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Which Way for the Class War?

Duke Aaron (NEFAC-Baltimore)

2003

Class struggle? Worker's movements? Stuck in the past? Living on the words and deeds of a bunch of nineteenth century white guys? Well, maybe. Maybe not. Class struggle anarchists get a lot of crap along these lines in the North American anarchist press. Some of it might just be slightly accurate. At least for some of us. But it misses a fundamental point. Those nineteenth century anarchists didn't have all the answers, and still don't. That's not the point. So what is? The point, my friends, is that they were asking the questions. They were searching for something. Searching for a crucial point in the system that was still developing. A crucial juncture that would allow for a fissure to be opened up. A place where we could leverage our power. One of those places was, and is, the worker's movement.

We are the working class. We are often reactionary. We are often fratricidal. We are often just plain stupid. But sometimes, every once in a while, we do it right. We organize. We fight. Our struggle is often co-opted. Sold out. Taken over. But then, every once in a while, we glimpse at the possibilities. The strength and power we can and should be able to wield against our masters. Capitalist, bourgeoisie, bosses, whatever word makes sense to you, these are

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the enemy. But class struggle anarchists are also our own worst enemy. We want to be pure. We want to be noble. We want to be just. The problem is that we are working class. And while we are pure and noble and just, we are also reactionary and fratricidal and stupid.

All working class movements are gonna be imperfect. They're all gonna be troubled. That's reality. That's humanity. But with that humanity we are also filled with love, nobility and justice and a hunger for something better. It just really depends on what we want to accomplish. How we realize our imperfection and decide to struggle on regardless. In this issue we look at a number of different worker struggles. With different tactics and different underpinning needs and desires. Are any of them a blueprint for success or a hallmark of ultimate failure? No. They are imperfect struggles from our class. None of them are pure. Some are better than others may be. Some might inspire and some might point to our mistakes. I can't really say. What I can say is that our class must unite and struggle with our imperfections, often against ourselves, but ultimately towards an understanding of our power and how to use it. No one's got all the answers. Certainly not NEFAC, and definitely not those dead anarchists from the nineteenth century. If we learn anything from the struggles of our class, we must learn that there is no perfect answer.

We must move forward in our struggles, and to that end we offer this issue dedicated to developing anarchist strategies in the workplace. We need to learn from the past but not fear new ideas. The stunted apathy of North American anarchism isn't the answer, and neither is the tired old cliches of hardline syndicalists.

As an organization, NEFAC sees the need to move from the paper tiger of analysis into the muddied struggle of the real world. We must move into the future with one eye on our methods and the other on that vital fissure in society. NEFAC has committed to this process of ideas and physical struggle. We believe that new ideas and methods combined with a healthy knowledge of our past can

help move us in the right direction. Our class may be imperfect but if we organize and educate ourselves, if we choose to pick ourselves up and fight on, we will succeed. We will bury them beneath the new world in our hearts.