

World Socialist Review

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Why you need a socialist party

Presently, everything we humans need to live is locked up tightly under the control of investors who accumulate capital (capitalists)—people who can deny everyone else access to “survival goods.” Because they have this power, they can force as many people as market conditions will allow to work for them, at rates they set low enough to allow them a profit on their investments. If the state does the investing and controls the capital, then the state is the capitalist; it all comes to the same thing. The owners and controllers of capital monopolize the production of virtually everything useful or enjoyable (wealth), which economists facelessly describe as “goods and services.”

This monopolization creates two classes of people—capitalists and workers. Anyone who works for a living—blue-collar, white-collar or professional—is a worker (whether this fits the currently fashionable image or not). Although not all workers produce wealth, the conditions prevailing in the factories, on the land, in transportation, set the standard for conditions elsewhere in the system. Workers alone produce wealth, and employment is just an evolved form of slavery.

Capitalists have to stay in business. This means they need to keep their costs down and their profit opportunities maximal. They must pay their employees the least amount they calculate will keep them alive; and their system allows the use of a “sliding scale” of valuation which gives them the right to pay employees as close to nothing as they can get away with, providing this is compatible with the maintenance of a profit-producing workforce.

Workers have to stay alive. This means they need to keep their earnings as high as

they can and to maximize their purchasing power as consumers. If they don't bother to draw their own conclusions about being forced into such a position, they will at least manage to respond to the initiatives taken by their employers; by organizing into unions, they can, when the economy is expanding, enforce the terms of their maintenance that capitalism normally requires in the abstract.

The attempt by employers to drive wages or salaries down below the survival minimum is part of a process we call “exploitation.” The driving mechanism of the process is the quest for profit, which requires producing the greatest possible surplus over workers' needs at any given time. We say “producing” because it is in the sector of wealth production that the most direct and explicit form of exploitation occurs. But employment in general is exploitation, even where workers produce no direct wealth themselves.

The result of a system based on these two all-inclusive sets of conflicting needs is an unending and often vicious struggle between the two classes (the class struggle). All political conflicts, based on this premise, form part of the same evil tree—all of them ultimately generated by the exploitation of workers by capitalists. Ownership of the means of producing wealth requires no work, and work—in any sector of the economy—implies no control over the system in any of its parts.

What is the solution?

Obviously, this state of affairs could go on forever—conditions permitting, which is arguable all by itself—if workers (a) either tamely submitted to their enslavement or (b) actively “improved” its quality

by organizing against their employers. The only way out of the whole vicious cycle is to eliminate its basis, the use of capital.

How do you do that? Abstractly speaking, on the one hand, by transferring ownership and control of the means of wealth production to the community at large, so that all who ask for what they need can give it directly to themselves. (This implies a democratically controlled administration, naturally; see below.)

More concretely, enough workers to constitute a majority of the population remove the obligation of obtaining money for the things they need, based on the work they perform. They abolish the wages system. If everyone, as the community, disposes of a common ownership over the means of creating useful and/or enjoyable effects, no one can have power over others in that community.

Why the working class?

Because capitalism has triumphed worldwide, eliminating all competing systems of wealth production, it has consequently consolidated the struggles between exploiters and exploited into one between capitalists and workers. No other social classes are left anymore. Workers are almost all the people there are in the world. Businessmen constitute the remainder. By eliminating capital altogether—which rests squarely on the payment of wages, salaries and other types of payment for services rendered—workers in effect constitute a new form of society. Only they can do this; to their employers (and anyone using employer-logic) the whole idea sounds perfectly insane.

————— *Continued on next page* —————

Getting there

The working class needs first of all—schematically speaking—to gain control of both the machinery of state and the world of work. A socialist party cannot help it do the latter, but—once workers realize the need to carry out this purpose—such a party is the best vehicle available for accomplishing the former.

Why gain control of the state? Because it is a command center for the economy, easily converted into a “war machine” for defeating working-class initiatives aimed at wresting control from the capitalist class. It is a strategic line of retreat that can otherwise save the day for the capitalist class when all else seems lost. Capitalism is replete with instances of the military taking control of the state to tide over the system for indefinite “emergencies,” when workers get too close. Workers do, however, operate the system to a degree that has become virtually total. Economically they are already dominant within the capitalist system, but of course the capital-accumulating class denies them the political control that should go with that.

Workers need to pursue this goal very single-mindedly. Less than the system itself will not suffice: leaving “parts” of it intact will only force it to adapt itself to the change of rules imposed on it, largely at working-class insistence. Basing an economy on payment for goods and services—specifically, on the payment of wages and salaries—itsself must go, or we will never be rid of the beast.

Any organization failing to recognize this will never enjoy real or lasting success in seeking to promote goals it sees as opposed to the effects or the operations of capitalism. A socialist party cannot therefore allow itself to pursue other objectives than the replacement of restricted access to goods and services with the objective of free access, which means it can only seek the abolition of the wages system. It must oppose all other goals and those who espouse them; the logic of its very existence requires this.

Why a socialist party?

What people in different countries around the globe should seek to accomplish through their respective socialist parties, as an immediate goal, is to place everything related to the production of anything useful or enjoyable—wealth—in the hands of the community—not the state. This includes distribution from the places where wealth is created to the places where it is used, with the community being made up of everyone without distinction of race or sex: each person having the same right to decide and procure what he or she needs. This arrangement implies the lack of necessity for money or for any other sort of bartering device, and the consequent lack of a basis for the institutions related to exchange—banks, insurance companies, governments and states; of everything, including legislation, designed to force people to do things.

Making it happen

We live under a pernicious system that denies and punishes our best instincts as community animals. Either we can all wait until crisis condi-

tions get so terrible that a confused collision (and possibly an explosively destructive one) between capitalism and reality forces everybody to recognize the benefits of common ownership; or we can do things as befits our human intelligence and organize to secure these benefits, restricting the pain of an enforced transition to our thought processes. We could all permit ourselves the luxury of betting on the luck of posterity, or we could make the change now ourselves while our chances of success remain optimal.

One cannot expect parties and groups committed to partial solutions (reforms) or indirect expedients (workers’ states, minority-led revolutions and the like) to know how to deal with the problem. As a socialist, you can work for an outcome that is a real possibility—although in the process you will find yourself opposed to these other promotions (and if you don’t realize it at the outset, the other parties and groups will waste no time in disabusing you).

Organizing for socialism—joining the World Socialist Party in this country—therefore implies your understanding of what socialism is and of what is required to achieve it, as well as a firm commitment to avoid embracing or endorsing any partial solutions to the crises of capitalism. While this is certainly not to everyone’s taste, adopting this rule is the only way to build a movement that really will have the eventual ability to act at the critical moment: when the working class, in a mood of historic revulsion, will finally move to end a system that only causes it pain, that trades it poverty for comfort, privileges for equality and slavery for freedom. ◊

American Demographics magazine has sought to define some widely used but vague terms descriptive of the class society we all live in. Using a shadow-logic that classifies households by annual income levels, it has given statistical flesh to the terms “upscale” and “downscale.” In its research of American class society, the magazine has even discovered a “midscale” group of people. Why, of course, this parallels the popular notion of the “upper,” “lower” and “middle” classes of American life.

Even with this blurred view of human relations, its report (based on the Census Bureau’s 1989 current population survey) perceives things that would surprise most of us. For instance, the largest proportion of Americans (45.9 percent) belong to the “downscale” class, while only 33.3 percent belong to the “midscale” category. The privileged “upscale” class rounds out society with a whopping 20.8 percent. On their scale only \$25,000 in annual income separates the “lower” from the “upscale” class.

It should logically follow from such a trivial perspective on class society that an individual might pass from “lower” through “middle” to the pinnacle of the “upscale” class, propelled

Is
“upscale”
slavery
more your
cup of tea?

solely by grit and gift: a naively romantic perspective of the world we actually live in! One need only look at ex-millionaire athletes, performers or even lottery winners now penniless to see that income infusion in itself does not change one’s class position.

Chasing shadows

Income is only the shadow of a more omnipotent reality: the fact that all wealth derives from the working class’s production of a surplus value in excess of the income we receive for expending our labor power. But, as the *American*

Demographics article demonstrates, the capitalist class has had remarkable success in misleading the working class into chasing shadows.

Just to set the record straight: only two classes shape our society. On top of the heap sits the capitalist class, a tiny minority, non-workers who own and control the means, the instruments, of production. They also have a death-grip on the mental and physical energies of the working class (the overwhelming majority of the population) on the bottom of the heap. The members of this other class (some of them “upscale,” some of them “underclass”) include you and me...us. Under threat of obliteration we are forced to sell our labor power on the job market just to receive life’s necessities. They give us a wage or salary to get by on, and we give them the wealth of the world. Working better-faster-longer-smarter will not change this objective class position. Eating more crumbs, gaining an edge on a shadow hunt, will not free us from our inherited class confines.

A key to crashing out of our class position is grasping that our class society is a contrived one, not an endlessly self-perpetuating natural order:



The pressures of capitalism's conflicting tendencies create conflicting (at times it seems alter-egotistical) effects on people's thinking. Witness the Secretary of Health and Human Services, Dr. Louis W. Sullivan—truly a candidate for Dr. Jekyll-Mr. Hyde of our times. One need only look at the bold and conflicting statements he made in the first half of 1991 to merit him this dubious distinction.

Early last year, at a leadership conference of the March of Dimes Birth Defects Foundation, he proclaimed, with a Dr. Jekyll benevolence of sincere and rational human compassion: "Tragically, it is our babies and children who are slipping through the weakened threads of our cultural fabric" (*Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, 3/13/91). He went on to point out that each year 40,000 babies die in the United States before their first birthday. Twenty-five percent of the nation's mothers receive no prenatal care whatsoever. And the United States ranks 24th in the world in terms of the number of infants who survive one year after birth.

So he boldly announced a program called Healthy Start to deal with this tragic, prevent-

One thing, however, is clear—Nature does not produce on the one side owners of money or commodities, and on the other men possessing nothing but their own labor power. This relation has no natural basis; neither is its social basis one that is common to all historical periods. It is clearly the result of a past historical development, the product of many economic revolutions, of the extinction of a whole series of older forms of social production. [Karl Marx, *Capital*, Vol. 1, "The Buying and Selling of Labour-Power," p. 169 (International Publishers, 1967)]

So it too shall give way. Socialism stands as the logical end-result of working-class interests...if we, the working class, act collectively in our own interests.

In a world society of free access to all goods and services, where the means and instruments of production are commonly owned and democratically controlled, there will be no group of people compelled to work for another group of people who are compelled to enslave. A profitless, wageless, moneyless, classless society in which the ideas of "upper," "lower" and "middle" scale people will be thrown out on history's slag heap, along with racism, poverty and war.

—W.J. Lawrimore

able situation. Healthy Start is to target ten "troubled" cities (unnamed at the time of proclamation) to reduce infant mortality by 50 percent within five years in those ten cities. Now the fact that his program limits itself to just ten cities on an entire continent raging with infant mortality (to say nothing of the Western Hemisphere as a whole) gives you a hint as to the real limits of his humanitarian efforts.

Dangerous delusion

For unfortunately, the good doctor, like most other Americans, is also a supporter of capitalism with its "cultural fabric" of buying and selling. He suffers from the devastating, dangerous delusion that all goods and services, no matter how essential for individual survival, must be paid for.

Enter the brutal, inconsiderate Mr. Hyde!

The *Washington Post* (2/20/91) had reported him surfacing in a speech at Howard University. The supposedly compassionate Dr. Sullivan had come out on this occasion in vigorous opposition to federally guaranteed insurance for an estimated 33 million Americans who have no public or private health insurance. In the present state of spiraling health costs, having health insurance is often synonymous with having access to health care. He droned smugly: "There are seven million uninsured with annual incomes above \$36,000 for a family of four."*

Well, if they don't have health insurance, what makes him think the 26 million other "uninsured" Americans can get it or don't need it? A car accident, a heart attack, cancer or a host of other threats to life and health can easily run up a tab in excess of \$36,000. Does the good doctor not see any connection between simple economic reality and this country's horrendous infant mortality rate?

Victims of wisdom

On March 13, 1991, the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution's* Washington Bureau reported the allegedly well-intentioned doctor passionately supporting a shifting of funds away from organizations that play a leading role in combating infant mortality. "Those programs do work well..." he conceded. "...But," he grumbled—and, unmistakably, Mr. Hyde had surfaced again—"what we have to do is find ways to use our money more wisely." The Bush administration's plan would shift \$33.7 million away from the Maternal and Child Health block grant and \$23.7 million from four other programs that give support to mothers and their newborn babies. In the following fiscal year those same programs would be reduced another \$66.7 million. (Dr. Sullivan's ten-city initiative had to be financed somehow.)

What effect this will have on needy newborns not domiciled in one of the benevolent Dr. Sullivan's ten most-wanted cities is unclear,

but it will surely be anything but helpful. It is unlikely the good doctor's job description includes caring very much about such "side effects." The question is, how much longer will innocent newborns pay for this archaic system of capitalism with their very lives?

Everyone is familiar with the robber's cliché, "Your money or your life" (meaning, if you don't have the former, I will take the latter). Capitalism robs without distinction of age. It adopts the same "pay up or else" posture towards everyone, from the age of one to the age of one hundred.

In a socialist society monetary cost will be no constraint in providing health care. Free access is the only criterion for efficiency. Human life has no price: if you value it, if it isn't cheap to you, it should logically make no sense for you to continue supporting a system in which everything sure does have its price.

—W.J. Lawrimore

* "Dr. Sullivan said few people realize that not all of the 33 million uninsured are poor and that nearly three-quarters are workers or their dependents who lack insurance on their jobs. Of the 33 million, he said, only a third are poor; some have pre-existing conditions that make them uninsurable (!); and others choose [out of perversity, no doubt] not to take insurance" (*Washington Post*, 2/20/91).

What I have found working with low-income patients is that my MD doesn't go very far. I can diagnose and treat medical problems, but if my patients have no money, no place to live and not enough food to eat, my diagnoses and prescriptions don't make much difference in their lives.

You have to be very poor to get Medicaid and other benefits, poorer than you might think. If you are a single parent it is a little easier to qualify, but not much. The benefits, if you can get them, barely cover expenses, but they cover them. The families I've seen that seem to be in real trouble are the 'near-poor,' the ones just above the poverty line who make a little too much to qualify for Medicaid or other subsidies, such as General Relief, food stamps, fuel assistance and rent subsidies, but not enough to pay their bills. Most of the jobs they have don't provide medical insurance, and they can't afford to pay for it themselves, so they go without. They pay whatever medical bills they can, and the rest of the expense is subsumed under the free-care budget of clinics and hospitals. ("A Doctor's Perspective," Claire McCarthy in *The Boston Globe Magazine*, February 10, 1991.)

During the 1980s, while the United States engaged in the largest military build-up in peacetime history, investing \$1.9 trillion in national defense, \$10 billion was cut from programs serving poor and moderate-income families and their children. As 2.1 million children dropped into poverty the number of American billionaires quintupled. And as wealth was generally redistributed upward, nearly every statistical indicator of quality of life—the poverty rate, real income, homelessness, access to health care and affordable housing, the increase in low income, no benefit jobs—translated into the abuse and neglect of children. ("Children of Crisis," Sandy Carter in *Z Magazine*, January 1991.)

No profits...no vitamins

While watching television some time ago, I noticed a paid commercial on how "we" could do something to alleviate the plight of third-world children who could lose their sight due to improper nutrition—more specifically, the lack of vitamin A in their daily diet. The message stated how every year tens of thousands of children around the world lose their sight because of improper nutrition, and how it manifests itself somewhere between the ages of 4 to 7 years.

The solution, the commercial went on to say, was a pill consisting of a mega-dose of vitamin

A. This could be achieved at the cost of just one dollar a pill and would ensure that those at risk would have their vision for the rest of their natural lives.

This presents the classic juxtaposition between capitalism and socialism. Many people contribute to needy causes and are frequently frustrated at their inability to contribute more. But in all honesty we should recognize that the ordinary operations of capitalism's marketplace (which generate poverty and insecurity in the first place) do not require any special machinery of repression to stymie your impulses of generosity. People may care, but capital doesn't. Profit simply comes first—and unless everyone can justify it as profitable before the capitalist owners of the instruments of production, the capitalists will not order anything to be produced. (It doesn't matter whether the state manipulates the profit system, either.)

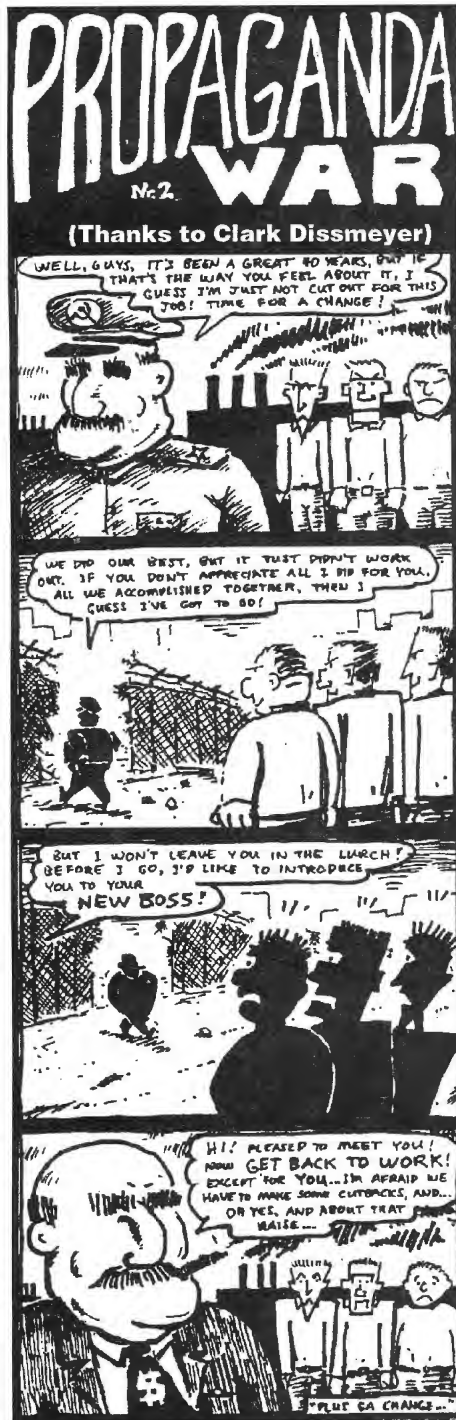
need represents a miniscule undertaking by comparison. Why should such a good idea be held hostage to "contributions" when technically it is perfectly feasible *right now*?

In a world of abundance millions starve, get inadequate medical care and little or no education [see upper section of box]. *Scientific American* (February 1987) stated that 12 million children and eight million adults, or about nine percent of the U.S. population, are "chronically short of nutrients necessary for growth and good health" [see lower section of box].

But capitalism, be it "western" or that of the erstwhile "socialist" states, maintains its grip through the exploitation of workers and the antagonism of interests between nations, races and social classes. Despite their seemingly revolutionary rhetoric, Leninists, Maoists and others of their ilk have never managed to figure out there is only one immediate "next step," and that is the direct abolition of the wages system. Taking this radical step will in itself lead directly to the global reorganization of food production, eliminating hunger worldwide and without further ado. Resorting to notions like Lenin's "proletarian state" can only leave history clutched in the grip of the capital-accumulating minority—whether these remain "private" or have the state do their dirty work.

Replacing production for exchange with production for use is the unavoidable preliminary step to eradicating world hunger—and the only sure way to gain the admiration and respect of future generations.

—Tony



The logical solution

The only logical solution to this and the many other problems facing humanity is common ownership and democratic control of the means of production and distribution (i.e., free access to all necessary goods and services at each person's discretion). Not just here and there in one country and another, but all around the globe.

If 20th-Century technology can enable astronauts to land on the moon and can find cures for previously incurable diseases, then surely the distribution of vitamin A pills to all those in

- More than enough food is grown to feed everyone on this planet.
- Today, 60,000 people will die of hunger—two-thirds of them children.
- One-third of the world's children are significantly underweight for their age.
- Four times more malnourished children are female than male.
- Nearly one in five people worldwide is chronically malnourished—too hungry to lead a productive, active life.
- What the world spends in half a day on military purposes could finance the entire malaria eradication program of the World Health Organization.
- The amount spent on weapons every minute could feed 2,000 malnourished children for a year.

—Oxfam America flyer

The first scientific study on childhood hunger in Massachusetts, sponsored by Project Bread, the Massachusetts Department of Public Health and the Massachusetts Anti-Hunger Coalition, has revealed that nearly 200,000 children under the age of 12 in the Commonwealth—one in four—are affected by hunger. Record high rates of unemployment in Massachusetts, coupled with cuts in state and local aid, have contributed to this childhood hunger crisis.

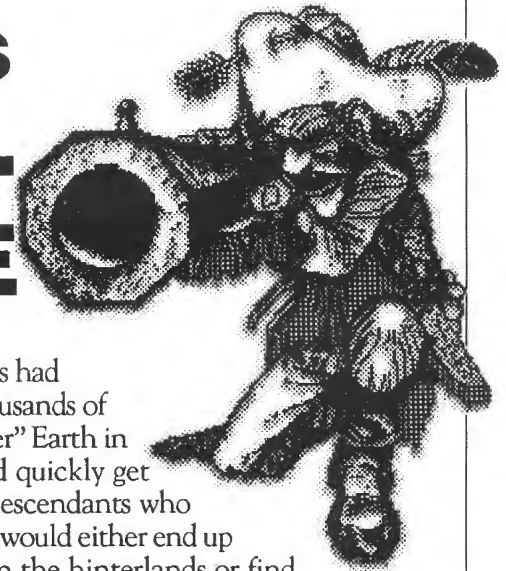
For many working families, wages simply do not cover the costs of basic necessities. After paying for shelter, utilities, medical care, child care and transportation, working families in the CCHIP [Community Childhood Hunger Identification Project] sample spent an average of only \$2.30 per day per person on food.

In addition, basic public family support programs do not provide poor families with sufficient resources. The combined benefits from Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) and Food Stamps do not provide even a poverty level income for families with children.

—Project Bread, Fall Newsletter 1991

Columbus quincentennial

This land was your land, But now it's MY land... ALL MINE



In 1492 Christopher Columbus “discovered” a world whose inhabitants had already been living here for tens of thousands of years. Were beings from another planet to “discover” Earth in the same fashion, most of the human species would quickly get wiped out from exotic new diseases, while those of our descendants who didn’t succumb to the aliens’ violent assaults on human culture would either end up as slaves, get deported to areas of human concentration way out in the hinterlands or find themselves reduced to a scapegoated minority, miserably exploited as wage-earners and made the butt of racist attacks by the arrogant invaders.

Welcome to the final solution

Whenever capital “discovers” an aboriginal population sitting on top of a gold mine—or a virgin market of some kind—it seeks to turn that population into wage-earners as soon as possible (which could even so take a very long time, as the record shows). Alternatively, it can expel the natives, which requires an ideological rationale. Wage-earners are the basic units of surplus-value production, which is the amount exceeding what is needed to reproduce a workforce reduced to selling its working abilities to live. For capital to see a region as “productive,” the labor force that inhabits it must have a set of needs capital can define on a scale ranging from bare humanity down to...nothing at all.

To exploit a workforce, of course, either you must have one already there—or you must create one. The Spaniards chose the first option, enslaving the native peoples and putting them to work in the fields and the mines. The Castilian monarchy desperately needed gold and silver to pay for its military adventures in Europe; adventures rationalized on a politico-religious model that lent itself very conveniently to spreading its wars to the western hemisphere. The method employed in contrast by the British may have lacked so deliberate a plan, but the lesser degree of urbanization of *their* savages lent itself in turn to a more piecemeal form of conquest, organized by the settlers themselves.

A direct-mail letter from the Native American Rights Fund, signed by John E. Echohawk, sums it up this way:

By 1900, after the Trail of Tears...after the extermination of countless Indians by disease brought to the New World by settlers...after the killing off of the buffalo, the *ten million* Indians living in North America when Columbus arrived had been systematically reduced to *one million*. And all the while, Indian lands and resources were stolen—as the leaders of this nation signed and then broke treaty after sacred treaty with Indian tribes. [Emphasis in the original]

Today, the survivors of this relentless assault on life and dignity are the poorest of the poor. Native Americans have the poorest health and shortest life expectancy of any Americans, the worst housing conditions, the highest unemployment and the lowest per capita income.

Today’s nation-states of North and South America stand as a monument of marketplace insolence toward the spirit of human community. To paraphrase Adam Smith, everyone becomes a loser where people let the “invisible hand” of capital guide them—everyone except the small

minority that profits from the system and drives it forward against the better judgment of society.

While it is true that the Maya in Central America, the Aztecs in Mexico and the Inca in Peru had developed the large-scale trading of goods and services by the time of the invasion, in general the populations native to the Western Hemisphere had not yet abandoned the basic institutions or outlook of communist society; they still produced wealth for use by the whole community, and they felt this was an appropriate framework for living and working together.

The Pig No. 1 System

But the Europeans wiped away this history of thousands of years with their imported diseases—aided by a technology premised on the reduction of socially-anchored communities to a market system powered by what we might describe as the “Pig No. 1” system. We must therefore ask ourselves, with the policy of genocide having been genetically incorporated into American capitalism, where—as a human majority reduced to selling our working abilities—do we go from here?

Echohawk in his letter urges us “to not simply commemorate history but to *change* history by healing the wounds of divisiveness between the red and white worlds...to heal the wounds of five centuries and create a *New World for Native Americans*.” This implies not ending the division of society into social classes—which was and remains at the root of the genocide—but only achieving a more equitable distribution of wage and salary opportunities on the one hand, and profit opportunities on the other. Even where the end-result returned their lands to Native Americans, the logic of the marketplace would still distort everyone’s common humanity in its own devilish image. We would stay just as locked out of abundance as we are now.

The time has come to end not just five centuries of atrocities against the American Indian, but three or more millennia of globally escalating class warfare *in general*. To do this we need a worldwide consensus rejecting capitalism and its market system, expressed at the polls; and a corresponding reorganization of the system of production so that people can return to living and working because they enjoy life and work. Living under the obligation to get money compels us to do things we otherwise would not choose to do, with no control over the direction change will take. Ø



Very likely only ONE of these rootless cosmopolitans would have advised you to

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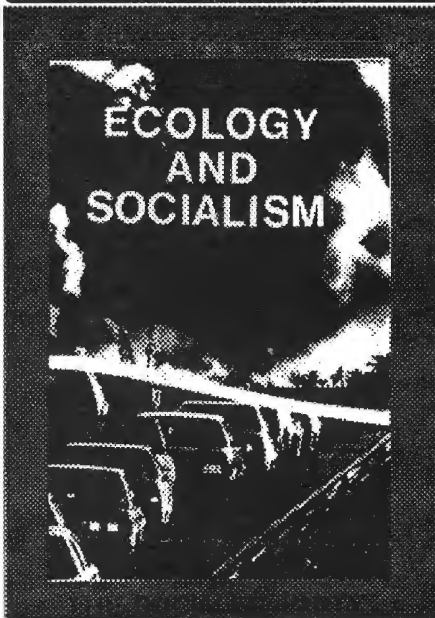
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Don't settle for a Ball of Confusion...

The Left doesn't really want to ditch capitalism (or its state-managed variants); the Right is a viper's nest of Machiavellian plumbers; and everything between them chases endlessly round and round on a nightmarish treadmill of short-term issues. Get the Socialist perspective on today's problems, and see for yourself why eliminating the wages system remains the only option that really makes any sense.



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What Can I Do?

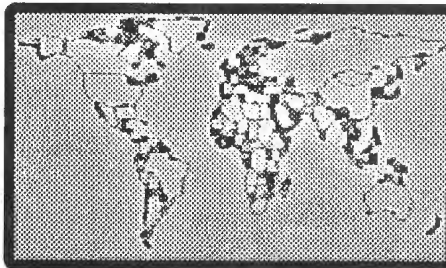
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DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES

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.
- 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.

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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.

1. 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.

2. 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.

3. 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.

4. 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!

5. 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.

6. 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.

7. 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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