

Unfuck the World

Fifth Estate Collective

2021

Unfuck the World, says the sign on this page and the next. It isn't just a one-off, rude slogan held by someone justifiably angry at the state of things.

It stems from the 2017 rap/rock song of that name by The Prophets of Rage, a band comprised of members of Rage Against the Machine, Public Enemy, and Cypress Hill. It's an anthem for what has become a worldwide movement that will host its 9th annual UTW Day, September 18.

The movement's goal are very general, but are clearly against racism, war, climate change, and other features of modern society that are, indeed, fucked up. Their online statement emphasizes local actions around community-determined goals, ones that include steps to address social and ecological ills with "positive actions."

People acting outside of approved channels. DIYing to meet community needs. Protecting the environment, animals, and homeless. Strongly opposing all forms of discrimination and racism. All of this is admirable.

However, it's a far cry from what animated rebels from 1848 to 1939 during an almost century of revolutionary agitation and action, all framed by a vision of a new world that completely shed the horrors of what continues today. Anarchist, as well as communists, and socialists, envisioned a utopia, in which exploitation based on class rule enforced by the armed might of the state was ended.

Almost all of this was based on the idea that a radicalized working class would be the mechanism to overthrow the current system and install a cooperative and free society to replace the misery of capitalist society. When revolts began in the late 18th century with the Luddite resistance to factory work and the European revolutions of 1848, capitalism was in its beginning stages although state repressive machinery had thousands of years of practice in blunting popular rebellions. Ultimately, the more organized forces of the state won every battle.

The final notable effort for traditional revolution was broken in Spain by a fascist victory aided by Stalinist treachery and the onset of World War II. Following that global conflict, many events labeled themselves revolutions, but all either solely changed who gave the orders to the police, leaving traditional capitalism in place, or worse, established state capitalist police regimes calling themselves communist or socialist.

Since then, very few upsurges have challenged the entire apparatus of the work/war nation state. It's the triumph of capital in all corners of the globe to the point where those who continue to speak in the voice of the prior revolutionary period are thought to be at best unrealistic. Some Marxists continue to employ the phrase late capitalism, sort of a political version of whistling by the graveyard to tell themselves that the master's voice was not erroneous. Revolution is always at hand. However, it's hard to tell at any given moment at what inflection point on an historical arc we are located.

Are we at a late stage? Instead, perhaps, at the entry to a period such as chronicled in Jack London's 1908 *The Iron Heel* where the Oligarchy reigns for centuries. Or, worse. In another dystopian novel, *1984*, where O'Brien of the Thought Police tells Winston Smith, Orwell's hapless protagonist, that if he wants "a picture of the future, imagine a boot stamping on a human face—forever."

So, what's next if that's a possibility. Or, a reality? How do we live our lives? How do we resist the boot and the Oligarchy? One response is to work cooperatively to unfuck the world. Even the conviviality of a community garden,

free stores, or neighborhood health clinics. Most certainly express our outrage at the brutality of a murderous system that defines itself with lies and platitudes.

But, let's not lose sight of a larger desire for an entirely different new world. The less we pronounce our vision, the farther away its reality will recede. The quieter we become about speaking out for the visions that animated our comrades of the past and us, the more the tyranny of the fact, of state and capitalist society, assures itself of a thousand-year Reich.

We often publish histories of people who participated in thrusts against the system. The Spanish Revolution of the late 1930s stands out to show that the new world carried in their hearts by workers and peasants could be made real. Their defeat is heartbreaking, but still exemplary.

Whether this is early or late capitalism, we will define ourselves as humans against the machine by raging against it, yes, but also by our acts and our choices each day that reflect the world we want.

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