

ing the rights of the minority, and both the majority and minority have their grievances carefully considered and have access to representation. Our goal is twofold: we must stop the hard right, and we must pursue the unfulfilled promises of a healthy pluralistic democracy: justice, equality, security, and fairness—the real American dream. . . .

The antidemocratic right has a multi-issue strategic agenda, but its tactic is to focus its attacks on one high-visibility target constituency at a time. No single segment of our society has demonstrated an ability to resist these attacks alone. We must learn to work together. We urge everyone who desires to defend and extend democracy to join together in forming broad and diverse locally based coalitions to resist the rollback of rights, to block the backlash, to fight the right.

The leaders of antidemocratic right say their movement is waging a battle for the soul of America. They call it a culture war. We believe the soul of America should not be a battleground but a birthright and that culture should be celebrated not censored. We believe America is defined by ideas and values, but not those limited by religious police, biology, bloodline, or birthplace of ancestors.

The time has come to stand up and vigorously defend democracy and pluralism against the attacks orchestrated by cynical leaders of antidemocratic right. History teaches us that there can be no freedom without liberty, no liberty without justice, and no justice without equality, and we look forward to success because we know it is through the never-ending struggle for equality, justice, liberty, and freedom that democracy is nourished.

4.B.8.

Love and Rage Revolutionary Anarchist Federation

“What Kind of Revolutionary Organization Is Useful Today?” (1995)

The Love and Rage Revolutionary Anarchist Federation was the most developed anarchist formation in North America in the 1990s. Through its national newspaper and local chapters, the organization took on issues such as police brutality, educational equity, antifascism, and solidarity with the Zapatista insurgency in Mexico. This article, first published in the *Love and Rage* newspaper, identified an approach of “revolutionary pluralism” as a way to organize against oppression in a broad-based, democratic fashion.

The multiple problems facing the world today require a revolutionary response. The troubles faced by the oppressed—especially people of color—exist not because the promise of liberal democracy is yet unfulfilled throughout the globe but because of inherent contradictions within liberalism and capitalism itself.

Because capitalism requires the many to work for the profits of the few, modern society cannot provide full freedom for all. Further, because capital will not surrender its privileged position without a fight, the struggle for a truly free society requires a revolutionary struggle against capitalism and all forms of oppression.

Given this, the revolutionary question is: What kind of revolutionary organization is effective at this time? Historically, there have been two answers to this question. The most common is the Marxist-Leninist vanguard party. The vanguard strategy, from the Russian Revolution to the present, is to build an organization of an elite cadre of militants who will guide the masses through a revolution and lead them to a socialist society. This strategy has proven to be an utter failure because it has failed to fulfill the promise of freedom. By creating a highly centralized and undemocratic organization, vanguard approaches have reproduced these same power structures in society, with the party as the new ruling class.

The second strategy is less well known but is currently popular in many North American anarchist circles. This strategy, which could be called the storefront approach to social change, advocates creating “temporary autonomous zones” (TAZ) of collectives, infoshops, community centers, and other counter-cultural outposts throughout the land. These storefronts, the argument goes, will inspire thousands of other TAZs to organically sprout up in the rest of society, transforming the world without a center of power or a hierarchical chain of command. This strategy is admirable for its critique of authoritarianism and for its commitment to decentralized forms of organization. However, it is unrealistic because it does not present a plan to directly challenge and defeat the fundamental structures of state power. Nor does it suggest a way to democratically bring these multiple TAZs and storefronts together to collectively craft a vision of a free society.

The ineffectiveness of these two strategies requires a different response. This third view, which could be called revolutionary pluralism, is the position Love and Rage has arrived at after six years of debate and struggle. It is based on our perception of what a twenty-first-century mass movement against oppression will look like. While movements aimed at organizing factory workers may have been appropriate in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the ever-changing landscape of capital and imperialism has grown much more complex today. The mass movements against them will inevitably reflect this diversity and complexity. The struggles of women, people of color, and oppressed nationalities throughout the world are no longer secondary to the struggle of “the proletariat” (in reality, were they ever?) but constitute the potential, in their plurality, to be the foundations for a new mass movement. What will bring these diverse struggles and peoples together? Only a deliberate effort to unite them into a radically democratic and plural movement that will maintain their autonomy and challenge the existing power structure. This is revolutionary pluralism.

If the mass movements of the twenty-first century are going to be plural, diverse, and emanate from a variety of locations, what is the role of a revolutionary organization? Clearly, such an organization should not attempt to make it-

self the “vanguard” and force the entire movement to conform to its ideology and be subordinate to its own organs of power. However, this does not mean there is no role at all for revolutionary organization, as advocates of the store-front strategy claim. The role of a revolutionary organization like Love and Rage in a mass movement is not to lead the movement but to participate in it as equals with other organizations and people. Through such participation we seek to do two things: 1) to argue for the most democratic mass movement possible, one that gives every person the ability to participate in it fully; and 2) to argue for our antiauthoritarian politics within this plural movement in order to influence it into struggling against all forms of oppression.

Of course, a plural and diverse mass movement does not exist in North America. At present, groups like Love and Rage are organizations without a movement. We do not pretend to be able to be this movement nor to be able to create it ourselves. That is the work of millions of the downtrodden and oppressed. However, we can and do participate in small movements right now, with the eye toward not only winning these smaller struggles but also toward bringing them together into a larger movement. We do this through active participation and by arguing for our politics in a free and open manner.

With this in mind, Love and Rage sees three current struggles that are not yet mass movements but that hold great potential. The struggle against white supremacy—not only against the far right but also against the principal institutions of this society (cops, courts, capital)—will be key to any revolutionary

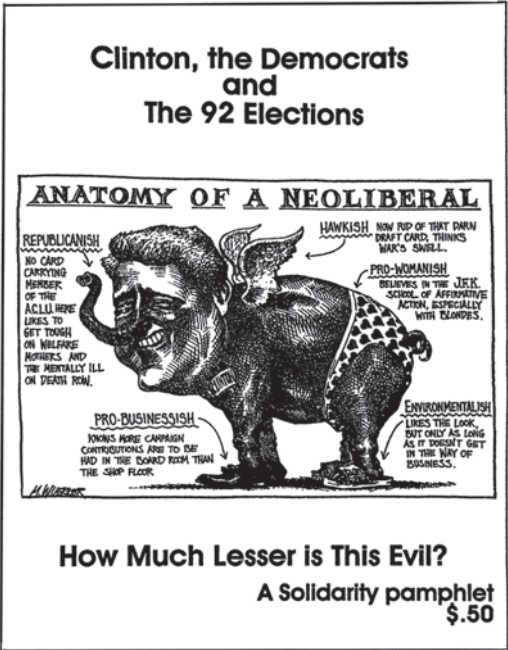


Figure 4.3. Matt Wuerker, “Anatomy of a Neoliberal” (1992). Image courtesy of and reprinted with permission by Matt Wuerker.

movement. Secondly, the Zapatista uprising indicates that México will be a central point of resistance to the global order in the upcoming century, and so we work to support our comrades in México and to open up a “northern front” in the US and Canada. And finally, we focus attention on prisons and the criminal justice system, not only to support our imprisoned revolutionary comrades but also to reveal prisons as the lynchpin of social control under capitalism and as a key weapon of Black genocide. Coupled with revolutionary pluralism, these three struggles offer a guide to building a new world within the complex and confusing shell of the terrible one we live in now.

4.B.9.

Labor Party

From “A Call to Economic Justice” (1996)

In an effort to challenge bipartisan support for expanded corporate power and a constricted social safety net, more than one thousand delegates founded the Labor Party in 1996. Its platform, titled “Call to Economic Justice,” identified what the party elsewhere described as an “organizing approach to politics”: rather than focus on running or defeating candidates, the party developed initiatives—particularly for universal health care—that would serve to improve the lives of working-class people.

Preamble

We are the people who build and maintain the nation but rarely enjoy the fruits of our labor.

We are the employed and the unemployed.

We are the people who make the country run but have little say in running the country.

We come together to create this Labor Party to defend our interests and aspirations from the greed of multinational corporate interests. Decades of concessions to corporations by both political parties have not produced the full employment economy we have been promised. Instead income and wealth disparities have widened to shameful extents.

We offer an alternative vision of a just society that values working people, their families, and communities.

We, the members of this Labor Party, see ourselves as keepers of the American Dream of opportunity, fairness, and justice. In our American Dream, we all have the right

- to a decent paying job and a decent place to live
- to join a union freely without fear of being fired or other retribution