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Where Do We Go Now? Towards a Fresh Revolutionary Strategy

NEFAC

2001

After Quebec, many are asking where to next? Some are already gearing up for the World Bank and IMF protests in Washington DC this fall, and the G8 meeting in Ottawa next year. Well, we have a different idea. Isn't it time we try to find ways to address the many criticisms leveled against the "movement" (being too white, too middle class, and too male)?

Developing a revolutionary strategy will be crucial for any significant revolutionary movement. In fact, it is probably this, and the practice developed around it that will determine the usefulness of this movement and whether it will stagnate or grow.

In our opinion, such a strategy can only come from a materialist analysis of the system we live under, and of our experiences confronting it. Such a strategy must be developed collectively. We would argue that we have in front of us an integrated system of oppression that is built around several pillars (authoritarian principle/Statism, patriarchy/social reifica-

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tion, nationalism/racism, wage slavery/the market economy — working together to exploit, alienate and oppress us and our world). From our understanding, this system is dynamic and not static, that is, it changes when challenged. It has proven to be highly successful at recuperating partial challenges.

While one of the positive aspects of the New Left was to stress that there was more to capitalism than class oppression and that no struggle was a “second front”, it also helped, by introducing the single issue approach, to kill the idea of total struggle (and that of a “revolutionary subject”). It seems now that no one has a total understanding (or general coherent theory) of the system we are up against. The theory of our movement resembles more or less a “grocery list” (and so does our practice).

If we begin to think critically at our situation (a first step towards building a revolutionary strategy) we must ask ourselves a few questions. One is: “Who’s benefiting from the crime?” or, like the police often ask before smashing our heads in at demos, “Who’s in charge?” Maybe if we knew who is benefiting from this system we are up against and who is running it, it would be easier to develop a strategy for revolution?

We think any honest look at the situation will point toward a rather small group of people, those that we, old-fashioned anarchist-communists, call the ruling class (the bosses and politicians) and their lackeys (technocrats and high ranking corporate officials).

Now, how can we challenge (and eventually overthrow) their power? Well, maybe a good first step would be to try to see how we can break their hegemony and how we can manage to convince the people they exploit and oppress to rebel against them.

Never heard of the 5-letter word? You know this little word called class? For people who want to change the world, this word is important (even if it’s not politically correct and seemingly outdated to talk about it). Any strategy that wants to over-

throw capitalism and build a libertarian communist alternative that doesn't start with a class analysis, is a doomed strategy.

Who has the power to change the system? Who has the power to take over the economy, destroy capitalism and build a self-managed, directly democratic community in its place? Who if not the working class (in its broadest sense, that is, all the 'have nots' and 'order takers' of this world)?

People are right when they point to a dual power strategy. In a class society, and the US and Canada are class societies, developing a strategy around the dual power idea would mean building a class force, the proletarian camp, to oppose the existing power (the ruling class).

Well, ok now, we know quite well that the contemporary proletariat is demoralized, disorganized and sometimes even reactionary. In fact, it doesn't even know it exists! We have many proles (that is people who are bossed around and only have their labor power to sell to survive and know it) but no proletariat (in the sense that there is still no sense of a class, that is, there is objectively a class rather than subjectively). The only way to go where we want to go, unless we are kidding ourselves, is to build that class force. The question is: How do we do it?

Any revolutionary movement will have to confront the whole system head on to topple it (once and for all!) if it doesn't want to fall under it and be suffocated. I think, because of the central role patriarchy plays in society (the "free" reproduction of the work force, the introduction of reification and authority in the social sphere, the negation of the individual, etc.) it's essential to confront it head on. It's the same for the rest of the pillars. Every division, every oppression, since it can be the basis for returning to a class system, must be challenged and eventually destroyed.

The purpose of a revolutionary organization is to make links between all the "single issues" and show what, in all the different specialized forms of revolt, can be generalized so that all

the “single issues” federate into one big general social fight. We must ensure that everyone understands that an injury to one is an injury to all. In this context, clinic defense, for example, is not defensive but offensive. It is part of a general fight to assert our autonomy and to reclaim what’s ours (everything!). It’s not only a feminist (or a women) issue; it’s also a class issue and an anti-racist issue.

But, how do we build that class force? One way to start this is to identify where the different oppressions meet. Which issues offer the best generalization opportunity? We must identify the interconnection and work on these.

The global war on the poor, also known as neo-liberalism and corporate globalization, can be a good start. From the dictates of the World Bank and IMF, to the cuts in national social programs, to the outsourcing of production and union busting, to the building of prisons, the introduction of a global management of poverty, etc., the links are clear. We are in front of a class war waged against every one of us. We can take any single issue and link it to a global question (that is: who has the fucking power in this society!). This war affects every community and every form of oppression. As it poses the question of the unequal distribution of wealth and power, it offers a pretty wide opportunity at radicalization.

But where do we start? Whether in sex or in politics, we are against the missionary position (it’s boring, cliché and old!). To begin with, we must know who we are, where we live, study and work and START THERE. We should organize around day-to-day issues that pose the question of power and offers an opportunity for radicalization. We are talking about class/community organizing based on a strategy of conflict. It’s all around us: Welfare reform, reproductive freedom, prison industrial complex, sweatshops, social housing, working poor, etc.

We don’t think a revolutionary organization is the means for organizing those struggles. We need mass based, radical, but open for all, organizations for this. However, we also need

an organization where revolutionaries can share experiences and organize for the battle of ideas.

For us, the strategy for a revolutionary organization (that is, an organization of revolutionaries) is to radicalize struggles and lead the battle of ideas against authoritarian ideologies. It must be a rallying point for like-minded activists so that they don’t have to run away from authoritarian activist trends, but can confront them head on and win the argument for the autonomy of the social movements. In NEFAC, we think that this work can be roughly divided into three different areas: study and theoretical development; anarchist agitation and propaganda; and intervention in the class struggle. Our aim is to make anarchist ideas popular and as widely used as possible.