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After the collapse of the so-called communist block we were told that we would be entering a "New World Order" in which democracy, human rights and international law should prevail, and rouge states were no longer supposed to be able to operate freely. After a couple of years, however, it turned out that the world was as screwed up as ever, and the phrase quietly slipped out of our politicians' speeches. Today it is only crazed right-wingers and militia groups that are using the phrase in describing their paranoid theories. Still, the world has changed significantly in the last decade or two, just not exactly in the way George Bush Sr. would have us believe…

In the rest of the world, our new world order is commonly called neo-liberalism. This can of course be confusing in a country where "liberal" is considered a dirty word. (In the rest of the world a liberal usually means a moderate right-winger.) In this relation, however, we are talking about the original economical liberalism of Adam Smith & co., that is pro free trade and against state intervention in the economy. If only business was left to itself, Smith told us, then "the invisible hand of the market" would make sure that the economy developed to everyone's best interest. This was the leading theory among

economists, up until the great depression in the thirties, after which a doctrine by a guy called Keynes gained more popularity. Keynesianism told us that governments ought to intervene in the economy in order to counteract the negative aspects of the market.

There were two problems with the way old fashioned capitalism worked. The first was — as was explained by a certain Karl Marx — that capitalism had an inherent tendency for going through periods of rapid expansion only for running into crises of overproduction and economical recessions. The same Karl Marx also claimed that the working class would eventually organize and rebel against the deplorable conditions that the capitalist system forced them to live under. Ironically, it was the movements fathered by Marx that was to help the capitalists overcome — at least temporarily — the seemingly hopeless contradictions inherent in the system. The thing was; although Marx was occasionally brilliant in describing the nature of capitalist society, his ideas of how to make a revolution and how to organize the society afterwards turned out to be a disaster.

Marx believed that the working class had to organize political parties in order to gain control over the state apparatus. As contemporary anarchists realized; this would only create a new class of bureaucrats that would continue to rule over the working masses, and this was exactly what happened. In Europe, the Social Democratic parties that Marx had helped to set up gained power in country after country, but instead of starting to build socialism it set out to reform and improve capitalism. By embracing the fore mentioned Keynesian economics it seemingly solved both of the major faults of capitalism. The building of a welfare state, and the policy of raising the standard of living, helped calm down the growing unrest amongst the working class. At the same time this seemed to solve the problem of crises of overproduction as the rising living standards meant an ever-growing market for the products of the increasing industrial production. (In the US, of course, there

wide gathering where all our different factions could come together and exchange ideas and experiences.

It is easy to become disillusioned and give up when you look at the miserable state of today's left. At the same time; the material and political preconditions for the reemergence of a revolutionary mass movement are probably greater today than they have been in generations. What we have to understand is that this movement most be built by the oppressed masses themselves, not by some anarchist vanguard. If we are to play a part in building this movement, we have to rise above our particular dogmas and ideologies. As a first step we should bring together all genuine revolutionaries: Anarchists; anarcho-syndicalists; revolutionary unionists; anarcho-communists; libertarian socialists; council communists; situationists… What matters is not which label we prefer; what matters is whether we are committed to fight for the self-determination of the oppressed masses; not just to exchange one set of rulers with another.

ing class, the Leninists still view themselves as the "bearers of the consciousness of the proletariat and the conscience of its historic vocation" (to quote one of the lesser known of the great Marxist prophets, George Lukacs). Thus the Trots and the ultra-leftists need to have the "correct line" on each and every conflict and problem. Like theologists arguing about the true interpretation of this or that verse in the holy scripture, the Leninists argues for their positions by applying the authoritative writings of their dead prophets Marx and Lenin. Naturally the only practical consequences of these elaborate (and usually self-contradictory) positions are to waste a lot of time in pointless debates. When for instance the International Socialist tendency during the Gulf War decided that we ought to give Saddam Hussain military support against the "western imperialist attack", it hardly mattered on the battlefield. What it did do was to disrupt a number of anti-war campaigns around the world.

But the Leninists hardly matters any more; no one else still take them serious, and we shouldn't either. Too long have the socialist movement been perverted by these revolutionary adventurists, but today their demise is finally drawing near. With both the revolutionary and reformist wings of the state socialist movement throwing in their towels, one should think the way would be cleared for us libertarian revolutionaries. To be sure, there have been some promising signs. New anarchists and syndicalist groups and federations have been formed or revived, even in areas with no previous anarchist traditions. On the whole, however, we remain an insignificant force and are seldom noticed outside the ever shrinking leftist ghettos. Our biggest problem is that we have lived so long in the shadow of the Marxists that we have started behaving like them. The libertarian left of today is riddled with ideological conflicts and sectarian in-fighting. It is reveling that it took a ragtag guerrilla army of indigenous Mexican peasants to arrange a world

were no successful socialist parties, but much of the same policies were put in place by Roosevelt's New Deal.)

As much support the capitalists got from the reformist wing of the Marxist movement, they still probably wouldn't have made it hadn't it been for the involuntarily help they got from the revolutionaries. In 1917 an especially unscrupulous variety of Marxists came to power in Russia, and declared the start of the worldwide proletarian revolution. The seemingly successful workers revolution in Russia revolutionized millions of workers world wide, and for a few years the capitalists were scared stiff. But as it turned out, the Russian Bolsheviks were a blessing in disguise for our rulers. As the revolution inevitably decayed into a totalitarian dictatorship, it took the international revolutionary workers movement with it, and the new communist parties around the world were made into unwitting tools for the Soviet Union's foreign policy needs. The consequences were no less than disastrous. For instance the German communists were ordered to stand by and watch as Hitler rose to power, and were told that the real enemy was the Social Democrats. Half a decade later the Soviet Union did send some arms to the anti-fascist side in the Spanish civil war, but at the same time Stalin made sure that the efforts to start a social revolution by the Spanish anarchists were stifled. Still, the worst consequence of State Socialism in practice was probably the bad example it gave to the ideas of revolution and socialism. No matter how drab an existence the American or European worker had; if the alternative was Stalin's prison camps, there was little doubt which alternative she would eventually choose.

Modern capitalism succeeded in pacifying the working class, but it could not stop the enevitable economic recession which finally hit in the mid seventies. It became clear that it would not be possible to continue building the welfare states and at the same time protect the profits of capitalists. An ever more international world economy at the same time made it increas-

ingly difficult for national states to regulate its economy. If one government made regulations that the now multinational companies didn't like, they could simply move their investments somewhere else. Finally, the events in 1968 had made it clear that economical welfare would not in the end be enough to thwart discontent. The youth of sixties didn't rebel against purely economical injustices; they vented their anger against the sheer boredom of everyday existence; against the emptiness of a world where everything were measured in money.

With an economy in a recession and a continuous threat of student and worker unrest, our rulers knew something had to be done. The answer they came up with was a return to good old fashioned capitalism. The growing discontent against the planners and bureaucrats were exploited to make way for the new right. During the eighties right wing governments won power all over North America and Europe, led by Ronald Reagan in the US, and Margaret Tatcher in Britain. When the bureaucratic monsters called communist societies finally collapsed on their own in 1989, it seemed there was nothing that could stop the right-wing attack.

Freed from the popularity contest with the "socialist" world; international capitalism has again showed its true face, and believe me, it's not a pretty one. The worst consequences have as usual fallen on the third world who has been forced by the IMF and the World Bank's "Structural Adjustment Programs" to abandon subsidies, health care and education to the poor in order to become more suitable objects for foreign investment. It is probably no exaggeration to say that these policies have cost the lives of millions of people. As for the countries in the former East Block, they did get their political freedom, but they also got an increase in crime and prostitution and a decrease in wages and social services. As a matter of fact; the countries in the former Soviet Union have seen a drop in the average male living age that is unprecedented in countries untouched by war or natural catastrophes. Here in the US, the consequences of

the new neo-liberal world policies have been less dramatic, but else quite similar. While the wealth of the rich in this country have skyrocketed, the real wages for working class people have now gone down for over two decades. Combined with the cuts in welfare, this means that millions of Americans can look forward to a life in poverty. The richest 500 persons in the world today controls more wealth than the poorest half of the world's population.

Today's capitalists see no challenge to their world domination, but they might have started celebrating to early. Their continuing attacks on working people have not failed to produce resistance, even if you don't hear much about it in the news. Country after country have experienced waves of strikes and unrest. The anti-IMF demonstrations in Seattle and Prague are only the most popularized of these events. To be a little cynical, much of these protests are more attempts by the liberals and the union bureaucracy to contain and recuperate popular anger, than they are real struggles. But they are an omen for times that might come. With a more and more ruthless capitalist world order, the time looks ripe for some genuine class warfare. The most important reason for why a working class rebellion isn't happening today is not the lack of popular discontent, but rather the sorrow state of the international leftist movements.

Communism might be dead, but the left of today still worship its lifeless image and slowly suffocate in the foul fumes of its rotting corpse. Still thousands of potentially revolutionary workers and students pass through the ranks of the various leftist sects, only to become burnt out and disillusioned and drop out of politics altogether. Still the Trotskyists continue their quarreling and splits and regrouping while they keep trying to organize the 42nd version of their glorious Fourth International. Having lost all hope of actually influencing world events, the Leninists cling to the straw of being an intellectual vanguard. Having lost their contact with the actual work-