



An ideological tenet imperative to capitalism is its perpetual expansion. Historically this expansion has been facilitated by the state, which serves large capital by fostering a political environment in which market aims become infused with the aims of greater society, until the aims of the former completely supersede those of the latter. The austerity measures that have been enacted over the last twenty years, and those still yet to come, serve as the latest means by

which the state in service of large capital seeks to erode spending towards public services so as to create more space for accumulation and concentration of wealth in the hands of big enterprise. Therefore the time is now to explore the root issues and go beyond the debate concerning austerity, a debate which misses the forest for the trees.

## a new mask for CAPITALISM

### Neoliberalism and Austerity: The Capitalism of the 21st Century

Both during and after the student strike of 2012, many were denouncing neoliberalism as many now denounce the politics of austerity. Has anything changed between now and then? Or to put it more directly, has there been a policy shift concerning the attack against public services which simultaneously serve the interests of the rich. Is there any difference between a PQ government and a liberal government? Since 2000 successive governments have proceeded with fiscal policies that have favored the rich while harming the poor, all the

while widening the gap between the haves and the have nots. When we think of cuts to social aid or subsidy reductions for post secondary students that were enacted under the previous PQ government it becomes evident that nothing has changed since the Charest years. Same shit, different asshole. It is imperative to understand that the problems of governance go well beyond what party holds the most seats in the national assembly, and that legislative aims are dictated by market demands, namely that of perpetual profit.

## **Name the Enemy**

Firstly, we must be able to identify the system of capitalism as the force which impoverishes workers in order to understand the global dynamic that underpins particular policy directions such as austerity. The defunding of our provincial health care system is undertaken with the aim of pushing citizens towards private profit seeking services. This

attrition of the public system permits the market to fill the vacuum, culminating in the complete privatization of health services. This tendency is in accordance with the historical trajectory of capitalism, which seeks to commodify all facets of existence, permitting the market a ubiquitous place in society, while forcing the latter to live in service of the former.

## **What path for the struggle?**

The examples of the PQ and the Liberal Party demonstrate that disapproval towards austerity measures is only vocalized whilst either or comprises the opposition, meaning that it amounts to nothing more than leftist posturing. In order to solicit the corporate support necessary to win an election the main parties have demonstrated time and again their willingness to fall in line with the corporate agenda, daring not to bite the hand that feeds them. Québec Solidaire is following the



same trajectory compromising there initially vague anti capitalist discourse with more market friendly policy, adopting the same position on minimum wage as there opponents, while still posturing as the party that will usher in a “greater equality for everyone”. The closer a party gets to power, the closer power gets to them. Our political process is intrinsically corrupting and systematically designed to put profit before people. By appealing to the political process “left wing” parties lend legitimacy to an illegitimate system of governance. By choosing to vote for the lesser evil, we still vote for evil.

## **Other Consequences of Capitalism**

The historical toll of a system that runs on the insatiable need for profit has led to consequences which are only now beginning to simmer to the surface of the collective conscious. The ceaseless pace of the rat race is exhausting natural resources to the point of extinction and collapse. The unavoidable conflict between the pathological pursuit of infinite growth on a finite planet. Through

the lens of resistance we must take into account not only our material wealth fare but also the wealth fare of the planet, as ultimately the two are tortuously linked. Negating the environmental degradation imposed by capitalism on the planet is to negate the future of subsequent generations, further threatening the prospects of dignified existence for the planets future inhabitants.

One must also not forget the continued exacerbation of global inequality between countries and regions of the world. Domestic and global inequalities are what fuel capitalism, and this reality is being perpetuated and worsened through the proliferation of global free trade agreements, which grant transnational capital an open door to exploit workers throughout the world. These agreements between states permit multinational corporations to choose their manufacturing sites based on where they can pay workers the least, while ensnaring the global workforce in a race to the bottom so as to stay competitive in the global labor market. Moreover, these inequalities

and the forces that seek to cement them sow seeds of conflict, which ensure an increasing degree of insecurity for people in all corners of the world, but especially those who find themselves situated at the shitty end of the global assembly line. We must stand in solidarity with the billions who struggle on a daily basis just to survive.

Within the domestic sphere one must also take into account the intensification of inequalities among demographics which are systematically oppressed such as: migrant workers, immigrants, women, first nation peoples, and other visible minorities. In the age of austerity people within these groups, more than others, are pushed towards a more precarious existence, an existence which is being shared by more and more people.

## Where do I sign?

The questions concerning the destructiveness of capitalism must be brought everywhere, from our general assemblies, to the kitchen table, from our workplace to the community. The way forward to is create a decentralized network of non-hierarchical consensus based organizations that fight for another world, a world free from capitalism. This is the mandate of the Convergence des Luttes Anticapitalistes (CLAC). At the CLAC, we have put into place an austerity committee to address the ongoing assault against society, the committee also functions with the mandate to address issues tortuously linked to austerity politics, such as the degradation of the environment.

**All are welcome to join our committee against austerity:** Our next meeting will take place **November 13 at 6pm at DIRA located at 2035 St-Laurent (close to Maisonneuve)**



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