

“Anti-Capitalist”— But Don’t Know What Capitalism *Is*

This is part of a series of messages where I am going to talk about a number of “woke” and “progressive” or supposedly “socialist” ideas and notions of what the problem is in this country (and the larger world) and what is the solution. I am going to show what is wrong with these ideas and notions, and speak to the importance of understanding *scientifically* the actual problem and the real solution.

These days many people say they are “anti-capitalist”—but they have no real understanding of what capitalism actually *is*.

Capitalism is not just “greed.”

Capitalism is not just *grossly unequal distribution* of wealth.

Capitalism is not just corporations having too much wealth and power, and the “billionaire class” lording it over everybody else.

Capitalism is not just workers being denied a decent living.

And capitalism is not “white people” exercising their “privilege.”

Capitalism is *most fundamentally* a **mode of production**.

“Mode of production” is another way of saying: the economic system—the way the economy is organized, and how it functions—the basic relations and dynamics of that economy. This is the *foundation* of any society, and *it sets the terms for what the relations are among the people in that society, and what the dominant institutions and culture will be*.

Capitalism is a system where masses of people are *exploited* by competing capitalists, who privately own the *means of production* (land, raw materials, machinery and other technology, etc.). And what is *exploitation*? To put it in simple and basic terms, exploitation is *profiting from the labor of others*. That is the source of capitalist wealth. The competition between capitalists, and the danger of going under if you do not out-compete other capitalists, drives them to constantly find means to more intensely and viciously exploit masses of people.

So long as you have a capitalist economic foundation, which is based on exploitation, you will have a society full of oppressive relations; and, while it is crucial to fight against those oppressive relations, you can only finally and fully abolish them by overthrowing the existing system and uprooting its capitalist economic foundation, and replacing it with an economic system that is not based on exploitation.

Or, as I put it in *Breakthroughs*:

If you want to get rid of all these different forms of oppression, you have to address them in their own right, but you also have to fundamentally change the economic system to give you the ability to be able to carry through those changes in fundamental terms. To put it another way: *You have to have an economic system that doesn't prevent you from making those changes, and instead not only allows but provides a favorable foundation for making those changes.*

That is the heart and the essence of the matter. (*Breakthroughs*, as well as other works of mine, available at revcom.us, discuss more deeply why this is so.)

For anyone who is actually interested in having a basic understanding of capitalism (what it rests on, how it actually functions, and why we need to get rid of and move beyond capitalism), I recommend, as a start, my two articles at revcom.us on exploitation and putting an end to exploitation and oppression—and, in particular, the video illustrating the first of these articles on the YouTube RNL (Revolution, Nothing Less!) Show #178.

This is also very important to understand: This capitalist system that we are now forced to live under has long since developed into a system of *international exploitation and oppression*—the system of *capitalism-imperialism*.

For a *more extensive* analysis of the nature and functioning of the capitalist-imperialist system and the very real horrors it imposes on the masses of humanity, in addition to these social media messages and other works of mine, at revcom.us there are two important essays by Raymond Lotta: *Imperialist Parasitism and Class-Social Recomposition in the U.S. From the 1970s to Today: An Exploration of Trends and Changes*; and *The "Industrialization" of Sexual Exploitation, Imperialist Globalization, and the Descent Into Hell*.

The essence of the matter is this: **It is the system of capitalism-imperialism—a system based on the most ruthless exploitation, murderous oppression, and massive destruction of people and the environment—that is the fundamental cause of the terrible suffering to which the masses of humanity are now subjected, and the very real threat to the existence of humanity as a whole.**

And, as I have repeatedly emphasized:

We, the people of the world, can no longer afford to allow these imperialists to continue to dominate the world and determine the destiny of humanity. And it is a scientific fact that humanity does not have to live this way.

Bringing truth the powers-that-be don't want you to have—truth you need to know

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