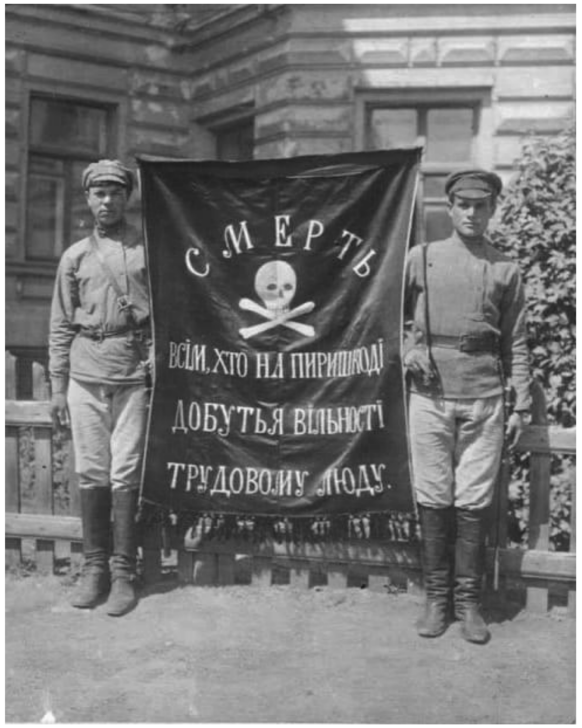


Avant! is a communist journal focused on the ability of the proletariat to abolish its own condition.

Drawing from a various pool of ideological influences, we seek to ruthlessly critique all forms of mediation.

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Revolutionary Semantics



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Protests often have the intended consequence of assailing an attendee's senses. There's the monotonous droning of, an often all too small, megaphone haphazardly clung to the belt of a scrawny organizer. Faintly one can make out the lull of a kettle bell or drum struck just ever-so-slightly off beat that it induces a sensory nightmare. Party organizations and NGOs dissect what momentum has grown to insert their own rhetoric, complete with heady speeches and a lengthy pamphlet which you will throw in the trash shortly after the scene has disbanded. All of these and more bless a gracious viewer who sifts through rubbish, hoping to find something worthwhile; this is a barren and hostile environment, littered with plastic and debris.

However, nothing at a protest is more mind numbing and intellectually jarring than the abysmal sloganeering which cloaks the mechanisms which define life. And like a broken record, these chants are repeated ad nauseum until they are burned into memory, satirical soundbites which loop in the brain well after the event has died. Furthermore, nearly all of the Parties involved in this spectacle seem to have no stake in revolutionary action or activity, thus to fuel their revolutionary itch they "muster up their courage" to stand on the side of a street or intersection and hurl their chants like spells at any passerby that is unfortunate enough to be in their vicinity.

Now, whether we have issues with these ideological vagrants of the Left propping themselves up on a busy intersection is not the purpose of this article (See the aforementioned piece for more). Today, we draw our issue in the specific content of these slogans and chants and what their language reveals about their aims and methods. Tactics aside, it is the content itself that seeks a departure from class struggle into something else altogether. Organizers will draw in the masses off the energy of the real movement, and leave them with nothing but a moral set of values. This itself is violence, violence waged against the working masses in the hopes of nullifying them before they take the chance to resist. Before the worker can reassemble life they are confronted by these values, which please them by offering an alternative reality where the clinical life remains holy. Thus these values must be dissected and taken apart, semantic or otherwise. Let us examine a few grotesque examples:

Original Slogan:

"#ShutDownNation, Boycott Israel, Defund Israel, Stop Supplying Weapons to Israel, etc." (As seen with the BDS Movement)

Amended Slogan:

"To Free Palestine, Free the Working Class"

The various economic attempts to punish Israel (as discussed in our first piece, "The Student Psyche in Political Crisis") are entirely hapless. Throwing one's weight behind such a movement is not viable due to the appeals toward both the petit-bourgeoisie, the bourgeoisie proper, and so on. Any one of the "popular" slogans listed are slogans utilized by the bourgeoisie to protect itself from criticism or examination during this movement. The truth is that should Palestine be liberated, it can only come with the liberation of the international working class. Thus we seek not economic reallocation but a war on economics itself.

Original Slogan:
“Arrest Killer Cops!”
Amended Slogan:
“Abolish Police & the State”
Arresting killer cops implies the supremacy of the justice system. As we discuss above, this is empty and reactionary. Furthermore, this slogan also implies the existence of good cops within the State system, therefore relying on a juxtaposition of morality within the State itself.
As much as one may enjoy a moral witch-hunt of such capacity, we simply don’t share in this hilarity. The bourgeoisie can purge its forces’ ranks every 4 years, and we would still be left in crisis.
There are no good nor bad police officers, and there is no divine nor inspired justice. Abolition-the absence of any being at all-is thus what we are left with.

Original Slogan:
“Protect Academic Freedom”
Amended Slogan:
“Return Education to Life!”
When not institutionalized or severed from life, education as an action can be incredibly valuable. That is, we are proponents of education as a process of engaging with life itself, and through those interactions forming comprehensive knowledge. Or rather, when learning ceases to be reduced to education. We are not proponents of the State’s monopoly on this process, its institutionalization, and reduction to beautifying labor power. As such there is a need to return education to its intentional use: Learning and life.

“Protesting is not a Crime! Justice for the [group of arrested activists]!”

At first glance you may say: “What’s wrong with this? All I hear is calls for justice against an unjust state.”, and that is precisely where we draw our issue. Moralistic claims such as these are alien to Communism, as was demonstrated heavily in Marx’s work Poverty of Philosophy. The statement above acts functionally identical to that of Proudhon’s claim that “Property is theft”, in that it is objectively incorrect in its analysis of the present situation. Let us examine this slogan piecemeal before looking at it in its totality.

“Protesting is not a Crime!”

An utterly false statement on its face. While in America there exists minimal protections for the “right” to protest and assemble, the State consistently throws off its sheepskin of “civil rights” to gnaw its true fangs. Many of the tactics taken by protestors across the U.S. are indeed illegal under U.S. law. It is illegal to block highways. It is illegal to impede traffic. It is illegal to even use amplified sound in some areas! Nearly every stage of a protest is full of many micro-actions that are often very much illegal, and this is by design! The Bourgeois State wants you, the hopeful proletariat, to believe that it can use the very mechanism of state power to reform the system by limiting the spontaneous power of action in the streets and workplace. We can see that this call is not only factually incorrect, but in its core messaging it seeks to integrate itself into the system! By claiming that they are not acting illegally they believe that they are granted some special privilege to continue their acts. It is a foolish and childish mistake.

"Justice for the [group of arrested activists]!"

Calls for "Justice" are utterly meaningless and devoid of Communist sympathies because whose "Justice" are we seeking out? One may say: "We are seeking justice for our bereaved comrades who were valiantly assaulted in the class struggle." Very well, but who is to deliver this "Justice"? Is this holy "Justice" to be rained down on the aggrieving pigs by the Communists themselves? Of course the answer to that is "No", so then, again, who is to deliver this "Justice" we seek? We see that the only entity that could possibly right this wrong is not the Proletarian class at large, but rather the Capitalist State itself! What logic is this? The State has already dispensed its justice! You ask me what "Justice" looks like and I'll show you. Justice looks like an army of pigs descending upon the streets, cracking their batons at anyone they see. Justice looks like the bullet that every pig fires at an unarmed black teen. Justice is the blood that runs down the streets and into the gutters after every vicious attack upon those of our class. You see, this is the justice you cling to so rapidly. The State will never right this wrong, because by all legal definitions no wrong has been committed!

"Protesting is not a Crime! Justice for the [group of arrested activists]!"

Now we see the true nature of this slogan. It is not a harmless cry of anger, but is the carefully articulated response designed by the State to mediate and pacify the Proletariat once again. This is not to say those that call for justice are class enemies, but that they are both mistaken and misguided in their approach for retribution. Justice will not come from the halls of the courts, but from the barrel of the rifle, as it rings out the last shot in our final battle. It is to say that we must cease with these calls that show our adherence to liberalism and the State. We must throw off the veil of mediation and dawn the cloak of insurrection. Embrace the illegalism they cast upon us! In this matter the State is correct! What we do is illegal precisely because we have no wish, want, or desire to exist under the State or its so-called justice anymore!

Let's sort through another common slogan found in recent protests:

Original Slogan:

"It is Right to Rebel/Resist" (As seen with Maoists, FRSO, SDS)

Amended Slogan:

"Abolish Rights, Abolish Classes"

As we have previously stated, ad nauseum, rights are inextricably tied to the bourgeois system. Since we have discussed this at length we see no reason to relitigate the issue at large, however we will still discuss the peculiarities of this phrase. No State has allowed this "Right to Rebel" in practical terms. Philosophers and Leaders have opined and made gestures towards this "right", such as Locke and Jefferson to even Lenin, but in practice this right has never materialized. In America, the "right of succession" was shot down with the Civil War and rebellions were quashed in Indian Country. Out of all the rights that "exist:", this one is the most insane.

Original Slogan:

"No Justice, No Peace!"

Amended Slogan:

"We Seek Neither Justice or Peace: Only Liberation"

Justice is a fluid and slanted judgement. It holds no truth to its claims, and as such there should be a staunch rejection of empty promises. What is justice can only be defined by the justice system, and thus we observe this slogan as another which leaves a sour taste in our mouths.

Peace is likewise a virtue so exalted as it is hollow. We cannot come to define peace as anything other than passivity, and as such we view peace as reactionary. Any peace we seek can only come in the abolition of classes, i.e. not under capitalism nor its justice system. Yet even then this supposed peace can only come at the end of the bitter struggle that will undoubtedly leave bloodshed and destruction around the world. Thus, we seek no justice, and no peace.

Original Slogan:
"Unions Uniting so Families Keep Thriving" (As seen with Teamsters)
Amended Slogan:
"Abolish Labor For a Liberated Life"
One of the greatest achievements of the union bureaucracy in this country is that they have managed to still convince masses of people that they are guiding an upward trend. The unions are not only subject to little criticism, but in fact they are subject to no public criticism even when they undergo the underwriting of contemporary history. Families have not thrived this century! But we are to believe them insofar that when we sign their cards, they will lead us to this new imagination.
The unions fear an employment of life that is not predicated on wage labor, so they paint over the cracks left by capitalist education, media, and superstructure.

Original Slogan:
"Defend Pilsen: Stop the TIF Expansion" (As seen with Residents Against TIF Expansion)
Amended Slogan:
"Liberate Pilsen: Fight Capital"
Gentrification is a perfect microcosm for those defense movements that go so wrong. This is precisely because the term and understanding of gentrification itself is bourgeois! Just as we attack the use of life under wage labor, we attack the use of land under State, finance, and so on. But in the case of labor we are not satisfied with a return to higher real wages or a step towards workplace parity. No, we seek the evolution of our collective life to something greater, more liberating. The same must be said for gentrification then in that we must resist staking a claim on gentrification, as if what? The petit-bourgeoisie are the base of support we seek to build our platform on? As if poverty, caste, and segregation are anymore desirable?
We must resist this tendency.

"Hands off Iran! [Or any country our State is currently aggressive towards]"

Again, at first glance this phrase may seem innocuous, or even positive. What could possibly be the issue with being anti-war? Well, is this phrase necessarily anti-war? We would answer this question in the negative. Even if the slogan was reformatted to say "No war with Iran!" we would still find issues with it. Under its current makeup, the slogan does little to show genuine internationalist sympathies with the proletariat of Iran, all it does is show allegiance to a foreign state rather than the United States. No state is worthy of defense or support. The correct position to hold in this matter is to agitate against both the American and Iranian states, as no state is innocent under the Capitalist Imperialist system. All states are the aggressors and the international proletariat are their victims.

After reading this, you may believe that our argument here is purely a semantic one. That our goal here is to create a "Pure Communism", but that is not the case. We merely seek to truthfully represent the tenets of Communism as it exists as a real movement to abolish what exists. As it stands, these linguistic deviations serve little to do but act as lip service for the State and Capitalism. They take moments of unrest and convert them into ideas easily rehabilitated by liberalism, and thus by nurturing sects of the bourgeoisie. This is not simply a matter of semantics, but of rhetoric. When a proletarian that is burgeoning in class consciousness and sympathetic to Communism is approached with these slogans and liberal ideas their revolutionary potential is effectively neutered. That is why we must be precise and cautious with our language, and show genuine discipline in these moments where conditions are deteriorating. It has real and tangible results on our practice.

Unfortunately in environments predicated on a spoken or unspoken Democratic Centralism, there is either little debate on rhetoric, or it is actively discouraged. To question leading ideas is mischaracterized as idealist itself, a bitter irony considering the role of the activists' mediatory ideas in building these movements. When we criticize ideas and especially these ideas, we are not-necessarily-criticizing those that struggle for them; We are certainly not criticizing the rank-and-file. We are criticizing the bourgeoisie, and the idealists with their head in the clouds of righteousness. They claim not to want to draw out debate on immaterial issues, but when they so graciously welcome bourgeois ideas into the movement, these ideas materialize in the most violent of ways. To criticize before, during, or after a critical moment is imperative.

The following section includes a small encyclopedic analysis of some of the most present language in movements with Communist presence today. We provide alternative slogans not because we are master sloganeers, but rather to hint at a more revolutionary direction that language can be taken. As it stands, movement language either hinges on humanity and the rights of man, concessional rhetoric, lawfulness, and other diversions which stifle a clear understanding of each issue. What we hope to incite is not a laundry list of our own slogans, but to encourage Communists to critically examine the slogans they struggle under and for.

Original Slogan:
"March for Humanity" (As seen with National PSL)
Amended Slogan:
"March for Workers' Liberation"
A march for humanity could be led by absolutely anyone from PSL to the Democratic and Republican Parties. Furthermore, if class is the distinction on which these claims of human rights are made, then it is class against class that we will abolish such notions.

Original Slogan:
"No Money for Massacres" (As seen with National DSA)
(Money for the State, just not this one specific tragedy)
Amended Slogan:
"Abolish the State, Abolish Capitalism"
Only an ingrained ideologue could look at a history of State-sanctioned genocides over the entirety of its existence, isolate it to one time period and as one variable to be contained, and contrast it to other forms of public expenditure.
There is frankly one correct way to approach the question of "money for massacres", and it is not in the maintenance of a parasitic capitalist life form.

Original Slogan:
"Abolish ICE" (As seen everywhere)
Amended Slogan:
"Abolish the State, Abolish Capitalism"
The American State has overseen some of the most calculating genocides, atrocities, and wars in human history, much of which it has dealt with on its own soil. This regime has consolidated itself like no other Empire in history, and it has done so for centuries without the existence of ICE. Thus when critiquing its use of force, why do we isolate ICE as a historical phenomenon? It is an inflection point undoubtedly, but it is the product of an incredibly cyclical spiral of nativist campaigns, deportation efforts, and maintaining hegemonic capital. ICE is a norm, a product of an entire ethos and employment of life. And in the context of our contributors, we have seen first hand how this derailment aids liberal entryist mystique. Any hope of struggle is ceased, because this slogan substitutes an existential threat for a medication that is easy to stomach.

Original Slogan:
“It’s Time to Get Organized” (As seen with National PSL)
This slogan doesn’t require amending, simply the end of its use for it grossly misunderstands social organization. To put it mildly, at points of crisis we seek the dissolution of every tangible class form, of the social relationship of labor, and so on. This means that there is no “time to get organized” as much as there are more and less tangible moments to strike at capital.
Yet at every social inflection point there is a Marxist group shouting at the masses to “Get Organized!”, which is usually a feeble attempt to draw away a few unsuspecting recruits into an activist and/or book club adjacent environment. They do this as inherent opportunists: What they really mean is to get organized with us and our programming, which is the only real program and the only really revolutionary program that can transform social relations. As if the proletariat needs to be pampered with source material for a movement to become “real”.
All we see here is a bleak departure from any notion of action or movement. “Getting Organized” just means to hyper fetishize structure and growing memberships, neither of which correlate with the overthrow of capitalism nor provide the platform for capital’s death. When a struggle is to be won or lost, and a group’s rallying cry is one of sublime organization, we see an ambitious SPD with a kernel of their capacity.

Original Slogan:
“Keep the Promise” (As seen with United Auto Workers)
Amended Slogan:
“We Demand Nothing But the World”

The bourgeoisie do not make concessions, they make concessions as fit which are ultimately subject to a falling rate of profit. The righteousness of capitalists is a cheap appeal, albeit one that is well ingrained in union circles.

ALTERNATIVE SLOGANS AND THEIR REASONING

Original Slogan:

“Protesting is not a Crime! Justice for the [group of arrested activists]!”

Amended Slogan:

“Abolish the Courts! Tear down the Prisons!”

Stated above. Legality is morality and morality is legality, i.e. the supremacy of liberalism.

Original Slogan:

“Hands off Iran!”

Amended Slogan:

“No War but Class War!”

The proletariat have no nation or incentive to defend their State rulers. States and the Capitalist class trap workers inside their nations and keep them held hostage. When we, as Communists, choose sides between Capitalists we grant legitimacy to their cause, whether that be tacit or explicit. By cheerleading for one imperialist power over another we effectively mediate the class conflict that is happening abroad in the minds of the domestic proletariat. The most recent wave of escalations between the United States and Iran have done little, except exacerbate the suffering of the Iranian proletariat, but to justify, and solidify, the existence of the Iranian State and ruling class. Our goal is to always escalate the class struggle to its highest level, the international revolution. We must thoroughly reject any war, but the class war.

Original Slogan:
“Fight for 15!”
Amended Slogan:
“Abolish Wages!”
Many Communists create an arbitrary distinction between the supposed “immediate” struggle and “end goals”. While well meaning in their attempts to alleviate the suffering of those around us they misunderstand what the Communist tactic is. Class struggle is not a moralistic claim, or a simple tactic to be used and then abandoned when needed. Class struggle is the driver of history, to deny the role of the real struggle in the current movement is to deny Communism altogether.
Not to mention that wages are the tools of the Capitalist class. Serfdom, and the peasantry, was eradicated by the creation of the wage labor system. By attaching our aims to the tools and framework of the Capitalist mode of production we do nothing but assert and affirm our class position instead of denying it.

Original Slogan:
“No Human is Illegal”
Amended Slogan:
“No Borders, No Nations!”
As we have discussed in our previous article, In the Midst of ICE: Against Protesting & the Allure of Nothing, we discussed the issue of inserting ourselves in the intra-class fighting of the bourgeoisie. Our support for those proletarians that are shouldered with the “undocumented” label must lie concretely in their dignity as humans and our assault must be against the very bourgeois legal system itself. Our criticisms of the legalistic and moralistic rhetoric found in the first section of this article stand here as well. To read further on this specific issue we recommend reading our article, In the Midst of ICE: Against Protesting & the Allure of Nothing, in its totality.

Original Slogan:
“Housing is a Human Right!”
Amended Slogan:
“Communal Housing for All!”
Human rights trace their existence to the beginning of bourgeois philosophy. To speak of rights presupposes the question of who/what will enforce and protect that right, and that responsibility falls upon the State. As we have demonstrated and said (as well as can be found in numerous other Communist works) many times now, the State is the vessel of class society. As long as the State remains, so does class. As long as class exists, so do the miserable and alienated lives of the proletariat remain. We must also look at what type of housing we are demanding. Well it is certainly true that any housing is better than no housing, the revolutionary viewpoint necessitates that we must end the current housing system, of large swaths of single family homes, that breeds alienation and replace it with communal housing.

Original Slogan:
“Freeze the Rent!”
Amended Slogan:
“Cancel all Rents!“
A similar argument to those of increasing wages, calling for a mere freezing of rents represents a temporary halt in the progression of the deteriorating quality of life the proletariat faces. It is not necessary to repeat the same line of argumentation twice; however, it is important to note that the primary call of campaigns surrounding access to housing and rents should be centered on the decommodification of housing and the ability to live.