other aspects of our politics and culture. Other areas of oppression such as homophobia & transphobia, for

example, are used to police social definitions of gender rooted in the capitalist family structure and its social psychology. This means queerphobia and patriarchy have a mutually reinforcing relationship *and* they both strengthen capitalism.

The point being made is that each oppression all supports capitalist exploitation and are supported by it. The fight against one is a fight against all. The ending of one requires the ending of all. There can be no classless society without the liberation of Māori, women, etc.

In a study of anarchism, Benjamin Franks stated that “capital relations [are] dominant in most contexts, but not the sole organizing force....Capitalism interacts with other forms of oppressive practices that may not be wholly reducible to economic activity.... However, as capitalism is still a significant factor, economic liberation must also be a necessary feature.” (*Rebel Alliances, 2006, Edinburgh: AK Press; p. 181*). So the goal has to be the total overthrow of the ruling capitalist class, its destruction as a class, and replacing it with a stateless, classless society.

As a whole, men do dominate women, but that does not mean all men run society. Pākeha dominates Māori, but not all Pākeha meet to decide on policies that affect Māori. In both examples, those who may be labelled the oppressor in fact have little power. However, the capitalist class does run society. They control the goods and services we receive, they determine wage rates, they determine unemployment and employment, and they pretty much control the political parties. They own the mass media which shapes our popular culture. If there is to be a better world, then their class rule has to be overthrown.

So how is this class to be overthrown? Throughout history, the struggles of minority groups have shaken up the world. The BLM Movement has had a powerful reach into many cultural and sporting areas. The women’s liberation movement towards the end of the last century had many consequences that shaped society. The LGBTQIA+ movement has also massively affected our cultural

thinking. A Māori renaissance has seen Treaty Settlements, and the wider adoption of Te reo Māori. Yet, on a socio-economic basis a few individuals may have improved their positions but as a whole there are still gender pay gaps, and minorities over-represented in the lower ends of the socio-economic scales.

Only a united working class has the ability to stop society altogether and rebuild it in a new way. Our class controls the manufacture and distribution of goods that capitalism survives upon. The reality of capitalist politics and their control of the media is to stop the awareness of this and prevent a revolution from happening.

But saying this, as revolutionaries we support every struggle against oppression, whether connected to class or not. Each system of oppression supports capitalism and is supported by it. Fighting against capitalism undermines oppression, and fighting against oppression undermines capitalism.

But we must point out how every oppression is related to capitalism and point out the need for revolutionary change. We should point out the connections to strengthen the links between struggles, else we become divided and weakened. In every movement, we need to point out the class conflicts that arise to try and prevent them being taken over by pro-capitalist reformist leaderships.

It is only by acting as a multinational, multi-cultured, multi-gendered working class that we can bring together all the anger flowing from different sources and channel it into a revolutionary movement of all the people, for all the people.