

I'm Sticking With The Union?

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E.B. Maple (Peter Werbe)

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THE BATTLE OF DETROIT

"Hey! What are you guys doing here? You hate unions!"

-A strike supporter

The labor militant who aimed this question at us was surprised, almost shocked, to see a group whom she considers anarchists critical of unions, standing shoulder-to-shoulder with striking Teamsters and newspaper reporters, squaring off against the cops at a suburban Detroit printing plant late one night last summer.

What our friend sees as "hate," has been our effort over the last twenty years to create a radical understanding, free of leftist mystique, of the role unions have historically played within the political economy of capital.

But the question she asked us is an important one, and in many ways expresses the contradictions and ambivalence we often feel when we transfer our theories to daily life experiences. If unions are nothing more than the institutional way capital purchases labor, why were we out there on Mound Road facing off 250 cops from 20 different suburban forces that balmy September night?

The revolutionary project with which we identify does not strive to share the loot industrial capital produces. Rather, it seeks to eliminate swag, created by the destruction of humans and nature, as the basis of societies. Radical desire does not want a "fairer" share of capitalist wealth to go to labor; it wants to leave all of this system and establish a new world, not reform the current one.

But this all said, how do we respond to attacks from capitalism's greedy, rapacious elite? Often individuals or groups reach the point where they refuse to be pushed around any longer or sit idly by while humans or the wild world are being exterminated.

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