

Politics Over Economy

By Tjen Folket, 01.09.2015

Serve the People have been criticized for focusing too much on political, social and cultural questions, and not enough on economy and class.

Firstly, we don't agree fully with this criticism, because economic and class struggles are often concentrated in political and social questions. Secondly, it's obvious that we don't have the resources necessary to work with every question. Therefore, no matter how large we become we can always be criticized for focusing on the "wrong" issues. We can never concentrate on all issues, which is why we have to choose. Some of the issues we have to opt out of are going to be important questions we would have liked to work with.

We have to prioritize

Serve the people has commented on several different questions on our webpages. We have written articles and pamphlets on capitalist economy and the crises it leads to. We have written about imperialism, taxes, strikes and the environmental crisis. But there are two questions we've prioritized especially highly, namely

- struggle against imperialism and the wars of the norwegian state
- the work against fascism and racism

Choosing to prioritize certain cases over others has been an entirely conscious choice on our part. Not because they're more important than all other, but because only concentrated and protracted work can lead to success.

But are these questions "only" political or social? We think that Norwegian imperialism is first and foremost an expression

of class and economy. Norwegian imperialism is a political-military expression of the capitalist class' economic interest to spread throughout the world. Together with Norwegian bombers and troops come Statoil, Statkraft, Telenor and other Norwegian huge companies.

With Lenin against economism

Lenin's classic *What Is to Be Done?* is written in opposition to economism. Economism is a tendency in the workers movement that only focuses on economic struggle – struggle for wages, welfare and rights in the workplace – and that limits itself to union work. As a resistance to this Lenin puts the versatile political struggle and the revelation of the state and the bourgeois. He writes:

Class political consciousness can be brought to the workers only from without; that is, only from outside the economic struggle, from outside the sphere of relations between workers and employers.

He also writes that:

that the Social-Democrat's [ed. note: communist] ideal should not be the trade union secretary, but the tribune of the people, who is able to react to every manifestation of tyranny and oppression, no matter where it appears, no matter what stratum or class of the people it affects; who is able to generalise all these manifestations and produce a single picture of police violence and capitalist exploitation; who is able to take advantage of every event, however small, in order to set forth before all his socialist convictions and his democratic demands, in order to clarify for all and everyone the world-historic significance of the struggle for the emancipation of the proletariat.

And:

Trade-unionist politics of the working class is bourgeois politics of the working class

Political struggle over economic struggle

In the article *Once Again On The Trade Unions* Lenin writes:

I said again in my speech that politics is a concentrated expression of economics, because I had earlier heard my "political" approach rebuked in a manner which is inconsistent and inadmissible for a Marxist. Politics must take precedence over economics. To argue otherwise is to forget the ABC of Marxism.

To put the politics first, to prioritize the so-called "political" questions in front of "economical", is actually in line with Lenin's recommendations. The question about the state power and what the bourgeoisie uses this for, are incredibly important to reveal capitalism. We cant reveal capitalism if we only tail behind the union struggle, only through lifting our eyes and looking at imperialism as a world system. And the question about racism is a democratic struggle that affects many, and that easily can be used to reveal how rotten this system is.

The most important thing is to build red organization

The most important question both in Lenin's and our time is to develop proletarian revolutionary politics, and the independent revolutionary organization of the proletariat. This never develops spontaneously from class struggles, but has to be organized consciously with revolution as a goal. We have to build red power and communist organization step by step. This means that its necessary to start relatively small, that one do not develop advanced politics in some important

areas, and that one does not take part in all parts of the working class or all its struggles. That means sticking to ones priorities, even when its tempting to push them aside for more popular struggles or “new struggles” or struggles that are seemingly more “typical” communist (strikes, union work), than anti-imperialism and anti-racism.

The alternative is to never develop ones own praxis and ones own organization, but to tail after others and comment on the events that are happening, without creating any events themselves.