

Our Antipolitics

Poor, the Bad and the Angry
1990s

Originally published at <http://www.againstsleepandnightmare.net/ANT-ICAPL/PBA/welcome.html> on the website of Against Sleep and Nightmare.

We live on a planet devastated by social relations based on money and market exchange. Regardless of the rhetorical or physical violence they offer one another in their fight for power, regardless of leftist or populist verbiage, every government and government-to-be, every politician and police force on this planet exists to defend and maintain this system. Different politicians and parties propose different management strategies for capital, but regardless of their jargon Yeltsin and Mandela, Time-Warner and MTV, Fidel Castro, the ecology lobby and the most bedraggled college campus socialist groups are all in agreement on this: the world of wage labor is to be maintained at any cost, and what capitalism is never to be identified in clinically specific, clear terms. Seemingly normal and inevitable facts – that an individual has nothing but her or his labor power, they must sell it to an enterprise to be able to live, that everything exists to be bought or sold, that social relations revolve around money and commodity exchange – are the result of a long and violent process.

The world we live in is the world of capitalism. Imposed and maintained by terror, mystification and inertia, capitalism is the historically specific form of class society based on the exploitation of human labor power as a commodity, on wage labor, money, and commodity production. Modern capitalism, in its free market and its statist forms, is a totalitarian system that has conquered the world, devastating human life and the planetary environment in an ever accelerating manner. But capitalism has also given rise to social forces that could bring about the revolutionary destruction of this system, and the rise of a new way of life; chief among them the mass collective actions of proletarians fighting against the conditions of their exploitation and impoverishment.

The class struggle is the primary liberatory force of our time. By class struggle, we mean not only the fight of wage-earners against their employers. The class war includes all the struggles of exploited and dispossessed people all over the world against their conditions of exploitation and impoverishment, wage-earning and unwaged, urban and rural, low-paid and high-paid. It encompasses our fights against racism, sexism, and homophobia, but not as separate reformist issues. Class warfare involves both fights for concessions from capital and the fight for our own power outside of and against capitalist social relations.

So-called Socialist and Communist parties, social democracy, Leninism and all its mutant children, are the left wing of capitalism's political ensemble [ideological spectrum?]. Any and all political groupings that aren't openly and explicitly committed to the fight against work and wage labor are counter-subversive efforts. We are against any cooperation or collaboration with leftist parties and groups.

National liberation movements are movements in which the exploited are marshalled to fight and die for the political ambitions of the local bourgeoisie or a substitute bourgeoisie of guerrilla chieftains or intellectuals. No national liberation movement has ever led to the rise of a society without exploitation; all regimes produced by “people’s wars” and “wars of national liberation” have been and always will be the voluntary or involuntary lackeys [agents] of imperialism and the world market against the needs of the local working classes and indigenous people. A Turkish proverb says it best: “When the axe came into the forest, the trees said: the handle is one of us.” Any support for national liberation movements or for nationalism in any form is support for the murder and exploitation of the poor by capital. The FMLN, IRA, PLO, ANC, etc. are capitalist and counter-revolutionary organizations having more in common with the mafia than with the armed actions of an authentic revolutionary movement.

Throughout the 20th century, labor unions have served capitalism both as labor merchandizing outfits and as police organizations, specifically against the struggles of unionized workers and more generally against the working class and poor as a whole. As 20th century states have become more frequently compelled to intervene in the economy, labor unions, regardless of ideology or the subjective intentions of their members, have tended to become mechanisms of the capitalist state. Working class people have to fight outside of and against all unions and unionist ideologies.

The abolition of capitalism has nothing in common with democracy, nationalization of major industries, power in the hands of leftists or workers’ self-management of the economy. The goal of an authentic, anti-statist communist movement is the abolition of wage labor, the eradication of all forms of market relations, the destruction of all states and national borders, and in necessary unity with this negation, the emergence of new social relations where poverty and unnecessary toil are abolished and work no longer rules social life.

In spite of their flaws and limits, the defeated social revolutions of the 20th century, and the mass collective violence of the poor in revolt from Los Angeles to Kurdistan, are the embryonic expression of the future anti-statist and unyielding class dictatorship against capital worldwide: what must become a consciously communist movement without frontiers or compromises, a new world trying to come alive. Communist revolution, and class struggles that tend towards communism, imply the despotism of the exploited against exploitation and exploiters, the violence of the poor against their violation by poverty. For us, communism is a real and living movement that tends towards the abolition of existing conditions. The destruction of commodity relations and the birth of authentic human community aren’t simply waiting to be brought about as a series of measures consciously enacted “The Day After the Revolution.” These communist urges live today as a repressed impulse in collective struggles, and in many small gestures and attitudes. We fight for this. We seek companions in this effort.

In this, our first issue, *The Poor, The Bad, and the Angry* is publishing, for a mostly English language North American audience, articles analysing the class war from other publications...