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AIDS is the HIV-induced dismantling of the human immune system—a fitting harbinger of the “end of nature,” the human-triggered collapse of earth’s biosphere projected by some naturalists. AIDS is an appropriate hazard for a species that has itself been busily dismantling natural systems now since the beginnings of the industrial revolution.

We don’t know why AIDS made its appearance; but is it just a coincidence that it came along when it did—as we entered a phase of accelerating eco-destruction?

Since the advent of capitalism a few hundred years ago, we humans have become ourselves a parasite infesting the earth’s ecosystem. As long as capitalism continues, we can count on progressing merrily along until we eventually provoke our planet’s definitive breakdown. On the way, we can also

look forward to an age of creepy horrors, a widening path of pain and suffering stretching up to a pointless grave. Humans might think of AIDS as our specific occupational hazard. AIDS and ecocide may not be unrelated after all: The appearance of the strain of HIV which triggers AIDS may well be the result of economic development uprooting traditional African cultures, combined with the “sexual revolution.” Ultimately, the finger still seems to point toward the system we live under: capitalism.

Humanity for sale

Where we have gone wrong is to have allowed a price to be put on everything. Everything we have, everything we are, has become alienable—up for sale. Under capitalism, humanity has disabled its own native sense of community (indispensable to its survival) through its lethal experiment with the market system. The capitalist marketplace has effectively rolled back the human community syndrome, and the unchecked caprices of the market-tyranny are literally making our species sick.

Homo sapiens— unfit to survive?

Could a green capitalism work any better? Yes and no: “improving” the system by removing the immediate threat of environmental disaster from its operations would only make a bad system more effective. Does anyone need reminding that capital runs on wheels of profit? Imposing respect for the Earth on capital would simply slow down those wheels. Capitalism is not a system of ethics but a nasty cesspool of class struggle—if there is a profit in it, of course. Capitalists will only end up whining that history has dealt them a treacherous blow—and society, if not so much its host planet, will continue going to the dogs, only presumably for “saner” reasons. (This, at any rate, is the optimistic scenario.)

Down with employment!

What is needed to “cure” our problems as a species is the dismantling of the mechanism of buying and selling our ability to do work. We must refuse to sell ourselves into job-slavery.

Employment is like a prison for our adventurous, ebullient and cooperative human nature, and our jailors are using it to kill the planet. Will we just let them pack us all into little cells, with a reality reduced to “exercise periods”? We should give some sign that our survival instincts have not yet expired and move as soon as we possibly can to abolish the wages-and-death system.

The world for the workers! Ø

Free access, not free trade!

The politicians want us to argue about the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) on the basis of whether it is a good deal or not. That certainly seems reasonable on the surface.

The right wing tells us that it is a good deal for all of us and will mean jobs, jobs, jobs—a familiar refrain. Of course, some “restructuring of the economy” may result.

The left wing tells us that it is a terrible deal that must be stopped (or replaced they’re not really sure which) because it will cost jobs. Of course, there may be some “restructuring of the economy” as a result.

You can trust whichever group you wish. You can believe that their undefined “restructuring of the economy” is good for you. Anybody who trusts the economic predictions or job promises of a politician is probably also waiting for the tooth fairy.



Economic War

As Canadian politician Pat Carney once said, “Trade is war.” An unusually honest statement from a politician, and one that everyone had better understand. It is not just a bit of imagery; it is the bitter economic reality of current society. Every nation is always at economic war with every other nation, and as in any war, working people are the casualties.

With or without a formal agreement free trade is going to happen. Very strong economic and political forces in all three North American countries are at work to ensure that it does. Some groups want stronger trade barriers, supposedly to “protect jobs”, but all that will do is generate retaliation by the other two countries and probably many others as well. Note that even economic powerhouse Japan which has some very powerful trade restrictions against other nations is being forced to look at making Japan a more favorable market for other nations.

If any of the three NAFTA partners should decide to erect or strengthen trade

Have you ever found yourself stuck in rush-hour traffic and wondering if the light—much less your life—would ever change? When you think about it, it doesn’t matter if you’re in the driver’s seat, since you’re always being told where to go. The Ross Perots of life literally bank on us acting like their societal chauffeurs or some other kind of admiring flunkies. Always mimicking their dreams and aspirations, trying to follow their lifestyles and goals; never conceiving our own.

In the same hot pursuit of the all-encompassing dollar, a neo-traditional ritual has grown up that runs roughshod over the grand cattle roundups of yesteryear’s golden days on the ranges. It’s euphemistically called morning and afternoon rush-hour traffic. In the cowboy days, otherwise unthinking and unmanageable beasts were herded up and driven long distances to self-destruction in slaughterhouses to make money for the well-to-do barons of old—leaving a hazy cloud of dust in their wake on the stampe to oblivion.

Today the money-making prize meat is much more mobile, intelligent and nor-

Git along, li’l flunky

mally just two-legged! For miles around we herd ourselves on asphalt trails cramming into towering marketplaces of concrete and glass. Like the cattle barons of old, today’s bosses require our simultaneous presence in workplaces to churn out bewildering profits for their benefit—leaving a hazy cloud of smog in our wake as we come and go...

Humanoid cattle

Yesteryear’s slaughter produced a one-shot profit for the cattle barons. Today’s employment produces profit hundreds of times a year from the same humanoid herd member. On a relentless death-march of hypertension, heart failure, cancer, even AIDS; but for a reason no different from the grand slaughters that made America “great.” And at six feet under, evolution stops. All species are the same—dead meat.

Sitting for hours, day in and day out, in nauseating traffic jams isn’t a mass expression of individual free will, nor is it just a coincidence. It is a compulsion of capital

that degrades us into high-tech cattle. Unlike cattle, though, we each have an advanced brain with which to think: and thus the ability to break out of this more sophisticated, but nonetheless induced, herd mentality at any point.

Today’s maverick entrepreneur cowboy-types just don’t know what’s on the other end of the rope. When they do find out, they will drop everything and run for cover (as Ross Perot did in his attempt to lasso the public, on getting what was for him a frightening glimpse, when he said, “...I didn’t want to wreck the political process”). When we move en masse, there will be no stopping us. Not only in the driver’s seat, we will decide where we go and when, at our convenience—also, what we will do when we get there: something no cow ever dreamt of! With democratic control of the earth’s resources replacing control by capital, we can all tell the cowboy bosses to get lost so we can go about our business.

—W.J. Lawrimore

barriers, the possible and likely trade retaliation will be at least as destructive as any free trade deal. None of the NAFTA partners can afford to lose their foreign markets and are not likely to be able to withstand this retaliation for very long. Result: Free Trade—or increased unemployment—or some other serious problem.

Of course, each of the three countries is somewhat different in this respect. The US is currently the best able to handle trade retaliation because of the size of its economy. Canada and Mexico are much more dependent on trade with the US and

leaders of all three countries it is better than admitting that they really can't do anything to protect the jobs of Canadian, or US, or Mexican workers.

For all of them, it is better to drape themselves in the flag and ignore the economic realities that we have to face, today and tomorrow.

Economic Realities

Businesses attempt to maximize their profit. Governments really can't affect the economy very much, no matter what they do or what they claim. Investment is mo-

there are only two options, IN or OUT, and no matter what happens, we are going to suffer. Neither one will solve the problems we face.

There is actually a third option. It is not an option that most people like to think about. It is not an option that most people understand. It is not an option that would please the politicians, or the labor leaders, or the rich. It is not an option based upon miracles. It is not an option that accepts the status quo. It is not an option that is based upon blind acceptance or following leaders.

Those kinds of options have gotten us where we are today! It is rather an option based upon understanding how the current economic system works, on human nature, on historical fact, on enlightened self-interest, and upon you making it work.

NAFTA Continued next page

ON SECOND THOUGHT

From the Western Socialist

When the worker becomes class conscious he realises not only that it is a class conflict he is engaged in but that it can only be fought out on the political field, because all class struggles are political struggles and must be so—struggles for control of the state.

Our sole job is to prosecute the class struggle on the political field and not be led into false positions by supporting trade union actions just because workers take part in them.

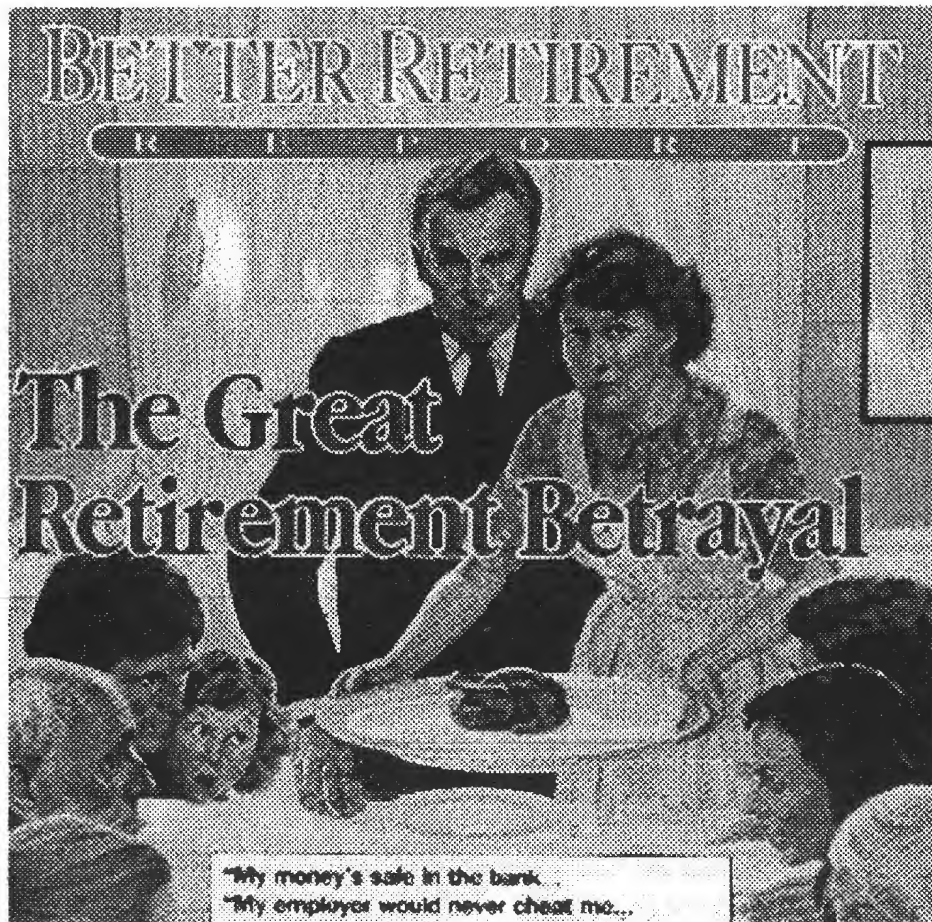
The fact that workers in trade unions indiscriminately support Tory, Liberal and Labour parties is incontrovertible evidence that their membership in trade unions is something apart from their political affiliations. The mass of those who support the Labour Party do so because they think that the Labour Party will help them to get better wages and conditions of labour.

Workers join trade unions...for the sole purpose of getting better wages and conditions in their particular industry, often regardless of the interests of workers in other industries employed by other employers. Further than that, they fight against each other on questions of status—and sometimes one union fights against another. This has become more frequent in recent years.

It should be borne in mind that we are not organised to improve the wages and conditions of workers under capitalism but to abolish the conditions that have given rise to capitalist and worker and replace them by Socialism.

—Gilbert McClatchie
(Socialist Party of Great Britain)

"A statement on trade unions," Fall 1979



therefore less able to withstand US economic pressure. However, even the US would suffer from trade retaliation.

Business as Usual

So what the three great leaders have signed (subject to legislative approval) is an agreement that will, depending on who is talking, create or destroy jobs in Canada, the US and Mexico. We can be pretty confident that the agreement pays no attention to the needs of workers—in Canada, the US, Mexico, or anywhere! This is business as usual! So why all the hullabaloo? Well, for politicians and labor

and will move to wherever the expected profit is highest. It has no allegiance to particular industries or national boundaries.

Labor power (our ability to work) is a commodity just like a hammer, typewriter or scalpel. What this means to you and me is that the NAFTA is not really relevant. The long relatively good ride that Canadian and US workers have had is over, and no amount of wishing, no agreement, no trade barrier is going to change that. History suggests that Mexican workers may benefit from the NAFTA.

Sounds hopeless, doesn't it? It looks as if

Those poor urchin CEOs

Charitable foundations have long been looked upon as alleviators of social injustice. Giving money to organizations that help the disadvantaged is considered a way to do a good turn for your fellow citizens. A survey of such organizations' tax returns, though, causes one to wonder just whose charity is being served.

Such a survey of 1991 tax returns was conducted by The Chronicle of Philanthropy on the nation's 100 largest charitable foundations. What they uncovered was that the chief executive officer's (CEO's) median annual salary is \$155,000! Three of the top 100 paid their CEOs more than \$500,000 with only six full-time CEOs paid under \$100,000! And who says charity doesn't pay? Just ask these guys.

Those poor idled executives, bound to cushy leather chairs behind marble-topped desks along, all alone in posh highrise suites, with only one or more personal secretaries to do their every bidding at the snap of a finger! They are in no position like you or me, having to go to a job every weekday and punch a timeclock. No, not these languishing few.

Despite their differences from us, they devote their lives and waking energies to

seeing to it that such a similar narrow fate doesn't befall any of us. And as long as we keep these charities floating with faith and donations, it never will.

Buddy, could you spare maybe 600 grand?

The Keck Foundation is doing its part to better the human condition by granting to one such wretched soul, Chairman Howard B. Keck, \$624,500 annually. But more needs to be done. Pew Charitable Trusts only had \$564,214 on hand in 1991 (plus \$56,648 in benefits) to give to its president, Thomas W. Langfitt. Remember, these men have such different lifestyles they probably could not really work a single day at a normal job if their very lives depended on it (which unlike for us, it doesn't). Won't you give today?

But better yet, won't you consider an alternative to charities? The charity mindset presupposes a mass of suffering have-nots getting handouts from benevolent haves. That is the best that capitalism can do. Caving in to that mindset and giving to charities only perpetuates the conditions of an ever-larger mass of have-nots looking to some "upright betters" for a chance to live as fulfilled human beings.

Poverty is not simply the inability to get money. The productive use of our working abilities in general creates wealth, the "excess" of which over our needs (defined by our employers, not by us) goes as surplus value to the capitalist class. It flies right through our fingers. Some of us create it, and then then we all help feed it to others whose only "job" is to declare themselves our leaders. If we, society's have-nots—whether employed or unemployed—only took possession of this wealth, none of us would have any need to look to a handful of six-digit-salaried CEOs to come to anybody's "rescue." In any case, all the problems that the charities are addressing only get worse as the years roll by. The worthiest cause of all is to save yourself (so we can all save each other)...

Common ownership and democratic control of the means of wealth production is the only gift with any distinction. Solicit for socialism!

—W.J. Lawrimore

* Atlanta Journal & Atlanta Constitution 9/8/92.

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to a friend!**

NAFTA—Continued from previous page

That option is socialism. Not the "socialism" of the USSR, or the "socialism" of China or Albania or Cuba or Nicaragua, or Sweden, or any other place. These "socialisms" were never socialist at all, just different ways to govern the profit system—capitalism.

Free trade a diversion

How can it fall to socialism to solve the problems of Free Trade? Both free trade and trade barriers are attempts by nations to solve problems of capitalism in those nations. Neither approach can address the problems faced by you and me because, despite the rhetoric of the politicians, they are not intended or designed to solve our problems. The free trade debate is a diversion from our problems. As in any supposed solution within capitalism, some

workers will benefit for a while and others will suffer, then the tables will turn.

Socialism eliminates the problems of free trade because trade will not exist in socialist society. Socialism will be a world society, without nations, organized to meet the needs of people. It will be a wageless, moneyless society where each individual contributes according to her abilities and consumes according to her self-defined needs. There will be no leaders because thinking people do not need to be led. The material abundance of society, natural and manufactured, will be available to all.

And how will socialism come about?

For socialism to come into existence will require the conscious support of the vast majority of the world's population. Socialism is completely democratic and cannot

be imposed from above. This means that the vast majority of the population of the world will have to understand that the problems we face are a direct or indirect result of capitalism and that to eliminate those problems we must eliminate capitalism.

The World Socialist Movement has no master plan to tell you how to implement socialism. That is a matter for everyone, when socialism is imminent. What the World Socialist Movement does have is ideas and understanding. We invite you to join us, for the future of humanity! You are vital to the establishment of socialism. You can do your part by learning more about socialism and capitalism, by refusing to believe the lies that keep capitalism going, and by actively promoting socialism.

—Steve Szalai

Talking about a revolution

No apologies to Lenin, Trotsky, Stalin or Mao!

Nick L: I say with a well-organized team and enough support from the general public at the right time, we can do it: we can take over the state and reorganize it from top to bottom.

Karl M: But wouldn't that make you just another management team?

Nick L: No, no, no! Of course the team's head would be in the right place. Once we took over, we'd make sure things moved in the right direction. OK, we'd have to plan on a complete renovation of the playing field, and sure, it probably would take quite a while before we were off and running...

Karl M: I still don't see how the "general public" fits into this. Nothing seems to change for them. You keep all the old rules—work for pay, return on investment, everybody still needs money to get what they need, and nobody sinks any capital into anything unless they're sure they'll at least get it back. Where's your revolution?

Nick L: Eventually, everything will work out.

Leo T: Yeah, provided all the team members play by the rules—

Joe S: You heard him, everything works out. Period.

Nick L: Things just sort of unfold automatically: A team with its head on its shoulders, sticking together and teaching the public, step by step, how to end the game of exploitation, you know, with lots of feedback and all that crap—I mean, hey! How can we go wrong?

Karl M: You call it a revolution, but there's nothing socialist about it—that's what can go wrong! You can't just expect to replace one set of managers with another. "Eventually" never comes. The only change that works is right now.

Mao Z: Oh, come on! You mean right here—in this room?

Leo T: [Sotto voce] Hey, be careful! There's somebody over there who might be listening... They might be police—

Karl M: No, that isn't what I mean: that's closer to what you meant, in fact. What I meant was, you have to get rid of capital and wage labor everywhere as your first move. If you don't do that, no amount of screwing

around with the machinery of state is going to matter. Your "team" will only get caught up in making it work. You're dreaming if you think you can "guide the masses" like that. The relations of exploitation you start out with—based on wage-labor and capital—won't waste any time telling you what to do.

Mao Z: Oh, now wait a minute... You don't just announce to the public that the game is over as soon as they've all sat down! The struggle against exploitation is like any good match: it could last forever if need be. The play is everything.

Leo T: The public needs to be led!

Nick L: There—you see? Out-voted!

Karl M: We'll see about that.

Leo T: Listen, keep your voice down—someone could be listening!

Karl M: The point is simply to end the game. According to the rules, certain people own capital and they invest it, deciding in the process how everyone else will live and work. That just isn't a community in any basic sense of the word. What we need is another set of rules: people in general decide what they can't do without and make it known to whoever produces it. In the process everybody decides for themselves how they will live and work. We all take turns making sure production happens.

Nick L: Hello-o! Hello-o! I'm sure that'll work just fine. How will you manage all of a sudden to turn people made passive or lazy and irresponsible by centuries of repression into paragons of reason? Think! Think!

Karl M: Think for yourself! Sooner or later, we'll all have to.

Joe S: But without capital, how can you run the state? And who's going to invest what you, sitting there in your nice easy chair, have "abolished" in your head? We've got to have a ruling class to struggle against—or are you just thick?

Karl M: Enough people have to abolish capital "in their heads" before any revolution can get off the ground. Without capital—you're so right—the ruling class disappears. Like smoke from an extinguished fire. But it can't just be in my head: it's got to be in everyone's head. No more goods and services for sale at a profit. The ending of the game means the starting of the real play, a game without spectators! People say they need certain items—wealth; producing and distributing those items implies only the administration of wealth. No one "rules" anyone, and everyone has control. From each according to ability and to each according to need.

Nick L: Oh, hey, look, I can see you don't really belong in this group; you're just too weird to be a real activist like us...

Karl M: You've just got to start out by replacing the wages system with a system of free access. I can say that here and now, in this lobby, but the only way anything's going to happen is if a large enough majority of people come to have some idea of how they want to reorganize production the world over—

Mao Z: Will somebody please shut him up?

Karl M: No, I'm serious! Without ending the class

struggle first, people will be unable to see an end to their powerless, downtrodden status and will just go on trying to make the world "a better place"; what we all really need is to replace this reality of fragments with an interconnected reality of whole people. Around the world, now...

Nick L: So you're saying history won't be able to distinguish my team from—

Joe S: [Walking to the doorway] That does it! I'm leaving.

Mao Z: [Getting up] Yeah, I really can't deal with this doctrinaire stuff, either. See you in St. Louie.

Leo T: [Huffily] I'm history. [The door to the stairwell slams closed]

Nick L: [Rising and turning around] Happy? You just ruined a perfectly good revolution!

Karl M: I didn't ruin mine. Look, I really have done a lot of work on the subject. People have fought the introduction or confronted the reality of the wages system with a persistence that is positively impressive: the German Anabaptists who followed Thomas Muenzer in the Peasant Wars around 1525; the English "true Levellers" or Diggers in 1649; 19th- and 20th-century Utopian experiments too numerous to mention—among them, communities based on the writings of Robert Owen and Charles Fourier. Each of these tried, in its own way, to break with the system of wage labor and capital—and all of them failed for lack of ability to reorganize the entire system of production—

[The stairwell door slams shut]

—Ron Elbert



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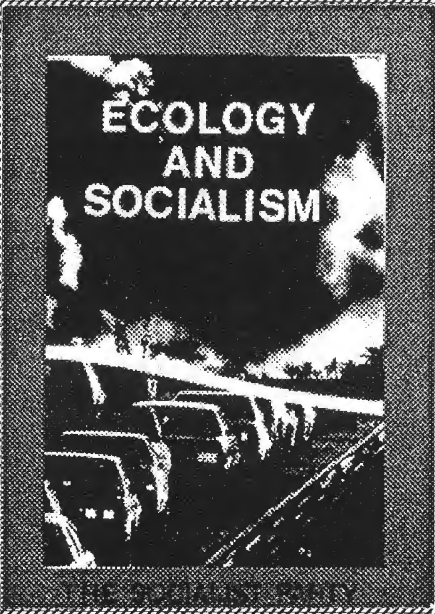
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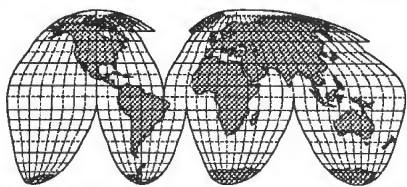
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The World Socialist Review



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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.

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- 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.

Are you a socialist?

Socialism—a classless, wageless, moneyless society with free access to all goods and services—is necessary and possible. The only obstacle to it in our time is the lack of a class-conscious political majority. Are YOU a socialist? You might recognize some of your own ideas in the following statements.

Capitalism, even with reforms, cannot function in the interests of the working class. Capitalism, by its very nature, requires continual “reforms”; yet reforms cannot alter the basic relationship of wage-labor and capital and would not be considered, to begin with, if their legislation would lead to disturbing this relationship. Reforms, in other words, are designed to make capitalism more palatable to the working class by holding out the false hope of an improvement in their condition. To whatever extent they afford improvement, reforms benefit the capitalist class, not the working class.

To establish socialism the working class must first gain control of the powers of government through their political organization. It is by virtue of its control of state power that the capitalist class is able to perpetuate its system. State power gives control of the main avenues of education and propaganda—either directly or indirectly—and of the armed forces that frequently and efficiently crush ill-conceived working class attempts at violent opposition. The one way it is possible in a highly developed capitalism to oust the capitalist class from its ownership and control over the means of production and distribution is to first strip it of its control over the state.

Once this is accomplished the state will be converted from a government over people to an administration of community affairs (both locally and on a world scale). The World Socialist Party of the United States advocates the ballot, and no other method, as a means of abolishing capitalism.

Members of the World Socialist Party do not support—either directly or indirectly—members of any other political party. It is always possible, even if difficult in some instances, to vote for world socialism by writing in the name of the Party and a member for a particular legislative office. Our main task, however, is to make socialists and not to advocate use of the ballot for anything short of socialism.

The World Socialist Party rejects the theory of leadership. Neither individual “great” personalities nor “revolutionary 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! Administrators to carry out the will of the majority of the membership, yes! But leaders or “vanguards,” never!

There is an irreconcilable conflict between scientific socialism and religion. Socialists reject religion for two main reasons:

- Religion divides the universe into spiritual and physical realms, and all religions offer their adherents relief from their earthly problems through some form of appeal to the spiritual. Socialists see the cause of the problems that wrack human society as material and political. We see the solution as one involving material and political, not spiritual, means.

- Religions ally themselves with the institutions of class society. Particular religious organizations and leaders may, and frequently do, rebel against what they deem injustice, even suffering imprisonment and worse for their efforts. But they seek their solutions within the framework of the system socialists aim to abolish. One cannot understand the development of social evolution by resorting to religious ideas.

The system of society formerly in effect in Russia, and still in effect in China and other so-called socialist or communist countries, is state capitalism. Goods and services, in those

countries, as in avowedly capitalist lands, were always produced for sale on a market with a view to profit and not, primarily, for use. The placing of industry under the control of the state in no way alters the basic relationships of wage labor and capital. The working class remains a class of wage slaves. The class that controls the state remains a parasitical, surplus-value eating class.

Trade unionism is the means by which wage workers organize to “bargain collectively” so that they might sell their labor power at the best possible price and try to improve working conditions. The unorganized have no economic weapon with which to resist the attempts of capital to beat down their standards. But unions must work within the framework of capitalism. They are useful, then, to but a limited extent. They can do nothing toward lessening unemployment, for example.

In fact, they encourage employers to introduce more efficient methods in order to overcome added costs of higher wages and thereby hasten and increase unemployment. More and more the tendency of industry is toward a greater mass of production with fewer employees. Unions must, by their very nature, encourage such development although they are also known, occasionally, to resist this natural trend through what employers like to call “featherbedding.” As Marx put it: instead of the conservative motto, “a fair day’s pay for a fair day’s work,” the workers ought to inscribe upon their banner “abolition of the wages system.” ☉

Membership in the World Socialist Party of the United States requires an understanding of and agreement with what we consider to be the basics of scientific socialism. We have always been convinced that a worldwide system based upon production for use, rather than for sale on a market, requires that a majority of the population be socialist in attitude. Events since the establishment of the World Socialist Movement have, we maintain, proven the validity of this judgment. In our opinion, if you agree, generally, with these statements, you are a socialist and belong with us.

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