

Class Dismissed

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“...As late as 1700, the prevailing European social system was still one in which vast power, the greater part of landed wealth, and the prime control of political life belonged to the hereditary landed aristocracy...the factor of continuity – of the perpetuation down to the modern industrial world of a one-class social structure, or, in another phrasing, of the domination of a landed aristocracy – is one of the fundamental facts and continuing conditions of the history of western civilization.”

–**Norman F. Cantor**, *The Civilization of the Middle Age*

Despite delusions to the contrary, since its inception, civilization has nurtured only one class – the ruling class. Attempts to divide civilized societies into sub-divisions such as middle or working classes miss this essential point. The parts of society which do not comprise the elite don't matter. The single focus of every element in civilized societies is the creation and perpetuation of wealth and privilege for the benefit of an elite. The unfortunate masses left out of the elite ranks are insignificant. Our lives pass with little notice. We are interchangeable parts of an inhuman system. We could be slaves, conquered by the armed forces of the elite. Either from foreign lands, or from the homeland. We could be wage slaves. Whatever the level of coercion, anyone who doesn't serve the interests of the elite are seen as deviant, undesirable, and dealt with as such.

The rise of the bourgeoisie in European societies was part of a process of liberalization of wealth that Karl Marx saw as potentially liberating for those who create the privileges and material abundance for the ruling elite to enjoy. Marx's followers, however, never desired anything beyond taking the place of the ruling elite themselves.

Let's face facts: people who are compelled to toil for the benefit of others are slaves. The end result of working-class rebellion is not the abolition of slavery, but would only result in putting the slave in control of slavery. This is not a good deal for most people. The reason working people fall for this proposition at all is because there has been little or no questioning of the false promise of industrial society – unlimited material abundance – at least not in the more advanced industrial states.

The proponents of class struggle whole-heartedly accept industrial society as the right and proper way of life. The benefits generated through the exploitation of natural and human resources make the costs of such exploitation bearable, desirable even. Here in the 21st century,

the ecological, psychological, spiritual, and social costs of industrialism are becoming increasingly and unavoidably obvious, even to the most willfully ignorant, and the benefits portioned out to a dwindling percentage of the public.

To clarify things: Industrial Society is not the end-all and be-all of human endeavor. It crushes people into rigid social roles that — by themselves — are dehumanizing. Since working class slaves are destroyed as people, they cannot be expected to behave in healthy, life-affirming ways. That's why nowadays, abusive, self-destructive behavior is so commonplace: dysfunctional families, sexual abuse, suicide, drug addiction. How can the majority of the population be expected to relate to other people in a healthy, respectful manner when every aspect of their existence brings them humiliation, powerlessness, pain, and abuse? Industrialism is not the answer to any of modern civilization's ills, nor will it produce remedies to the devastation it causes.

Capitalism did not evolve slowly from medieval mercantilism over generations; it was manufactured in the English countryside when people, derided by the elite as "commoners", were forced into destitution. Their access to lands their ancestors had utilized for centuries (the commons) was denied them. Prior to that, most people were able to meet their needs through the efforts of their own hands. People did not give up their ability to live self-sufficiently and take up wage-slavery voluntarily. It was forced on them through overwhelming military power. Luddite rebellions against Industrialism didn't come until later (1800–1820). The original, primary battle to establish capitalism was over access to land. Class-based "revolutionary" movements have yet to grasp this, the single most important aspect to the fight against Capital. Yet peoples' demands for land to utilize for their sustenance has fueled revolutionary movements since the 1640's on every continent contaminated by Capital's touch.

Tremendous amounts of wealth — accumulated over generations, centuries even — were plundered from people around the world by European armies, mercenaries, and adventurers. The first global empire was that of 16th century Spain, by the way.

This vast wealth was used to initiate capitalism. It funded the construction of massive factories and the seizure of the commons.

The aristocracy abolished common law. They refused to acknowledge the commoners' age-old rights because these rights weren't recognized by law — written laws utilized by the courts. It helped their cause that the Lords were often the judges too. It also didn't hurt that the Lords had professional soldiers in their service, nor that factory owners and bankers would assist them to hire mercenaries, if necessary, and arm them.

The traditions of the commons were finally eclipsed by the cowboy economics of the American West, wherein the first person or entity to utilize resources for profitable enterprises could claim First Rights to them. Thus, a mining company could divert the flow of a river to wash away mountainsides and leave simple pastoral families and subsistence farmers downstream with little or no water for their use. What mattered was that distant banks and industrialists profited, not whether homesteaders could provide for themselves and their families.

This plundering of natural resources, traditionally utilized by people through common agreement, was legitimized through shady legal shenanigans. These legal sleight-of-hand maneuvers form the basis on which international trade treaties and organizations that enforce and fund them, claim their authority. In addition to continued conquest of lands inhabited by indigenous peoples with no "legal" title to their homelands, the WTO and IMF/WB demand that local laws — fully established and recognized by local courts and governments — be overturned in favor of the interests (primarily the creation of profits) of international corporations and banks.

The struggle over control of the means of production is all but irrelevant to the idea of a liberated existence. Control of industry won't free us from capitalism. Worker-controlled industries would still be dependent on financial institutions; we'd still be crushed into dehumanizing industrial standardization. We'd still be forced to compete for, even fight wars over, dwindling natural resources. We will be rid of the shackles of capitalism when we can meet our needs without being forced into economic servitude. For that to happen, we need to pursue our own goal: control of land to utilize for our own needs.

In the 21st century, we are living through a transformation in the way civilization functions. The wall of lies utilized to put a liberal face on the New World Order (NWO) is beginning to erode and the vile face of fierce ruthlessness necessary to enforce its regime is becoming easier to discern.

The greatest lie – the one which captivated Marx and generations of class warriors – was that liberal, bourgeois states and capitalism would create material abundance enough to enrich everyone and provide us all with lives of material ease. Marx's unrequited infatuation with industrial society prevented him from looking behind the smoke-screen of capitalism to see the fallacy of perpetuating its infrastructure, but under new management. So long as people still believe in the liberal lie of material abundance for all, they will continue to be subservient to the interest of the elite. The International Communist Conspiracy failed to create any sort of alternative to capitalism because they neglected to counteract the methods used to construct it.

The three pillars of domination that prop up the NWO – overwhelming military and economic superiority, along with a compliant, pliable system of law – grew up alongside one another. Liberal states, capitalism, and military power are intertwined in their development; their evolution into a single entity during the last century makes it impossible to imagine any one existing without the others. This suggests that the success of one was, and still is, dependent on the others.

As things stand now, we in urban, industrialized societies are weak and helpless dependents on the forces that have reduced our lives to meaningless tedium. We have lost our way. We are also completely ignorant of how to live within the planet's biosystems to sustain ourselves. Even sadder still, most of us are descended from a long line of people similarly alienated from the basic knowledge or ability to provide for ourselves without the benefit of markets. Few of us can hunt, fish, or forage for food, or build shelters from materials at hand, or make clothing out of raw materials. This knowledge is not completely lost, however. Not all people have embraced industrialism, nor have all people been assimilated by industrialism. We have allies in our fight against capital and we desperately need to seek them out and learn from them. Fortunately, there are religious, craft, and indigenous societies that retain the skills and knowledge we require.

In return for learning from indigenous peoples, we need to fight alongside them to preserve their autonomy. If they are under assault by corporate interests (mining, logging, petroleum extraction, etc.), we need to counter-attack.

We also need to respect the fact that they are different from us and accept them on their own terms. We may have something worthwhile to offer their societies, but it should be up to them to make that determination. Whether they are Inuit, Amish, herbalists, subsistence farmers, we must respect one another. We need each other desperately; we are all in a fight for our lives and the lives of coming generations.

One aspect to our yearning for liberation, which works in our favor, is that the NWO is dependent upon our consent and cooperation to function. There certainly is a vast array of coercive pressures they can assert on us: material comfort, social conformity, police harassment, etc. The

NWO provides us with many excuses for remaining safely within the parameters it sets for us. When we resist these pressures, we sacrifice a lot, even so far as to endanger our lives. If we actually manage to overcome the NWO, we will undoubtedly lose a lot of what we take for granted in our consumer-oriented lives. What those of us in the industrialized areas need to keep in mind is that our lives of relative ease are dependent on the oppression of distant people who likely have no access to technology we take for granted. Two billion people alive right now have no access to clean drinking water. More than 3 billion have never used a phone.

The NWO solution – sell them cell phones and Perrier – isn't the appropriate one. How many of us are in danger of losing our access to technology and the means of sustenance because of economic contractions in our countries? What our friends and allies in “underdeveloped” lands might tell us if they could, is “All we want is to provide for ourselves and our families. Please spare us economic development and leave us in peace”. Rather than competing over dwindling economic resources we should find common ground and learn how to survive without profiting from other people's oppression.

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