

2. ARTICLE

ANTAGONISM AND BOURGEOISIE AND PROLETARIAT

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1. What is antagonism?

If in a relationship a certain property, a certain quality becomes possessed by one side of the relationship and is denied to the other side of the relationship, that sort of relationship is an antagonistic relationship.

For example in commodity production we end up with commodity exchange. In commodity exchange it first seems that all commodities are exchangeable with one another-that all commodities commonly possess the property of being exchangeable by all other commodities. This is the barter period. But in time, as commodity production and thus commodity exchange develop money commodity (gold-silver) comes into being and it becomes the only commodity that possess the property of being exchangeable with all other commodities, while all other commodities loose that property. Money commodity monopolise this property of exchangeability.

Of course, this monopoly of exchangeability with all other commodities by money lead to all sorts of problems –crises- in commodity production and commodity exchange.

2. How is an antagonism resolved?

Two things about antagonism:

a) Antagonism either exist in a relationship and thus is to found in a relationship through the study of this relationship-or it does not.

b) If it does, it inevitably leads to all sorts of problems in anything that the said relationship is a part of, and it will need to be resolved.

Resolution require the dissolution of the said relationship and its replacement by another relationship -a relationship that gets rid of the property that is monopolised by one side of the relationship.

For example commodity production and thus commodity exchange is dissolved, products are no longer commodities and thus they do not need to be exchanged as commodities using money commodity.

3. Antagonism of the Bourgeoisie and the proletariat

This relationships of the society of commodity producers who exchange their products as commodities inevitably give rise to a division in this society. It gives rise to a relationship between the two parts that come to be as a result of this division. In the latest form of commodity producing and commodity exchanging society, the bourgeois society, this division is that of the bourgeoisie and the proletariat.

What sort of a relationship is this relationship between the bourgeoisie and proletariat?

Well if we have an even a cursory look at this relationship we find that a certain property is the monopoly of one side of this relationship. What property is that? It is the ownership of the means of production and thus of the products produced using these means of production. Bourgeoisie owns all the means of production and the products that are produced using those means of production. While the proletarians do not own any means of production and thus do not own the products which are produced (by them) using those means of production.

Clearly this relationship between the bourgeoisie and proletariat is an antagonistic relationship.

Resolution of this antagonism also require the dissolution of the said relationship and its replacement by another-a relationship that gets rid of the property that is monopolised by one side of the relationship. Thus private ownership of the means of production (and thus of products) by the bourgeoisie is got rid of and the means of production and (thus products) become common property of all.

4. Antagonism in society is reflected as antagonism in political ideas.

We have seen that the relationship between different sections of the bourgeois society, that is between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat is of an antagonist nature, due to the ownership of the means of production and the products. Bourgeoisie owns them while the proletarians do not.

The political ideas that reflect this antagonism are also and inevitably antagonistic-for those ideas, if they are to be correct, reflect the fact that the relationship of the bourgeoisie to the proletariat is of an antagonistic nature.

Clearly, the bourgeoisie do not want this fact, this existing antagonism in economics and society to be reflected as political ideas. For then it would become clear that this relationship must dissolve-the bourgeoisie must lose its monopoly of owning the means of production and products.

Clearly, it is only proletariat who wants this fact, this existing antagonism in economics and society to be reflected as political ideas. For then it would become clear that this relationship must dissolve-the bourgeoisie must lose its monopoly of owning the means of production and products, they must be owned by all.

This inevitably give rise to class struggle between these antagonists for the primacy of their own ideas!

5. Antagonism in political ideas give rise to antagonist political institutions

Based on bourgeois political ideas, bourgeois political institutions are formed.
Bourgeois parties and bourgeois state.

Based on proletarian political ideas, proletarian political institutions are formed.
Proletarian party and trade unions.

This inevitably leads to class struggle in the political field between these antagonists for the primacy of their own parties and thus the primacy of their own state institutions!

We know what the result of this struggle have to be: Proletariat must win and put an end to this antagonism!