

World Socialist Review

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SPECIAL ISSUE



FROM GLOBAL VILLAGE TO GLOBAL COMMUNITY

INTRODUCING WORLD SOCIALISM

INSIDE:

how to get a world that is truly free
introducing the WSP
our principles
capitalism vs. socialism
revolution or reform?
world without money

How to get everything for FREE!

The time has come in the history of our species when we can get everything we want for free. Yes, you heard me right, for free!

Technology has evolved to the point where there is no reason why food, clothes, housing, medical care, education, transportation, computers, books, CDs, digital connections, cannot be freely available to all human beings on the planet. It is time for such a change. And we are urging our fellow humans to organize to bring about this new world, which is no pipe dream, but a logical outcome of our technological progress as well as our desire to live a fuller, freer life.

Many of us are used to campaigning for, or at least voting for, different politicians to run our political and economic affairs for us. We find that our lives do not change at all after each election. The leaders often do represent differences in how much money should be spent on the military, on the environment, on education, and the like, but when we get right down to the nitty gritty we find our lives are fundamentally the same no matter whom we vote for. We still have to work hard (some of us in more than one job) to raise enough money for our families and ourselves. Our lives are still ruled by the alarm clock, traffic congestion, budgeting, saving, praying for an economic miracle when we spend more than we earn, and by the stress that our working lives produce for us.

Ever wondered why our lives are so similar no matter the outcome of the elections? The reason is that the market system itself, based on buying and selling, operates by its own laws. So when politicians say they are going to reform it for the better, they are not telling the truth. There is nothing they can do to stop recessions, or to significantly improve the value of our wage or salary, or to meaningfully reduce the prices of the things we need to live. In other words, the economy controls them — just the way it controls us.

You see, the companies that produce all the things we require and that set the standard for all other non-productive kinds of work must compete to save as much in production and to make as much from the sale as they can. The market value of the things they produce reflects not only the fixed costs of materials and machinery but also the socially necessary labor used in making them, which is partly a function of technology and workplace organization and partly based on the cost of feeding and housing the employees, their educational needs plus their other living expenses. That can't be changed much. Our unions can work for small increments here and there, yes, but they can't work for, say, five times the value of our wages and what we would really like to earn to buy all the things that would



UTOPIA: Idealen in uitvoering, May 20, 2001 (Eindhoven, Netherlands).
(Source: <http://www.ddb.nl/duurzaam/utopia2001/fotos1.html>)

make our lives fuller and less stressful.

It would therefore be true to say that money itself prevents us from having what we need. There is no technological reason we cannot have all the food and clothes and other important things we need to live absolutely for free — if the whole community owned the farms, food plants, clothing factories, and all other workplaces where wealth is produced. The only reason money exists is so that the owners of these places of work can generate profit to live off, the value above our wages and all other production costs from the revenue obtained from sale.

Sorry, Prof: Just two classes

Although our culture likes to think of itself as possessing many classes (e.g., the lower-upper middle class), that is really a lot of nonsense. There is only the class of people living off profit, interest and rent, and the class (most of us) that lives by working for wages or salaries (a fancy word for wages that are paid once or twice a month instead of every week).

So the wealth accrues to the population in only those two ways, the vast majority of us only earning wages or salaries. While there are always failing businesses whose owners fall into the work class, the capital class tends to make the most money, while the work class tends to make the least. That is always how it is going to be, as long as money exists. No politician can do a thing about that.

Even in the countries our media incorrectly call “socialist” or “communist” like the old USSR, or England under the Labor government, or China or Cuba today, the laws of value still apply. Most people in those countries are work people who are

paid wages they must budget all their living expenses out of, while a small clique lives abundantly. Although, theoretically, one can become President, the Prime Minister, or some other fancy name for Head of State, even a Manager or Chief Executive Officer for some giant multinational, living off high salaries and million-dollar bonuses, we all know the chances of *that* happening!

Beyond the “global village”

Real socialism or communism has never existed on a global scale. It means a society in which the means of producing wealth are owned “socially” or “in common.” Obviously if the state owns the railroad that does not mean all the people do, even if it allows them to ride it for nothing. If the government owned the Post Office, you’d still have to pay for stamps, wouldn’t you? Government ownership in countries such as ours merely means that the capital class decided there were industries they could all benefit from, or share the expenses for as a class, like the post office, most roads, state hospitals or the military. But in countries like China where the government still owns most of the industries, there is a whole class of bureaucrats who live off the fat of the land, just like here.

Our revolutionary movement — one of ideas, not violence — consists of working people from around the world who feel that the time is ripe for us as a species to finally own the means of producing wealth collectively. In such a society we would no longer need money. Everything really would be free, but that obviously doesn’t mean it would work if we were all hoarding ten times more than we needed. But we believe that hoarding behavior is more likely to occur in an economy of scarcity rather than one of abundance. For example, in today’s American economy, most of us can afford basic foodstuffs like bread, so we don’t store 600 loafs at a time in our freezer, do we? That is because we know we can always get more in the supermarket. Real socialism or communism will be like that. Knowing that we can get what we need for nothing, we will hoard much less (if anything) than we do even now in our cluttered homes, where today we keep every piece of rubbish we bought in case we need it again and would have to pay dear money for it a second time!

When wealth is held in common, we believe that without the impediment of financial cost limiting efficiency and progress, our society will be able to recycle at an almost 100 percent capacity. Greenbacks prevent us from having a truly green society. The beautiful visions of ecologists remain pure pipe dreams as long as we inhabit a world in which the economy turns nature into commodities and in which the most idealistic reforms are going to cost money. The class-based money economy remains the true obstacle to all other technological and social advances that we could have today, to the type of society of peace, abundance, ecological balance, and creativity that we find is achieved on Earth only in Star Trek: The Next Generation. Make it so!

A planet-wide society based on private or state property is also divided into nations. It causes war, terrorism, starvation, child labor, ecological devastation, racism, sexism, shoddy goods or waste through planned obsolescence that the market requires companies to produce for their economic survival — and totally useless industries that squander our planet’s resources while not producing anything, such as those industries that revolve around advertising, selling, buying, banking, ticketing, investing, brokering, insuring, militarizing, policing, governing, managing. Think of the millions of wasted buildings, or the vast supply of wasted energy, resources and human lives that are entailed in these useless occupations — useless from the point of view of producing wealth, although, of course, the market system requires them, and that is one reason it is so wasteful.

When we own the means of producing wealth as a community, we won’t need those industries anymore because goods and services will be free. So we will require far less resources and energy than we do now to produce much, much, more. We will probably only need to work about a day or two at most per week to produce a lot more wealth and get everything we need. But since we are not a lazy species (except when forced to work or do anything else), we will nevertheless probably choose to expand our activities (though there will be no law saying we have to, since without property, even law itself will be redundant). We will probably want to spend the remaining five days of the week in athletic, creative, intellectual, social, sexual, scientific or other pursuits, depending on our talents and interests.

Forward to the past

Imagine actually being happy and secure in our world. We have the technology to liberate our lives, yet we find ourselves working many more hours each day for our masters than the feudal peasants did to support theirs. Our amazing technology is rapidly developing into the future, yet our social organization based on working people and employers, buying and selling, money and nation-states is from the primitive past and is still around today, holding us back!

Capital society is only a few hundred years old. Before that, most of humanity lived in feudal societies with kings and queens, in slave-based economies, or in tribal systems (some of which did possess relatively communistic organizations, but they could not prevent the advance of capital society and the turning of their common land into a vast commodity or into production sites for other commodities).

And while capital society helped to abolish feudal privilege and slavery, and to usher in our scientific progress, it also caused destruction on an unimaginable scale. Why, in the last century alone, hundreds of millions of lives were lost to war and

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immediately.**

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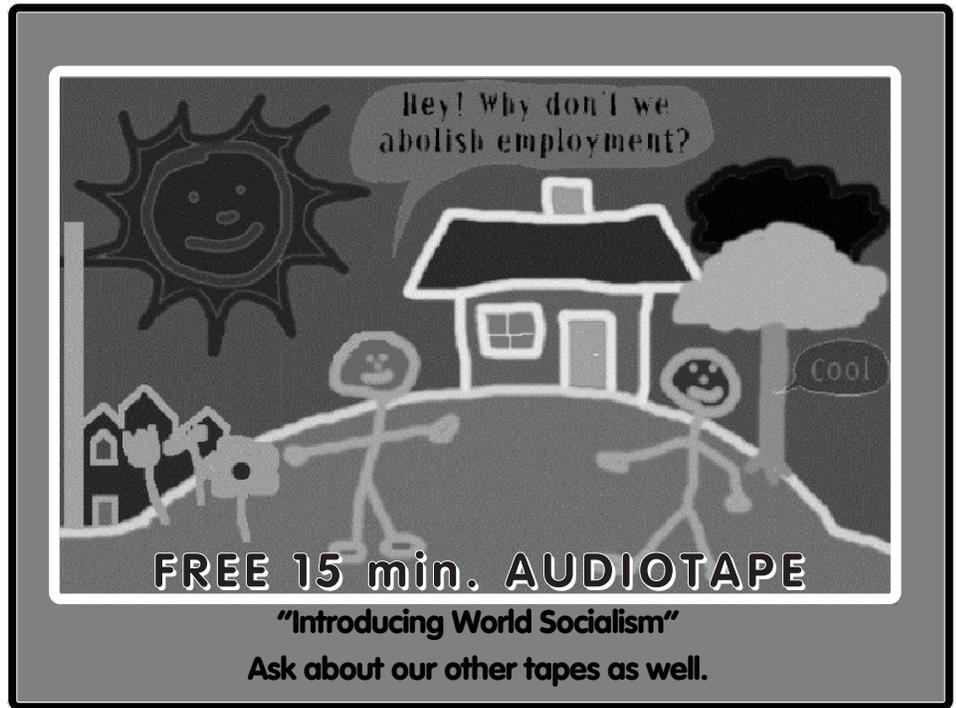
starvation, and that doesn't even count the billions who were either unemployed or employed in totally useless occupations or living in squalor.

It is now time for us to harness our technological progress and use it for the common good. You think we are going to achieve critical social, spiritual and technological advances in a society based on wage labor, or in which we do not produce important inventions or innovations just because investors think them too expensive, as in today's society of strife and want?

If we did bring about a society of common ownership, we could abolish world hunger in months, poverty in weeks, and war immediately. We could organize our society democratically to produce all the goods and services we need, producing to meet needs rather than for sale. Using our computer technology to record needs and the use of world resources, we could live in a society without poverty of any kind and with relatively less stress. (The psychologists tell us we function at our best with moderate stress, presumably not the extreme stress our lives in capitalism produce which has created the entire mental health industry in the first place!)

How will problems be handled in socialism?

Many of today's problems, such as poverty, will not even exist in a socialist society. Of course, no human society will ever be without problems. A socialist society will have to deal, democratically and cooperatively, with the problems as they arise. An example of a major problem: even under capitalism, natural disasters generate tremendous volunteer effort and people donate huge amounts of goods, services, and money to help those who are suffering. It is not conceivable that this human response will decrease in socialism. Without the profit constraints of capitalism, such major problems can be dealt with quickly and satisfactorily.



FREE 15 min. AUDIOTAPE

"Introducing World Socialism"

Ask about our other tapes as well.

With employment abolished, we could spend more time in stimulating activities that will feed rather than starve the human spirit. When the health of our ecosystem returns, and the quality of our food improves, when we live more in harmony with our planet and with ourselves, will our mental and spiritual health not also greatly blossom?

An idea come of age

These ideas have been around for the last 150 years or so, and they have been growing slowly but surely, largely in the industrialized areas of the world. Most recently, this understanding has been healthily spreading in areas of the former Soviet empire, in India and several African countries. More and more humans are awakening to the promise of a world that can truly be called theirs. They are awakening to their own power, and they are demanding the world for themselves. When they do, the old religious dream of a "brotherhood of man," which could never be achieved by prayer, can actually be realized by political organization.

Many scientific ideas have taken entire generations, even millennia, to be accepted, such as the idea that we are not

IF IT QUACKS LIKE A DUCK...

- If you work for wages, *it is not socialism.*
- If goods and services are sold in the marketplace with a view to profit, *it is not socialism.*
- If the world is divided into nations, *it is not socialism.*
- If there is any kind of government over people, *it is not socialism.*
- Unless all humans everywhere have free access to all goods and services, *it is not socialism.*

at the center of our solar system. We do not know when our ideas of liberation from the market system will begin to spread like wildfire across the lands. But we believe that the experience of our lives forges our ideas, and that the more people live in this violent and unsatisfactory social world, the more these revolutionary ideas will be accepted as common sense and be seized upon. We invite you to consider them carefully, not as followers but as fellow citizens. And when you are ready, we invite you to join us. Change occurs as quickly as an idea travels, and ideas travel faster than light.

Speed the day!

— Dr. Who

Pass this copy on to a friend!

Introducing the World Socialist Party

Everyone knows about high prices, lagging wages and salaries, housing difficulties, the ever-present threat of devastating wars; it isn't news that we live lives of frustration, stress and uncertainty. How to deal with it? The much-ballyhooed Left preens itself on its "practicality." Unfortunately, very few of these pragmatists see the origins of our problems in the *basis* of society, and they tend to get fuddled when asked to treat them as the predictable effects of a bad system.

The World Socialist Party invites you to consider the possibility of making a fresh start.

Socialism? What's that?

Our goal is world socialism: the immediate establishment of a system of society based upon the common ownership and democratic control of the means and instruments of producing and distributing wealth by and in the interest of society as a whole; free access to what everyone needs, independently of whether or how much individuals may spend their time "working."

Socialism is possible, practical and necessary right now — in fact, the need for it has never been more urgent. The only thing standing in the way is the lack of a conscious political majority of the world community who understands it and wants it and has organized to achieve it. A majority is necessary because socialism cannot possibly be imposed on an unwilling populace by even a well-intentioned minority. Besides, only a majority of the world's population can definitively establish that socialism actually does represent the rudiments of a social organization capable of meeting the needs of all human beings. Élites separate from society, armed with nuts-and-bolts theories, can only organize production to suit their own ideas.

The majority has to be conscious of what it wants so that it can make it work. All of us together *can* make socialism work.

The majority for socialism needs to be political because at the turning point, the socialist revolution, we will need to organize politically to take over the machinery of the state and immediately convert it into a genuinely democratic administra-

tion of the affairs of the new society. We all have the basic intelligence needed to understand this: no coterie of leaders is required to guide an ignorant majority through a lengthy "transition period."

To avoid confusion, let us make one point clear: we are neither Social Democrats nor Democratic Socialists. The World Socialist Party is as unlike the Socialist Party USA, the party of Eugene V. Debs, or the Democratic Socialists of America, the party of Michael Harrington, as it is possible to be. It was formed in 1917 when a group of members repudiated the reformist aims of the Socialist Party of America. The WSP is an independent organization opposed to all other political parties in this country. It is affiliated with companion socialist organizations in parts of Africa (e.g., Gambia, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe), Australia, Canada, Great Britain, India, Ireland, New Zealand and the Ukraine, all observing the same Object and Declaration of Principles.

It is especially important to stress our *independence*. Our Object and our view of economic and political questions are radically opposed to those of other groups in this country who confuse socialism with a kinder, gentler capitalism. The WSP's one and only goal is to replace immediately the capitalist basis of society with a fundamentally different one, socialism.

Under the existing system, the only way we can get the things we need to live — food, clothing, housing, travel, entertainment, etc. — is by buying them. All the things we need are produced to be sold at a profit. The kind and amount of these things individuals can buy depend on how much money they have. The life of leisure and luxury enjoyed by the rich few is far removed from the laborious, insecure existence of the great majority. But this contrast of riches and poverty is the natural order of the existing system of society organized for the benefit of the few, the owners of the means of production and distribution.

The great majority, the wage and salary earners who make up the working class, regardless of how soft their job may be or how much money they pull in, have to get

their living selling their working abilities to the owning class. This is a basic fact of capitalism taken for granted even by the "reptile press": "For most Americans, the important influences on spending are a job and a salary, not their stock portfolio." [*The Economist*, July 20, 2002, p 27]

Globally, the implications of this are a dismal commentary on some 3½ million years of our evolution: "The world's 358 billionaires," write J Bissett and DG (citing *The Independent*, July 23, 1996) in "Who Owns the World?" "including the Sultan of Brunei and Bill Gates, founder of Microsoft, have more assets than the combined incomes of countries representing 45 percent of the planet's population." [<http://www.worldsocialism.org>] "Incomes of the richest fifth of the world population," they add, "are now on average fifty times the incomes of the poorest fifth."

Socialism means replacing capitalism with a worldwide social system in which the means of production and distribution cease to be privately owned and pass to the whole community. As stated already, this is a goal only the majority can design and implement.

This majority must want to bring to an end the present competition between countries for markets and sources of raw materials that causes international rivalries and leads to war. It must want to cease immediately producing goods and services for sale on the market at a profit, and to begin producing them instead for the direct use of the human community. It must intend that all forms of income derived in property society (profits, wages, rents and interest) shall be replaced *now* by free access to what people need.

Thinking for yourself

The WSP(US) makes no offer to solve the workers' problems for them. We do not cultivate a philosophy of leadership. Left to themselves, people will almost always take what initiatives they need to. We work in the confidence that people are perfectly capable of using their native intelligence to understand how capitalism works, that they

Continued on next page

will have no trouble recognizing how to replace it with socialism. Putting trust in leaders and their promises can never match the power of a self-reliant majority motivated to think for itself.

Given this basic understanding and desire on the part of most people, the economic problem to be tackled by a socialist society will be the organization of the able-bodied population in producing freely accessible food, clothing, houses, and whatever else is needed for the full life of human beings. This socialist principle expresses it best: *from each* according to their abilities and *to each* according to their needs.

Socialism cannot be brought about inside the capitalist system or within the frontiers of a single country. One social system can only replace another, and socialism, which is necessarily international, must begin where global capitalism left off.

In our view, the policy of dealing with social problems one by one is *not* the road to socialism. The task of socialists is to facilitate the majority's achievement of a fundamental change in the basis of society. Whatever the alleged merits of particular schemes for dealing with particular evils, they necessarily fail in their purpose, because they are not designed to bring about a change of *system*. The end result of campaigning for reforms is either that a new set of evils replaces an old set, or old problems are incorporated into new solutions. Capital meanwhile continues to trample on us all.

If you think that present-day problems like the cost of living, inadequate wages and the shortage of decent housing are new, think again. Such problems have been harassing workers from capitalism's earliest beginnings — over 300 years ago. Capitalism will never solve them. The struggle to achieve a better and more secure living goes on ... and continues to get nowhere.

The New Deal came and went in the

30s, paid for ultimately only by leading millions off to the slaughterhouse in the 40s. Workers let the postwar boom of the 50s lull them into believing that capital could be milked with the right combination of reforms, paving the way for the "Great Society's" welfare state in the 60s. And did the workers finally tame the tiger they had held so long by the tail? After all the glib assurances that welfare programs could take a bite out of poverty, the working class at the turn of the century finds itself looking forward to a humiliating future of creeping impoverishment — downsized, temped, overworked, underpaid. Politicians greet the return of widespread poverty and homelessness with complacent boredom, while an inscrutable and corrupt business aristocracy celebrates the defeat of the Left and chases new wars around the globe.

Welfare legislation, now crumbling under the onslaught of this new aristocracy, was at best only ever a collection of schemes to make poverty less burdensome to the poor. The decline of the welfare state demonstrates all too clearly that the crumbs of "welfare," whether dropped by the rich out of generosity or fear, have nothing in common with the socialist aim of establishing an entire *system* of society in which the concepts of riches and poverty will draw a blank among the young.

Naturally, socialists recognize the importance of keeping up the struggle over wages and working conditions while capitalism lasts, but this is not all that must be done, for it still leaves unchallenged the right of the capitalists to own the means of production. We are here to facilitate the speedy termination of the employment system itself and the capitalism to which it belongs — nothing less. The World Socialist Party therefore does not support nationalization, which is better described as a form of state capitalism. Nationalization means only state or public ownership, not common ownership,

and it has failed miserably to live up to expectations wherever it has been tried.

The world we live in, like the one our forefathers lived in, offers little more than hard work, insufficient wages and insecurity. Keep trusting the capitalist class and it will bring you bigger deserts, hotter climates, lakes and rivers you must forbid your children to swim in, ever-increasing pollution of the environment, fishless seas — perhaps even a dead planet. Capitalists remain disturbingly nonchalant about their global thermonuclear option, even in the absence of a credible bogeyman to use it on.

Is this what we want to pass on to our children, when a world free from these and other troubles is within our grasp? It is no use leaving the job of understanding and acting to others. Being free of capitalism's insecurity and tribulations requires enough people creatively understanding and joining together to take the action that will result in our common emancipation.

The ballot weapon

Socialism cannot come about until the majority understands and desires it and democratically takes the steps necessary to achieve it. The socialist majority, using the vote to gain control of the government through delegates having revocable mandates, will use that control to end the employment system once and for all by legalizing free access to all goods and services needed by the population. This will bring the revolution to a head and set the stage for all the required fundamental changes that follow.

And what kind of people, finally, join the WSP? Only convinced socialists can become members. As you may have surmised by now, we do not admit anyone, however sincere, who wants only to palliate capitalism's worst evils through reforms. This is because an influx of reformists would ultimately compromise both the socialist nature and the completely democratic character of our organization, leading as it must to the emergence of interests within the party tied to one or another aspect of the capitalist system. At its formation the party adopted as a statement of vision and purpose its Object and Declaration of Principles (see "World Socialism: What makes it tick"), and admission to membership has from its beginning depended upon acceptance and understanding of these. Ø

We are here to facilitate the speedy termination of the employment system itself and the capitalism to which it belongs — nothing less.

World Socialism: What makes it tick

In every copy of the World Socialist Review and on most pieces of literature published by the Companion Parties of Socialism you will find our Object and Declaration of Principles. Those who read the following analysis of these principles with care will notice some occasional repetitions. This is because the Object and Principles were designed to tie together. Thus, one cannot accept some points and reject others: they stand in their entirety, on sturdy feet and solid ground. Taken as a whole, the Object and Declaration of Principles form a single interrelated statement, no clause of which is intended to be analyzed independently of the whole. They constitute, we believe, a scientific presentation of the goal we are organized to attain, the basic reasons why such a goal is of the greatest urgency, and the way in which a socialist working class should go about reaching it.

OBJECT

The establishment of a system of society based upon the common ownership and democratic control of the means and instruments for producing and distributing wealth by and in the interest of society as a whole.

A system of society alludes to the sum total of human relationships and is meant to distinguish us from those who seek to organize cooperatives or communes, islands within a sea of capitalism. Socialism, as we understand it, is not a commune, not a kibbutz, but a system of society in the sense that capitalism, feudalism, and chattel slavery may all be characterized as systems of society.

The term common ownership should not be confused with such phenomena as state ownership, or “public” ownership, terms used under capitalism to designate a more direct ownership of certain industries by the capitalist class as a whole. Common ownership implies the absence of ownership and we specify that this common ownership is to apply to the means and instruments for producing and distributing wealth. We do not speak here of one’s personal belongings. Democratic control should speak for itself;

What is the World Socialist Movement (WSM)?

The World Socialist Movement is an organization which began with the founding of the Socialist Party of Great Britain in 1904. The Companion Parties of Socialism, which make up the World Socialist Movement, are those parties sharing an understanding of what socialism means, how to establish socialism, and a scientific analysis of past and current society.

worth stressing, even so, is that it is difficult to conceive of control being other than democratic in a society in which the means and instruments of wealth production and distribution are commonly owned.

PRINCIPLE #1

That society, as at present constituted, is based upon the ownership of the means of living (i.e., land, factories, railways, etc.) by the capitalist or master class, and the consequent enslavement of the working class, by whose labor alone wealth is produced.

Around the world today it is self-evident that a tiny minority of the population owns the means and instruments of wealth production and distribution, either directly or through ownership of stocks and bonds. Even the sidewalks and public buildings are actually owned by those few members of the population who own the bulk of municipal and government bonds. The reason they don’t charge the general population for using their sidewalks and only restrict access to them or to “public” buildings on rare occasions, is that the working class must not be hampered in their comings and goings like the chattel slaves and serfs of former times. Nevertheless, the majority of the population today remain slaves, chained to a class rather than to an individual. Lack of ownership of the means and instruments of wealth production and distribution compels the working class to work for those who do own.

The process in those countries that not so long ago designated themselves “communist” or “socialist” was not significantly different. A minority of the population, through ownership of government

bonds or in some cases radically reforming the state and even the economy, owned and controlled the means by which all must live, compelling the majority to seek employment at wages or salaries.

Despite its subordinate status, the working class is the one class essential to production and distribution — a point we will encounter again.

PRINCIPLE #2

That, in society, therefore, there is an antagonism of interests, manifesting itself as a class struggle between those who possess but do not produce, and those who produce but do not possess.

Explicit in this clause are three facts of life often hotly denied by defenders of capitalism: strikes and lockouts are nothing if not manifestations of a struggle between economic classes, the capitalist class’s manifest parasitism makes it non-essential to production, and the working class obviously fails to participate in the ownership of capital, in the face of its undeniable responsibility for all of production.

Yet the statement stands, despite the rationalizations of labor union brass, the payment of huge salaries and “perks” to corporate CEOs as “essential management,” and even the diffusion of stock ownership among sections of the working class. Unions, although essentially working-class organizations, must operate within the framework of the employment system, must cooperate and compromise with the managers of capital, and must support the lie of a common interest between employers and workers. It is useless to cry “traitor” and “sell-out” at labor leaders. It is the nature of capitalism that they operate as they do.

On the other hand, capitalists who act as managers do so by their own choice, not because they are economically necessary. Some of them, in the style of Peter the Great or Nikolai Lenin, relish the adventure of climbing the ladder themselves, of learning the ropes by “thinking different.” The institutions of higher learning long ago instituted business schools for the growing of managerial brains. But the entrepreneurs who prefer

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to go to the office, generally speaking, could hire their replacements with little difficulty. The entire capitalist class could be resettled on the moon with no noticeable impact on the way their system operates. (In fact, even at the height of the Cultural Revolution, Chinese state capitalism worked along the lines of just such a policy, cultivating a class of businessmen in a separate nursery from its “planned economy.”)

Nor does the possession of stocks to the extent enjoyed by average working people place them in the capitalist class. This is a quaint delusion. None of them could live on such an income for more than a short period, assuming the stock market beast did not devour them anyway.

PRINCIPLE #3

That this antagonism can be abolished only by the emancipation of the working class from the domination of the master class, by the conversion into the common property of society of the means of production and distribution, and their democratic control by the whole people.

The majority may still quarrel with our assumption that the working class will eventually take such action, but it can hardly quarrel with the point that class antagonisms cannot exist where economic classes do not exist. As for the instrument that will enable the whole people to exercise democratic control of the common

property of society, such an instrument already exists. Intrinsically, there is nothing wrong with institutions where representatives assemble to parley (parliaments, congresses, diets, or even so-called Soviets). What is wrong about them — today — is that such congresses are used to carry out the wishes of the capitalist class. Remove class society from the picture and the assemblies will function in the interest of the whole people. We advocate transforming the state from government or rule over people by a master class into an administration of things in the interest of all mankind, through the elimination of modern class rule’s twin foundations, capital and wages.

PRINCIPLE #4

That as in the order of social evolution the working class is the last class to achieve its freedom, the emancipation of the working class will involve the emancipation of all mankind, without distinction of race or sex.

Capitalism has narrowed the class struggle to the point at which there are left but two contending classes. It is obvious that once the working class has taken political control from the capitalists there remains no class beneath it to exploit. The very act of stripping the capitalists from control of the state by abolishing the need for an income, and therefore the entire system of employment capitalists depend on, brings with it the end of class society and the resultant emancipation of all man-

kind. All distinctions and discriminations existing today, such as those based on ethnicity or sex, will vanish.

PRINCIPLE #5

That this emancipation must be the work of the working class itself.

No minority section of the population, no educated leadership, no vanguard composed of professional revolutionaries from the ranks of the intelligentsia (as Lenin and the Bolsheviks advocated almost a century ago), can lead the working class to socialism. Social revolutions are made by those whose immediate interest it is to abolish existing relationships. The concept of leadership, “correct” or otherwise, is not only unnecessary to a revolutionary working class but harmful to its interests. Leaders, in fact, can never lead masses where they do not want to go. They must advocate policies and action favorable to the followers, which makes the leaders followers themselves. When the working class understands and desires socialism it will appoint and elect delegates, not leaders, to do its bidding.

PRINCIPLE #6

That as the machinery of governments, including the armed forces of the nation, exists only to conserve the monopoly by the capitalist class of the wealth taken from the workers, the working class must organize consciously and politically for the conquest of the powers of government, in order that this machinery, including these forces, may be converted from an instrument of oppression into the agent of emancipation and overthrow of plutocratic privilege.

Many a would-be revolutionary will tell you that the machinery of government is either too vast or that the iron grip of the capitalist class is too tight for an anti-capitalist opposition to “conquer the powers of government.” Perhaps they have been overawed by the propaganda put out by the mass media (in which case the investment paid off). If, however, all they have to go on is their convictions, there are sufficient cases on record of revolutions that have either weathered the effects of any reactionary sentiment in the military or that have in some cases won over the pawns in their game, the ordinary soldiers. Predictions like this serve only to numb and demoralize; they cannot claim to be factual.

How will people who disagree be treated in socialism?

Freedom must include allowing disagreement with the status quo and spreading unpopular ideas, but freedom does not include hurting people or destroying the common wealth of humanity. While it is impossible to predict the shape of institutions in a world where the administration of things has replaced government over people, anthropologists have uncovered enough instances of methods used by “primitive” communities to resolve disputes without resorting to force. It is merely a question of how. Whatever methods are devised, they will undoubtedly be more humane than those “civilization” has handed down to us.

If disaffected individuals or groups should foolishly attempt to promote a revival of capitalism or some other class-divided social form, they would face all the difficulties the first capitalists did and many more. They would above all have to demonstrate to their free contemporaries the desirability of volunteering for slavery. (Missionaries among peoples of color are familiar with this problem.) The dissenters would in effect have to miraculously revive the corpse of a dead social order. As to violent behavior, whatever the methods of control communities eventually do adopt, it will be much easier for them to isolate and neutralize aggressive tendencies than it is in a system like capitalism, which can only channel aggression by rewarding it.



Meeting hall of the Executive Committee of the capitalist class for the duration — pending the abolition of wages and capital.

Anarchists, syndicalists and industrial unionists contend that the power of capital resides basically in industry rather than in control of the state. One is either to ignore the state entirely while advocating general strikes, individual acts of terror, armed insurrection, or one is to advocate the organization of “socialist” industrial unions that would “back up” a socialist majority at the polls. But if control of the state is so secondary, why does history not seem to show it? Given the opportunity, not only do capitalists almost invariably move to buttress their position of advantage militarily once in control of government, but military power itself becomes a growth industry in the developed countries. And more concretely, there have been many examples of orders from a state governor or the President of the United States to mobilize National Guards or U.S. Army units, and even of the conversion of the first into the second to thwart a recalcitrant state governor. It is an empirical and historical given in this country that the armed forces, from city police to U.S. servicemen, move only at the command of those who sit in control of political power.

How, then, should the working class organize to end capitalism? Naturally, it must be on the political front, but it must certainly be more than merely politically. And that is why in our proposition the word “consciously” comes before the term “politically.” This is the key. The working class must not not leave the thinking to

“wise” leaders, political messiahs, etc. It must know what it is doing. Once in control of the seats of power, a victorious socialist working class can immediately declare the end of class ownership and immediately convert the government over people into an administration over things. The capitalist class will cease to exist as a class category and without control of a state will be in no position to do anything important about it — except to retire and submit.

PRINCIPLE #7

That as political parties are but the expression of class interests, and as the interest of the working class is diametrically opposed to the interest of all sections of the master class, the party seeking working class emancipation must be hostile to every other party.

This proposition points to the fact that political parties exist as the expression not solely of class interests but also of the interests of different sections of the capitalist class. The record of history, again, testifies how eagerly capitalists enlist the aid of workers, even radicals “of the worst sort,” when their particular interests move them. Capitalists who have their investments in retail merchandising, for example, may unite with leftists in a struggle against high rents and interest rates, as happened in October 2002 with the election of the leftwing Lula government in Brazil — there are, after all, only so many dollars of wages and salaries to go around and why should the landlords get more of them? Landlords, on the other hand, might enlist in a protest against

high prices in supermarkets, department stores, etc. And each section within the capitalist class tries to shift the burden of taxation onto the shoulders of the other sections, going all out to convince the workers this is their fight, too.

There cannot be more than one socialist party in one country because there is but one reason for the existence of a socialist party: to get rid of capitalism and right away. It follows then that the socialist party “must be hostile [i.e., opposed] to every other party.” Should another party appear on the scene with the same views as the World Socialist Party, steps would be taken for consolidation. We are not in competition with others for the establishment of a classless society.

PRINCIPLE #8

The Companion Parties of Socialism, therefore, enter the field of political action determined to wage war against all other political parties, whether alleged labor or avowedly capitalist, and call upon all members of the working class of those countries to support these principles to the end that a termination may be brought to the system which deprives them of the fruits of their labor, and that poverty may give place to comfort, privilege to equality, and slavery to freedom.

There are other ways of “waging war” than using bombs and guns as our masters do to protect or expand their dominion. Socialists wage war by building an arsenal of socialist information and using this arsenal to the fullest extent of their capabilities to counter the propaganda of the capitalist class. We direct this “war” not only against the avowedly capitalist political parties like the Republicans, Democrats, Independents, Libertarians, Greens or other designations expressing one theory or another of how to operate capitalism. But we also take aim at those organizations who falsely style themselves socialist or communist and who at the same time seek votes by advocating reforms within capitalism or violence by unarmed workers against those who control the arms of the state. None of these “belligerents” really believes revolution is possible anyway, and supporting any of them will just keep the system spinning round and round as if nothing were wrong with it. We ask the support of the working class only for the immediate abolition of the wages system and the immediate institution of world socialism, and nothing else. Ø

The ideal producer of the future
Frans Masereel, 1919.
Source: International
Institute of Social
History,
Collection IISG,
Amsterdam
(<http://www.iisg.nl:80/exhibitions/art/maser05.html>)



The capitalist
Albert Hahn, 1909.
Source: International
Institute of Social History,
Collection IISG, Amsterdam
(<http://www.iisg.nl:80/exhibitions/art/indexhahn2.html>)

CAPITALISM IN A NUTSHELL

Must capitalism have a free market? It is widely assumed that capitalism means a free market economy. But it is possible to have capitalism without a free market. The systems that existed in the USSR and exists in China and Cuba demonstrate this. These class-divided societies have been widely called “socialist.” A cursory glance at what in fact existed there reveals that these countries were simply state capitalist. In supposedly “socialist” Russia, for example, there still existed wage slavery, commodity production, buying, selling and exchange, with production only taking place when it was viable to do so. “Socialist” Russia continued to trade according to the dictates of international capital and like every other capitalist state was prepared to go to war to defend its economic interests. The role of the Soviet state became simply to act as the functionary of capital in the exploitation of wage labor, setting targets for production and largely controlling what could or could not be produced. We therefore feel justified in asserting that such countries had nothing to do with socialism as we define it. In fact, socialism as we define it could not exist in one country alone: like capitalism it must be a global system of society.

It is also possible (at least in theory) to have a free market economy that is not capitalist. Such a “market economy” would involve farmers, artisans and shopkeepers each producing a particular product that they would exchange via the medium of money. There would be no profit-making and no class division — just independent producers exchanging goods for their mutual benefit. But it is doubtful whether such an economy has ever existed. The nearest that may have come to it would have been in some of the early colonial settlements in North America. Some Greens wish to see a return to this kind of economy. We do not think that it is a viable alternative for modern society. Such a system would almost inevitably lead to capital accumulation and profit making — the definitive features of capitalism. Ø

The word capitalism is now quite commonly used to describe the social system in which we now live. It is also often assumed that it has existed, if not forever, then for most of human history. In fact, capitalism is a relatively new social system.

So what exactly does “capitalism” mean?

Class division Capitalism is the social system which now exists in all countries of the world. Under this system, the means for producing and distributing goods (the land, factories, technology, transport system etc) are owned by a small minority of people. We refer to this group of people as the capitalist class. The majority of people must sell their ability to work in return for a wage or salary, referred to as the working class.

The working class is paid to produce goods and services which are then sold for a profit. The profit is gained by the capitalist class because it makes more money selling what we workers have produced than it costs it to buy our working abilities on the labor market. In this sense, the working class is exploited by the capitalist class. The capitalists live off the profits they obtain from exploiting the working class while reinvesting some of their profits for the further accumulation of wealth.

This is what we mean when we say there are two classes in society. It is a claim based upon simple facts about the society we live in today. This class division is the essential feature of capitalism. It may be popular to talk (usually vaguely) about various other “classes” existing such as the “middle class,” but it is the two classes defined here that are the key to understanding capitalism.

It may not be exactly clear at times which class some relatively wealthy people are in. But there is no ambiguity about the status of the vast majority of the world’s

population. Members of the capitalist class certainly know who they are. And most members of the working class know that they need to work for a wage or salary in order to earn a living (or are dependent upon somebody who does, or depend upon state benefits.)

The profit motive In capitalism, the motive for producing goods and services is to sell them for a profit, not to satisfy people’s needs. The products of capitalist production have to find a buyer, of course, but this is only incidental to the main aim of making a profit, of ending up with more money than was originally invested. This is not a theory that we have thought up but a fact you can easily confirm for yourself by reading the financial press. Production is started not by what consumers are prepared to pay to satisfy their needs but by what the capitalists calculate can be sold at a profit. Those goods may satisfy human needs, but those needs will not be met if people do not have sufficient money for them.

The profit motive is not ultimately the result of greed on behalf of individual capitalists. They do not have a choice about it. The need to make a profit is imposed on capitalists as a condition for not losing their investments and their position as capitalists. Competition with other capitalists forces them to reinvest as much of their profits as they can afford, to keep their means and methods of production up to date.

As you will read elsewhere in this issue, we hold that it is the class division and profit motive of capitalism that are at the root of most of the world’s problems today, from starvation and war to alienation and crime. Every aspect of our lives is subordinated to the worst excesses of the drive to make a profit. In capitalist society, our real needs will only ever come a poor second to the requirements of profit.

SOCIALISM IN A NUTSHELL

First of all socialism is not utopia

Socialism will not be some utopian dream, although compared to our lives today it may seem like it. Socialism will allow humanity to find its full potential, unhindered by the requirements of profit. Socialism is not a magic formula that will make all of our problems disappear.

Socialism: a wageless, moneyless society

Money and wages are entirely unnecessary to fulfill our needs. In fact, money prevents the fulfillment of the most basic needs of millions of people. Because they cannot afford to buy food and shelter, millions of people are denied these fundamental requirements, for life. Production for need, not profit is the only way to satisfy human needs, both physical and emotional.

More leisure time & no useless work

Because so much of the work in present society is tied not to the production of wealth, but to dealing with money, many jobs that currently exist will not be necessary. The entire banking industry, the insurance industry, tax collectors, cashiers and many other industries and jobs will not be needed. The people now employed in these jobs will be available to produce goods that are useful to people and this great increase in the useful work force will reduce the number of hours of work required from each individual. Since useless jobs will be eliminated, and people will produce to satisfy needs, work may come to be regarded not as “the daily grind,” but as a personally satisfying part of life. If this happens then the distinction between work and leisure may not even exist.

Voluntary production Today, people go to work and cooperate to produce all the goods and services that are available. Many people enjoy their jobs and the feeling that they have accomplished something. They have built a house to satisfy someone’s need for housing. They have participated in harvesting food for people to eat. They have produced a work of art for people to enjoy. They have taught mathematics or biology or literature to help their students understand and solve the problems of society.

When a job is satisfying, when we can see the benefit to ourselves and other people, we like to work. Untold millions of hours of voluntary labour are given freely by people who want to help others live a better life. It is a myth that people are naturally lazy and only work when forced to do so.

In socialist society all work will be voluntary. Artists will produce art, carpenters will build houses, medical professionals will tend to the sick, farmers will grow food.

The most important feature of wealth production in socialist society will be that the wealth will be available to those who need it, whereas in the present system, capitalism, it is available only to those who can afford it.

It is satisfaction of self-defined needs

Because there will be no money, people will be able to take the goods they need from the stock of available goods produced by society. In other words, there will be no poverty, since poverty is the denial of peoples’ needs.

A world without war Because current society is based upon unsatisfied need and maximizing profit, wars are inevitable. The elimination of money and profit will end war forever. We will no longer produce weapons to kill other human beings or destroy the wealth that we have slaved to produce. With the end of the war machine, the entire productive capacity in this industry of death will be available to produce wealth for living.

No property crime Since most crime is property crime — people seeking to acquire wealth that is denied them — and the wealth produced by society will be freely available to those who need it, this whole arena of crime will disappear.

Reduced crimes against people These are the real crimes in society. With free access to wealth, the worst crime against people — poverty — will vanish.

Violence reduced significantly Most, if not all, violence is caused by living in a society that does not meet people’s needs. With the end of property crime, the violence associated with it will also be eliminated.

Most of the remainder of violence in current society is a result of mental illness.

Much of this mental illness is aggravated, if not caused, by living in a society that promotes a “dog-eat-dog” attitude. Every one of us is brutalized by this society in one way or another. Is it any surprise that some people react violently?

In current society, where people are used as implements of wealth production, is it any wonder that people treat each other not as valuable human beings but as objects to be used by those with the power to do so? Isn’t it “normal” in a society like this, that brutalized people brutalize others?

In a socialist society, this dehumanization will cease, people will not see others as property to be abused by its owner. The laws in today’s society do not even attempt to end violence, just to keep it to acceptable levels. In socialist society, violence will no longer be acceptable, it will not be macho, it will not be ignored, it will be revolting. The sick will be treated.

Community Society is not something that people merely exist in, society is how people relate to each other. In socialist society people will be able to express the normal caring love of others that we currently suppress. Only in a society organized to satisfy human needs, can we really have a sense of community that is inclusive and not exclusive. The world will be our community, and everyone’s well-being will be our concern.

A green environment In socialism, the value of environmental care will not only be recognized, but with the elimination of the profit motive, will be a part of everyday life and every industry. The worker versus environmentalist conflict that both have been losing will end when society is organized to serve humanity as a whole, not just a rich minority. Humanity needs a healthy planet. Today’s society is organized to produce short term profit, it cannot also maintain a healthy planet.

Real needs Today we are constantly bombarded by advertising telling us how much we need to buy the latest and greatest produce of society. But this advertising is designed to create “needs” for the sole purpose of selling a product and producing a profit.

Continued on next page

In socialism, the manufacture of needs to create profits will not exist. No one can predict exactly how we will live our lives in socialism, or what we will consider necessities. But it should not be difficult for most of us to find several useless things in our homes that we have bought and never used. Useless junk that the advertising industry convinced us that we needed.

Nothing but the best Unlike the reality of capitalism, in socialism there will be no benefit to producing poor quality. And by producing high quality goods that will last, and eliminating created needs, the world's resources will last longer.

Freedom Most Americans are glad to live in a free and democratic country, but how free and democratic is it really?

Almost every freedom is dependent on having enough money to enjoy it. The freedom to travel is severely restricted if you cannot afford the bus fare.

The freedom to say what you wish is very effectively restricted by the amount of money available to publicize your ideas. Those with money have no problem filling the media with their ideas and lies.

The freedom to vote every few years for the least repugnant of a bunch of political parties (gangs?), none of which can make this system work, is not a lot of freedom.

Not a better way to run capitalism There is no good way to run capitalism. It would be difficult to imagine a way that has not been tried and failed. From no government intervention in the early days of capitalism, to near total regulation by the government as in the USSR and Cuba, every attempt to make capitalism work has failed to satisfy the needs of people.

Socialism is the only option remaining. Ø

Socialists talk of a moneyless society. Does that mean we'll use the barter system?

In a socialist society, there will be no money and no barter. Goods will be voluntarily produced, and services voluntarily supplied to meet people's needs. People will freely take the things they need.

World without accountant\$

It is often claimed that market competition makes society run efficiently. It is even claimed that it ensures our resources are used in the interests of society as a whole. In reality, the destructive waste generated by the market system is so vast and complex that it is impossible to measure it precisely.

We can get an idea of the scale of present waste by looking at different kinds of jobs and asking whether they are connected with providing for real needs, or whether they are only connected with operating the market itself. For example, does a bank worker contribute to real needs? In their work, bank workers spend the day counting out money or transferring totals from one piece of paper or computer screen to another. Under capitalism it is obviously an indispensable employment. But this work arises from the lending and borrowing of money for investment, purchasing and so on. It is therefore inextricably bound up with the day-to-day operation of the market system. It is not intrinsically useful work, necessary for the production of goods and the running of services for needs.

To banking we could add insurance and finance. But the waste does not stop here. All these functions are serviced by other workers.

For example, bank workers are carried to work by transport, they work in buildings which require maintenance and use equipment such as computers. In this way the administration and servicing of the profits system involves circuits of waste which pervade the entire structure of production.

There are many other examples of employment which is necessary for the profit system but would be immediately redundant in a socialist society of common rather than private ownership and production for use instead of for market sale. The list is a long one: legal workers, certified public accountants, cost accountants, estimators, valuers, claims

assessors, underwriters, brokers, taxation workers, marketing and sales personnel, advertisers, social security workers, cashiers and check-out assistants, police, prison workers, security guards, charities, armies, navies, air forces, armament workers, defense establishments, etc.

The armed forces, in particular, waste vast resources. They use millions of people and divert the most advanced techniques of applied science. On a world scale, tens of millions of people are involved in the war machine. With the abolition of the armed forces, these vast resources of energy, skills, materials, and technology would all become available for useful production in socialism.

Moreover, wars, large or small, are always going on in capitalism and means of production are constantly being destroyed. War objectives include the destruction of industrial networks and communication systems. In the wars of this century the destruction of factories, industrial equipment, buildings, railways, roads and bridges represents a vast amount of waste. It also involves a massive waste of the labor used in their construction.

Other people who are at present wasted under capitalism are the unemployed. They represent the whole spectrum of human skills forced into idleness while human needs are denied. This in itself constitutes the self-evident proof that the capitalist system maintains an economic barrier between production and needs.

A final acute problem of wasted labor arises from world-wide poverty.

The full extent of waste under capitalism is impossible to quantify precisely. But taking account of the main features, we can estimate that, with the elimination of all of capitalism's wasted labor and materials, socialism will probably be able to at least double the number of people available for the production of useful goods and services directly for need.

— P. Lawrence

**ALL PARTY
EVENTS ARE OPEN
TO THE PUBLIC**



Reformists all *Eduard Bernstein, Vladimir Lenin, Leon Trotsky, Josef Stalin, Mao Zedong, Fidel Castro.*

Revolution or reform?

Given all that we have said so far about capitalism, it seems obvious that something must be done. But what? Can capitalism be made to work differently? Or must there be a social revolution to replace capitalism with some other society? This is a debate that has raged for over a century.

The route of trying to change capitalism, or “reform,” is the one that has been taken by most people who have wanted to improve society. We do not deny that certain reforms won by the working class have helped to improve our general living and working conditions. Indeed, we see little wrong with people campaigning for reforms that bring essential improvements and enhance the quality of their lives, and some reforms do indeed make a difference to the lives of millions and can be viewed as “successful.” There are examples of this in areas like education, housing, child employment, work conditions and social security. However, in this regard we also recognize that such “successes” have in reality done little more than keep workers and their families in efficient working order and, while it has taken the edge off the problem, it has rarely managed to remove the problem

completely. What we are opposed to is the whole culture of reformism, the idea that capitalism can be made palatable with the right reforms. By that we mean that we oppose those organizations that promise to deliver a program of reforms on behalf of the working class, often in order that the organization dishing out the promises can gain a position of power. Such groups, especially those of the left wing, often have real aims quite different from the reform program they peddle. In this, they are being as dishonest as any other politician, from the left or right. The ultimate result of this is disillusionment with the possibility of radical change.

Getting something done

If you are convinced, however, that groups or parties promising reforms deserve your support, we would urge you to consider the following points.

1. The campaign, whether directed at right-wing or left-wing governments, will often only succeed if it can be reconciled with the profit-making needs of the system. In other words, the reform will often be turned to the benefit of the capitalist class at the expense of any working class gain.

2. Any reform can be reversed and eroded later if a government finds it necessary.

3. Reforms rarely, if ever, actually solve the problem they were intended to solve.

This was summed up by William Morris over a century ago: “The palliatives over which many worthy people are busying themselves now are useless because they are but unorganized partial revolts against a vast, wide-spreading, grasping organization which will, with the unconscious instinct of a plant, meet every attempt at bettering the conditions of the people with an attack on a fresh side.” For more on William Morris, see *William Morris: How We Live and How We Might Live*.

What if people want too much?

Society already has the knowledge and technology to satisfy all of our basic needs sustainably. There is every reason to believe that socialist society will supply every human being with all the material goods they need for a comfortable, pleasant, enjoyable life. In a socialist society “too much” can only mean “more than is sustainably produced.” If people were still able to decide that they (individually and as a society) needed to over-consume, they would not have succeeded in replacing capitalism with socialism yet, because over-consumption is a behavior symptomatic of capitalism’s need to sell an ever-expanding heap of commodities.

Under capitalism, there is a very large industry devoted to creating needs. It tells us we need toilet seat warmers, nifty gadgets (that often don’t work), new this and more that, and attempts to convince us that our human worth is dependent upon our material wealth. Capitalism requires consumption, whether it improves our lives or not, and drives us to consume up to, and past, our ability even to pay for that consumption. On top of that, goods are not built to last because that would interfere with profit making. Socialism will be a very different society. Goods will be built to last. The buy-buy-buy advertising industry will no longer exist. People may decide that they have better things to do than to produce goods widely seen to be extravagances. And with the pressure turned off, people will even have a chance to discover that acquiring material goods doesn’t necessarily make them any happier.

In other words, although individual reforms may be worthy of support, the political strategy of reformism — promising to win reforms on behalf of others — is a detour that leads nowhere. Those wanting to improve society should seriously question whether capitalism offers enough scope for achieving lasting solutions to the vast range of social problems to which it gives rise. Of course, some improvements are made and some problems are alleviated. Yet new kinds of problems also arise in a society which is changing ever more rapidly, seeking new ways to make a profit. Ø

Is socialism against human nature?

How

often do we hear it said “It’s only human nature?” And

mostly about an anti-social piece of behavior, as if

it couldn’t be avoided? Curiously, it is not often said about the best things that people can do. On hearing that someone has risked their life to save another, for some reason we are not inclined to say “Yes, it’s human nature.”

Mostly, the idea of “human nature” is a reflection of a divisive society that is incapable of creating a decent life for all its members. This failure is then rationalized as a pessimistic view that all people (mainly other people) are inherently selfish, greedy and lazy. This view has been used as an objection to socialism, in which all the bad examples of human behavior under capitalism are called upon to say that a society based on equality and voluntary cooperation is impossible.

Not genetically programmed

This prejudice is also reinforced by arguments which assert that our behavior and our relationships result from the way we are biologically or genetically programmed. These focus on competition, leadership, possessiveness, aggression, social and sexual inequality and an alleged drive to be territorial — but again, all these are behavior patterns that reflect capitalism.

The arrival of capitalism is a relatively recent phenomenon in human history, 90 percent of which has been spent living as hunter gatherers, in small tribes moving from place to place. This ended with the rise of settled agriculture about ten thousand years ago, and a great variety of social and economic organizations have followed across different parts of the world. If our social arrangements were determined by our biology then this diversity of human behavior, relationships and culture would never have arisen.

The anthropological and psychological scientific evidence supports a view that humans are able to adapt to cope with the challenges presented by the natural and social environments within which they have had to live. Evidence from the now completed human genome project supports the view of the adaptability of human beings. Dr. Craig Venter, President and chief scientific officer of Celera Genomics (the private firm that wants to patent genes for profit and thus not someone to be suspected of anti-capitalist or pro-socialist leanings) declared in the official press



release issued by the journal *Science*, which published his firm’s results in its February 16, 2002 issue, that

There are many surprises from this first look at our genetic code that have important implications for humanity. Since the June 26, 2000 announcement our understanding of the human genome has changed in the most fundamental ways. The small number of genes — 30,000 instead of 140,000 — supported the notion that we are not hard-wired. We now know that the notion that one gene leads to one protein and perhaps one disease is false. One gene leads to many different products and those products-proteins- can change dramatically after they are produced. We know that regions of the genome that are not genes may be the key to the complexity we see in humans. We now know the environment acting on these biological steps may be key in making us what we are. Likewise the remarkably small number of genetic variations that occur in genes again suggest a significant role for environmental influences in developing each of our uniqueness.

Toolmaking, language and thought

While human genetic nature leaves much scope for variation in behavior, there are certain features that we all share and that distinguish us from other species. These include the ability to walk upright, binocular color vision, hands with opposable thumbs, organs capable of speech and the ability to think conceptually. These physical and cognitive features have led to the versatility of the human species as embodied in their labor as well as to social behavior such as the accumulation of shared experience that can be passed down through the generations. The development of tools, from the flint-working technique during the paleolithic period to the computers and space vehicles of today, is central to understanding human history.

It may have been that this toolmaking tradition played a key part in the development of human consciousness. The tools made by early human kind objectified the existence of the tool makers, and in contemplating this they became conscious of their own existence. This reflection of their own lives in their own creations may have led to a heightened self-awareness and an ability to think in an expanded time-frame of past, present and future. Language could then develop from basic references to material objects, to higher levels of abstract thought which expressed a developing, more complex vision of their world. It was possibly then that humanity created ideas and culture, relying less on instinct and more on cerebral calculation. Through this dynamic interaction between human characteristics and the environment which was epitomized by the labor process, human beings not only altered their conditions of life; they changed themselves. What this required was not an invariable set of behavior patterns programmed by genetic coding, but adaptability.

But why will people work if they don't have to?

This question refers implicitly to the “human nature” objection: since human nature is weak, unreliable or vicious, socialism could not possibly work. This stems from a failure to consider both sides of the question. Freed of the need to get money, people will work to serve both their own and others’ convenience. If enough people didn’t work to meet the needs of communities, society would obviously fall apart. But why would a conscious majority vote to establish socialism in the first place if they did not already understand that someone must be prepared to do the work? Work, like leisure, is part of human life. Today rich people work when they don’t have to, because they, like many of the rest of us, enjoy working. Many people work harder at their hobbies than they do at work. It is the nature of employment that makes it “work” instead of pleasure. Work needn’t be a part of the day we wish would end.

Many people who are now unemployed, working in socially unnecessary occupations, imprisoned or people whom we now refer to politely as “investors” will be available to do whatever work needs to be done. This means that “jobs” will be spread out among more people, the concept of a “workday” will probably be radically redefined, and people will identify with working as decision-making participants, not as workers. “Dirty work” will become much cleaner once there is no longer anyone at the top to command those at the bottom to do things they had no say in determining the need for to begin with; any work that is still inherently dangerous or unpleasant will be re-evaluated based on the community’s need for it. If no one chose to mine coal or to work in a restaurant, coal mines would shut down and restaurants would vanish into history.

Predisposed to cooperation

But none of this would have been possible without cooperation. While we may not say that cooperation is programmed into our genes, it is certainly required for our social development. The view that cooperation was essential to the survival and development of human society has recently been supported by the work of the anthropologist Andrew Whiten, an evolutionary psychologist at St. Andrew’s University in the U.K. He argues that egalitarianism, sharing and lack of domination were the most prominent features in hunter-gatherer societies.

By cooperating with others through a division of labor we greatly increase what can be produced for our mutual benefit. Besides these material benefits, cooperation enables us to develop as individuals. Our individuality grows and finds its expression in relation to others, and this would be impossible in social isolation. In this process of individual growth we draw not only upon personal relationships but upon society in general and even upon the lives of those who lived in the past.

Cooperation is sometimes said to be impossible because there is an inherent conflict between self-interest and the interests of others. In fact, the reverse is true. The interests of the individual are best realized when people are working together. Ø



COVER ART: Refugee camp at Benako, Tanzania, 1994, by Sebastião Salgado. For samples of his work, see <http://www.masters-of-photography.com/S/salgado/salgado.html>.

A NOTE ON THE SOURCES

This issue was put together from a variety of sources. **UNSIGNED ARTICLES:** “Capitalism in a nutshell” (originally titled “What is capitalism?”), “Revolution or Reform?” and “Is socialism against human nature?” were lifted from the WSM Web site (<http://www.worldsocialism.org>) with slight modifications, for which we take all responsibility; the same for the “Frequently Asked Questions” scattered throughout, with some extensive transformations in a few cases (and our apologies). “Socialism in a nutshell” (originally “What is socialism?”) is adapted from a leaflet authored by the Socialist Party of Canada. **SIGNED ARTICLES:** “How to get everything for free” comes from a party leaflet and can also be found in its original form on the WSM Web site. “World without accountants” lives there likewise, along with many other excellent explorations of the case for socialism. “A world fit for human beings” is published unaltered, as it appeared in *New Democracy*; it has also been recycled as a party leaflet.

— Editorial Committee

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THE WORLD SOCIALIST PARTY OF THE UNITED STATES

object

The establishment of a system of society based on the common ownership and democratic control of the means and instruments for producing and distributing wealth by and in the interest of society as a whole.

declaration of principles

The Companion Parties of Socialism hold that:

- Society as at present constituted is based upon the ownership of the means of living (i.e., land, factories, railways, etc.) by the capitalist or master class, and consequent enslavement of the working class, by whose labor alone wealth is produced.
- In society, therefore, there is an antagonism of interests, manifesting itself as a class struggle between those who possess but do not produce, and those who produce but do not possess.
- This antagonism can be abolished only by the emancipation of the working class from the domination of the master class, by the conversion into the common property of society of the means of production and distribution, and their democratic control by the whole people.
- As in the order of social evolution the working class is the last class to achieve its freedom, the emancipation of the working class will involve the emancipation of all mankind, without distinction of race or sex.
- This emancipation must be the work of the working class itself.
- As the machinery of government, including the armed forces of the nation, exists only to conserve the monopoly by the capitalist class of the wealth taken from the workers, the working class must organize consciously and politically for the conquest of the powers of government, in order that this machinery, including these forces, may be converted from an instrument of oppression into the agent of emancipation and overthrow of plutocratic privilege.
- As political parties are but the expression of class interests, and as the interest of the working class is diametrically opposed to the interest of all sections of the master class, the party seeking working class emancipation must be hostile to every other party.

THE COMPANION PARTIES OF SOCIALISM, THEREFORE, enter the field of political action determined to wage war against all other political parties, whether alleged labor or avowedly capitalist, and call upon all members of the working class of these countries to support these principles to the end that a termination may be brought to the system which deprives them of the fruits of their labor, and that poverty may give place to comfort, privilege to equality, and slavery to freedom.



journal of the world socialist movement in the united states

the world socialist movement

THE FOLLOWING COMPANION PARTIES ADHERE TO THE SAME OBJECT AND DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES:

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We are committed to one overriding goal: the abolition of capitalism and the establishment of a truly democratic, socialist form of society. Accordingly, membership in the World Socialist Party requires a general understanding of the basic principles of scientific socialism and agreement with the Declaration of Principles. It is our view that a worldwide system of production for the satisfaction of human needs, individual and social, rather than for private profit requires a majority that is socialist in attitude and commitment. Events since the beginning of the World Socialist Movement have demonstrated the validity of this judgment.



Since our fundamental goal is quite firmly defined as the attainment of socialism it is important that members understand and accept our principles. To dilute the principles with reformist tendencies or advocacy of the undemocratic idea of "leadership," for example, would be to subvert the Party's reason for being.

That said, we recognize there is room for differences of opinion in a socialist party. In contrast to principles, relatively few in number, there are a multiplicity of matters upon which socialists may have all kinds of conflicting views. If you agree with the following statements, you are a socialist and you belong with us.

To establish socialism, the working class throughout the must gain control of the powers of government through their political organizations.

It is by virtue of its control of state power that the capitalist class is able to perpetuate its system. State power means control of the main avenues of "education" and propaganda, either directly or indirectly. It also means control of the armed forces that frequently and efficiently crush working-class attempts at violent opposition to the effects of capitalism. Moreover, the police and the armed forces are often used to combat workers during strikes and industrial disputes with employers. In a modern, highly developed capitalist society the only way to oust the capitalist class from ownership and control of the means of production is to first strip it of its control over the state. Once this has been accomplished, the state will be converted from a coercive government over people to an administration over things and community affairs. The World Socialist Party, therefore, advocates the ballot as the means of abolishing capitalism and establishing socialism. Socialism can only be established democratically; means cannot be separated from ends.

The present, capitalist, society, even with "repair" and reform, cannot function in the interests of the working class, who make up the majority of the population in most of the world today.

Indeed, by its very nature, capitalism requires continual reform. But reforms cannot alter the basic exploitative relationship of wage-labor and capital, or production for profit. Whatever the reformers' intentions, reforms function only to make capitalism run more smoothly and to make present-day society more palatable

to the working class by holding out false hopes of a fundamental change or radical improvement. In the long run, reforms benefit the owning, capitalist, class rather than the class that produces the wealth. The World Socialist Party does not advocate reforms of capitalism — only socialism.

The World Socialist Party does not support, directly or indirectly, any political party other than our companion parties in the World Socialist Movement. We can only oppose those parties that one way or another support the present system. Our main purpose is to make socialists, not to advocate the use of the ballot for anything short of socialism.

The form of society once in effect in the Soviet Union, and still more or less in effect in China and Cuba now, was not and is not socialism or communism. It was a dictatorial, bureaucratic form of state capitalism. In those countries, as in the United States, goods and services were and are produced primarily for profit and not primarily for use. Nationalization and government "ownership" of industry in no way alters the basic relationship of wage labor and capital. The bureaucratic class that controls this form of the state remains a parasitical, surplus-value-eating class.

Trade unionism is the institution by which wage and salary workers attempt by various means to sell their working abilities, their mental and physical energies, at the best possible price and to improve their working conditions. Workers without such organizations have no reliable economic weapons with which to resist the attempts of employers to beat down their standards. But unions necessarily work

within the framework of capitalism and are useful, therefore, only to a limited extent. They cannot alter the fundamental relationship between wage-labor and capital. They can only react to capital's fiat, particularly in the case of long-term issues like automation or unemployment. Every wage or salary increase, in fact, only spurs employers and investors to accelerate the replacement of humans by machines in the workplace. If anything, instead of foolishly selling themselves short by demanding "a fair day's wages for a fair day's work," workers would do far better to follow Marx's advice and simply abolish employment altogether.

The World Socialist Party rejects the theory of leadership. Neither "great" individuals nor self-appointed "vanguards" can bring the world one day closer to socialism. The emancipation of the working class must be the work of the working class itself. Educators to explain socialism, yes! Administration to carry out the will of the majority of the membership, yes! But leaders or "vanguards," never!

The socialist point of view rests solidly on the materialist conception of history. While some concepts of spirituality, loosely defined, are not necessarily incompatible with that conception, socialists see the problems that wrack human society as material and political, and their solutions as likewise material and political, not supernatural. Particular religious leaders may rebel against what they deem injustice, even suffering imprisonment or worse for their efforts. But where this means that they seek solutions within the framework of the system socialists aim to abolish, they demonstrate a lack of understanding of the development of social evolution, and socialists cannot endorse their views.

By the same token, membership in formally defined religious denominations or adherence to their beliefs can defeat people's best intentions unawares. The doctrines of organized religions traditionally locate the solution to society's problems in the individual's salvation and remain fundamentally indifferent to the fate of the human social community. At their most progressive they seek only to modify the existing institutions of a class-divided society, and at their most reactionary they openly obstruct even that desire. Such confusion over goals in an organization claiming to practice scientific socialism would sooner or later undermine its revolutionary character, for the tendency of such thinking is to confine discussion of capitalism's problems to the horizon of existing society, a blindness fatal to the socialist viewpoint. ◊

Some work may be so distasteful that nobody will want to do it. If no one wants to mine coal, for example, then no coal will be mined; other ways have already been found to heat homes. But it's human nature to be happiest when engaged in goal-oriented activity. Most socially necessary work is not so inherently unpleasant that people won't be willing to take their turn.

When goods are produced and services performed with no thought of making money, the outlook will be very different from what it is today. It's not just that the people planning production will be doing it to satisfy the needs of their community, but also that the people involved in production will have chosen that involvement freely. If a worker would rather be doing something else that day, she won't be at work — she'll be elsewhere: playing with her kids, fishing, painting the living room. The only people engaged in production will be people who want to be, and who will therefore do it well.

If anyone reading this is worried about the work of the world not getting done, remember what huge numbers of people today are not "working" at all: the unemployed, the homeless, the disabled. Even of those who are "working," many of us are not working at anything socially useful. I'm thinking of people in the armed services, in insurance, in advertising, in banking and lending, the police force — the list of paid jobs that will become completely unnecessary can go on and on. And also consider how many people are "working" now, only to compete with



other people doing the same thing! It certainly doesn't make sense, for example, that so many competing auto plants are running at once. When money is "no object," maybe only Cadillacs and Rolls Royces will be produced, and with skilled workers who like to make cars organizing their own plants, it won't take as many of them as it does when you've got all those different, competing outfits. (Actually, this may be a bad example, because it's perfectly possible that once production is for use instead of for profit, automobiles will be replaced altogether with means of transportation that don't seem "practical" under capitalism — hovercraft? Moving roadways? Who knows!)

By a generation or two after the revolution, the people who have been born and raised in a classless, moneyless society will have conceived all sorts of ways of managing that we can't begin to picture.

Huge changes, however, don't usually happen overnight.

The day after

It's my guess (only a guess, of course) that the day after the Revolution most people will go to their usual workplace just as they did the day before. Old habits die hard, and besides, for a lot of people the workplace is where they feel the strongest sense of community. The people whose jobs serve no purpose at all (bankers, insurance salesmen, and the like)

may not continue meeting their former fellow-employees very long, or maybe they'll decide to begin some venture together that would be pleasant and useful. Those of us whose work is useful will certainly recognize that and continue to perform it. Gradually, we can alter the conditions of work to suit our own needs and those of society as well. (Example: I myself am a nurse. I like what I do. Many nurses today like their work, but most probably would rather not spend as much time at it as they do now. So nurses who work in a hospital can get together, either with or without some help from the Scheduling Department, and figure

out a mutually agreeable schedule of work.)

This kind of flexibility is something that is sure to be valued.

Who wants to do the same thing day after day after day? It's hard to make a change now because work is all connected to being able to pay for things. Once that connection is broken, once you don't have to pay for things, if you get tired of doing something you can just stop. And decide what you'd rather do. And if you don't feel like doing anything at all for a while, fine! We'll have the right to be lazy.

— Karla Ellenbogen

Do we want "jobs"? I'd rather not need a job in order to live well.

Does socialism mean forced equality for everyone?

No. People are different and have different needs. Some needs will be more "expensive" than others to satisfy (in terms of resources and labor needed). On the other hand, it seems unlikely many people will find it easy, on the strength of their good looks, to interest their peers in volunteering to help them build more than one castle, construct two or three yachts or reserve Central Park for their afternoon nap.

Wouldn't everyone have to be altruistic for socialism to work?

No. Socialism isn't based upon altruism. Socialism will work even if everyone suddenly decides that they dislike everyone else. Supporting socialism involves recognizing the fact that the current system just doesn't work for most people. Socialism will be a society in which satisfying an individual's self-interest is the result of satisfying everyone's needs. It is enlightened self-interest that will work for the majority.

A world fit for human beings

Being clear on goals is central to getting where you want to go. If the goal is not clear, it's unlikely that action will lead in the right direction. Unfortunately, most "socialist," "leftist," and "radical" groups betray their basic confusion when the subject of goals comes up. The often-heard rallying cries for "The Right to Work," or "Jobs for All, with a minimum wage high enough for everyone to have a decent standard of living" are examples of what I mean.

Do we want "jobs"? I'd rather not need a job in order to live well.

I go along with Paul LaFargue, who argued not for the "right to work" but for the "right to be lazy."

Our goal must be free access to everything we need or want.

No profit — no laundromat!

Money is only useful when there is a need to limit access to things because of scarcity; but the reason things are scarce under capitalism is not that we working people can't produce enough — it's that if things became too abundantly available, they could no longer be sold profitably. Money is no longer socially necessary. After the revolution that ends capitalism, production won't be contingent on profits, but on the necessity of satisfying our own human wants and needs.

Another important goal must be the ability to make meaningful choices about our own lives (the prerequisite to real democracy.) Very few real choices are ours to make as long as we are forced to earn a living. If we're lucky, we may get to make a decision about how to earn a living, but not about whether we want to. For most ordinary people, earning a living takes up so much of our time and energy that there's not much left over for other things.

Only when we have free access to our needs, will the ability to make meaningful choices about our own lives become possible.

A third goal most people share is that we want to be part of a community of equals. In capitalist society, there are two classes of people: those who are exempt from the necessity of earning a living because they own the means of production (the capitalists), and the rest of us. Capitalism creates an atmosphere of scarcity that encourages selfishness and greed, and makes it inevitable that some people will have an easy life while others



are homeless and hungry. So another way of phrasing this third goal (living in a community of equals) is that we want a classless society.

Imagine, then, a classless, moneyless system of society, where everybody has a common right of access to the wealth of the world. This would be a world fit for human beings to live in. What would it be like?

Start by picturing what your own life would be like if money were no object (literally)! If money were no object, wouldn't we want to do things the best way we could?

We wouldn't settle for less! We would want to be surrounded by beauty in our homes, and our communities. We would want to breathe unpolluted air, feed our kids healthy food, be able to travel when we wanted to. (I remember when my son was in nursery school, he and his best friend Ian both got terrible colds. Ian's parents, without any hesitation, took him to a Caribbean island where he could recover in the warmth of the sun. That's something everyone should be able to do.)

Say no! to imploding imaginations

The division between "work" and "leisure" will be blurred in a world fit for human beings, and many things that are thought of as leisure activities now will result in benefits to the community. People will no longer be prevented from doing socially useful things by the necessity to spend eight hours a day at labor that tires them out and is so boring that their imaginations atrophy.

Once we can organize our time to suit ourselves, there's no way of knowing exactly what society will get to look like. Social evolution will not end just because capitalism ends. As time goes on, gradually things will change, according to the way the community chooses. Society will certainly be democratic (in the real sense); no one will have any way to coerce anyone else into doing something they don't want to do. But there are dozens of ways people might choose to run things. Organization and management will be no less necessary than they are now — only where now the goal of management is to maximize profits for the capitalist elite, in the world which is our goal it will be to increase efficiency and pleasure in accomplishing a task.

Concluded on page 19
