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IMAGINE



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WAR IN GAZA

Who's Side
are You On?



Socialism
as a Dirty
Word pg.
2

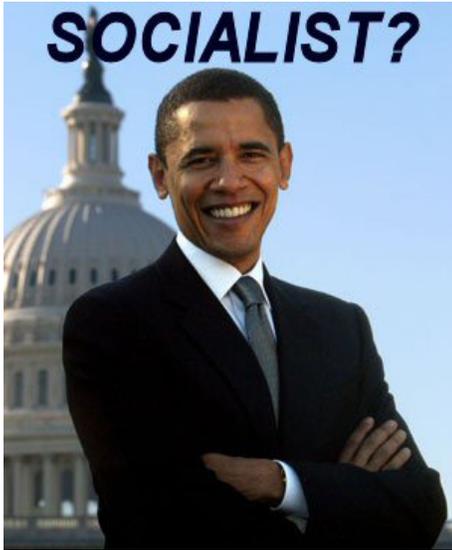


Rainfor-
ests Un-
der Stress
pg. 7



Book
Review
History
of the
SPC pg. 8

Political Fear Mongering *and the Stigma of Socialism*



M. CROSSMAN

If you have been in the dark lately, an election recently occurred in the United States. Election time in the U.S. guarantees mudslinging and scandals. Socialism is now being dragged through the mud, having been thrown around during the election race like a deadly weapon. True socialism has been tarnished by previous historical events, and the Presidential candidates perpetuated the misunderstanding of scientific socialism. “A vote for Obama is a vote for Socialism” was plastered on a billboard in Pennsylvania on October 31, 2008. Barack Obama, now President elect, has been branded as a socialist because of a statement made regarding taxes. In a discussion with a man termed “Joe the Plumber” Barack Obama stated that the distribution of wealth was part of his agenda. Obama was quoted as saying “when you spread the wealth around, it’s good for everybody.” John McCain and Sarah Palin, the candidates for the Republican Party have

declared that Obama’s “spread the wealth” comment proves he has a socialist agenda. “Certainly it’s part of the socialist creed, the socialist philosophy ... to share the wealth,” McCain said. Governor Palin repeatedly used the word socialism in the context that it is a toxic programme. “Friends, now is no time to experiment with socialism,” she said at a rally in Roswell, New Mexico. And McCain, discussing Obama’s tax proposals, agreed that they sounded “a lot like socialism.” Furthermore, Todd Akin, a Republican congressman from Missouri, told a McCain rally outside St. Louis that, “This campaign in the next couple of weeks is about one thing. It’s a referendum on socialism.” And yet another Senator, George Voinovich of Ohio, said of Obama, “With all due respect, the man is a socialist.”

It is these broad and misunderstood statements about what socialism is that impedes the advance of a true and scientific understanding of it. Simply distributing wealth in the U.S. would not be socialism; instead it would be state capitalism. The essential features of capitalism would still remain, which are; ownership of the tools of production by a small minority with the consequent wage enslavement of the majority and production with a view to making a profit on the market. Furthermore, the government would still exist the way it does now, to sustain the status quo. What’s worse is that people truly believe that wealth sharing would usher in Soviet-style socialism, which was state capitalism, since it is one of the examples of a country that labelled

itself socialist or communist. For example: 84-year-old World War II veteran John H. Gay is certain that Obama believes in the communist ideology and that “if we go the socialist way, you young people will lose all your freedoms -- mentally, physically and religiously.” That is not part of true socialism in any way, but the stigma and lack of understanding on the subject impede people from considering it as a viable and practical alternative. Although Mr Gay’s stigma does not reflect true socialism in any way, the likes of such “common sense” ignorance on the subject hoodwinks people from considering real socialism as a viable and practical alternative to the never ending capitalist mayhem of economic slumps, unemployment, wars, environmental destruction, and other varieties of human-made misery.

Although material conditions are often the mother of invention in building class consciousness opposing capital, socialists never cease endeavouring to educate en masse debunking the myths of capitalist apologists and mystifiers. Through persuasive argument and much hard work rational opinions and knowledge can be ascertained to truly reflect and share the ideas and scientific principles of conducting human affairs based on what real socialism is – and not what it is not. We urge you to join us in hastening this en masse education evolution for social revolution and speed the day to end capitalist oppression and all that it entails.

The Palestinian/Israeli Conflict:

Who's Side are You On?

The latest outbreak of hostilities in the Middle East has brought predictable results – condemnation of the brutal way in which Israel has used its military might (900 dead and 4 000 injured, many women and children); support for Israel by most Western governments, especially Britain and the US; inaction by the UN as any resolution is easily vetoed by the five permanent members of the Security Council, who just happen also to be the world's main purveyors of armaments. Israel has invaded Palestinian territory ostensibly to stop the continual firing of crude rockets into their land. Palestinian rockets are in response to the two-year blockade of Gaza, essentially imprisoning them and creating economic chaos and misery. Hamas, the ruling party of the Palestinians, refuses to rec-

ognize Israel's right to exist, while Israel and the US have declared Hamas, a democratically elected government, verified by international observers, to be a terrorist organization. But the roots of the conflict go much deeper than that. The establishment of the state of Israel after WW II was carried out at the behest of the US. For them, it created a modern friendly state in a strategically important region and gave them the opportunity to destabilize the area to evade facing a pan-Arab front. It has worked well. The region is in a constant state of war and conflict and Arab factions compete with each other. Jews and Arabs lived peaceably in the area for thousands of years, but when the Israeli state boundaries were drawn and enforced, many Palestinians had to move from territories they had oc-

cupied for generations. It was a recipe for disaster and the West has seen to it that this situation will continue forever. The modern state, with clearly defined boundaries, a central government complete with its apparatus for 'defence' and for propaganda, the education system and the media, is necessary to the operation of the class system that is capitalism. That there is conflict as rival states compete for economic hegemony is no surprise to the socialist, as this is a natural consequence of the operation of the system. The supposed solution to the problem, the creation of a Palestinian state, would simply create a formally organised capitalist unit, complete with a dominant owning class and an exploited working class. Like all other states, it would operate in the interests of profit, not in the interests



of the people. Furthermore, it would necessarily be in direct competition with all other states, including Israel, for resources, land, and trade. In other words, the conflict would continue as long as the competitive profit system exists. So whose side do we take? The Socialist Party of Canada and its companion parties around the world were first confronted with this question as the First World War began. Using Marxian theory, its own Declaration of Principles, and analytical common sense, The SPC produced a war manifesto on August 6th, 1914. In its "Manifesto to the Workers of Canada", it stated that modern wars have their origin in the disputes between the international capitalist class and have no interest for the working class; that it will be the workers who will be expected to fight and die for their capitalists' cause and benefit; that since the international working class produces all the world's wealth yet possesses nothing and receives but paltry wages to maintain a slavish existence, while the capitalist class produces nothing and possesses everything by virtue of the powers of the state, then the only struggle of interest to the workers is wresting this power from the master class to remove all forms of exploitation and servitude. (see "The Impossible; A Brief History of The Socialist Party of Canada", by Peter E. Newell, Athena Press). This stance has been upheld continuously since that time by all parties of The World Socialist Move-



ment in the face of the seemingly endless wars that afflict the profit system. In the Israeli/Palestinian conflict, then, we equally condemn the invasion of Gaza by the vastly superior forces of Israel and its blockade that causes

hardship to the Palestinians, and the indiscriminate rocket attacks and the tactic of sending in suicide bombers, some just children, to kill and maim a few Israeli workers. The SPC supports the workers of both sides in their struggle to throw off the yoke of capitalist oppression, legitimized and enforced by the state machinery and operated by so-called leaders who pretend to guard the interests of the people while operating a system of exploitation.

Only when the working class as a whole comes to realize that we are in the majority and that we have the same interests, no matter where we live, and that we have the power to make the fundamental changes needed to end all conflict, will the Middle Eastern problem, and others around the world, be solved. This, and other, conflicts will continue so long as the present competitive system of private ownership by the minority continues. Only when the people are able to elect representatives, not leaders, who are charged with carrying out their wishes, and are daily responsible for that task, will peace be possible. Only when private ownership of the means of producing and distributing wealth become collective and states, classes, money, profit, wages disappear, will the reasons for war also disappear.

Mankind as a Commodity

J. HODGINS

Human beings are commodified through the selling and buying of their labour power. A commodity appears simply as something with a threefold value i.e, a use-value, an exchange value and a price. What implications does this have in regards to the commodification of human labour power? It would appear as though the purchase of our labour power would indeed be the essence of enslavement, slavery being defined in terms "as one being compelled to work for others, and the surrender of the product of they're labour". The term wage-slavery would be an appropriate definition for the monetary exchange of human labour. The commodified human being

does not have any claim over the wealth that they produce. While, unlike the slaves of yesterday, the wage-slave is not compelled to work for any given master, he nonetheless must work for a master, for his very livelihood depends upon this monetary exchange. The Capitalist neither purchases his worker, nor does he own them. The capitalist merely purchases from them their labour power, the workers physical energy, for a certain period of time. The worker represents to him merely a machine capable of expending a certain amount of labour power. When the capitalist does not need any more labour power, he simply refrains from purchasing any. This occurrence is quite a common thing, as we have recently seen in the layoffs in the various sectors of industry. The layoff is an overt example of the cessation of exchange that exists between workers and capitalist, it is merely a circumstance of supply and demand.

It is clear that mankind's livelihood is directly related to the production we are involved in. In all aspects of social history this has remained true. It is the relationship that the worker's holds in relation to labour that has transformed throughout the ages. Where once the worker laboured in a state of serfdom, he now labours in the state of wage-dom. The future of this relationship will not remain unchanged. The Socialist Party of Canada puts forth the case for a radical transformation of the workers relationship towards the means of producing wealth. The socialist advocates the common ownership of the wealth of mankind's labour, and the abolishment of the commodification of humanity. It is only when the working class as a whole stands in an equal ownership towards the means of producing and distributing wealth that this exploitation will end. To that end we encourage the entire working class to study our case, and to bring forth the next age of mankind.

What's in a Price? J. HODGINS

In the Capitalist mode of production the creation and distribution of commodities and goods take form in the shape of prices. The rise and decline in prices can be attributed to many varying factors. Production of a single commodity does not occur within a vacuum, rather many different aspects and circumstances go into the production of a product that are out of the hands of the workers that produce them. Let's for example use the automobile as an illustration of this. An automobile takes its final form as a finished product in the shape of a price, lets say \$40 000. If you break apart the process by which the production of an automobile occurs you find that hundreds of different forms of labour were involved in its final form. A car is composed of thousands of different mechanical parts, the majority of which are produced in different factories by different workers. We can deduce even further that the production of a single mechanical part in the car has many different aspects of labour involved with its production. The worker who labours at the mine in northern Ontario producing steel derivatives is as much

involved in the process of automobile production as the worker that assembles the finishing pieces of a single car. The same can be said for the truck driver who transports the raw material from the mine to the processing plant to be further refined into industrial grade steel. Even more so we can lump into this process the farmer, who by their production of food allows individual workers in this chain the sustenance required to be a productive producer. We can see then, that the \$40 000 dollar price tag is not some arbitrary number created out of thin air by money crazed capitalists. The final price is the amalgamation of all other forms of labour value that goes into the production of a single product for sale on the market.

Neither are the wages that we receive just an arbitrary number created by our employers. A wage takes its form in the shape of a sale and purchase. The sale is brought forth by the worker, who confronts the market with his only true possession, that of his mind and muscle. The purchase occurs on the side of the owner who buys from the worker his time and labour. Wages are

calculated by the cost of the goods and services a worker needs to consume in order to continue being a productive worker, this being the necessary things a human needs in order to live and support a family. Simply put, the price of labour is what constitutes a wage. The labour a worker expends during production adds value to the thing the worker is producing. It is this factor that creates what is called 'surplus-value' i.e. profit. It can then be considered that the worker, throughout one portion of the day works to produce the equivalent value of their wage, and in another portion of the day works to create profit for the capitalist. The wage a worker receives must always be less than the value of what they produce, otherwise there is no profit to be made, and production will cease. Profit is merely the value created by the worker above and beyond the cost of the wage; it can be considered that profit is the equivalent of unpaid labour. Consider this next time you are in your workplace, for most of your working day you are essentially working for free.



As soon as the world credit crisis burst on the scene, capitalists, politicians, and soothsayers put global warming on the back burner. Even before the economic crisis, the deforestation aspects of global warming were already low on the radar which is ludicrous to anyone concerned with preventing the environmental catastrophe into which capitalism is rushing headlong. Forests were left out of the original Kyoto agreement and out of the carbon markets proposed in The International Panel of Climate Change Report of 2007. Yet, they contain fifty per cent of life on earth while covering less than seven per cent of the earth's surface, and they are responsible for most of the rainfall on this planet. To an extent, they determine the earth's temperature by forming a cooling belt around the equator. According to Rodney Castleden in his "Discoveries that Changed the World" (Futura, 2008), "The rate of destruction of the tropical rainforests became a major cause of concern in the 1980s. Sud-

denly, environmentalists and the general public all over the world became aware that the forests were being lost at such a fast rate, that, in as little as a generation, there might be no rainforest left at all." Nearly two decades have gone by since that time and they are becoming increasingly smaller, through over exploitation, in the name of profit, for timber, agricultural land, mineral resources and cattle ranching. Commercial logging, which is a major contributor to deforestation, provides pulp for paper and cardboard for the major industrialized countries. Approximately fifty per cent of the world's timber and seventy-five per cent of the world's paper is consumed by a quarter of its population, mostly in the US, Europe, and Japan. Though some forest is cleared for local food production, much is cleared for cattle ranching. Beef cattle are raised for the US fast food industry. Every burger eaten represents the clearing of fifty square feet of rainforest. Powerful, multi-national companies are also in-

involved, whether it is logging, oil and mineral mining, or power generation. Their power schemes have resulted in vast flooded areas of rainforest. In addition, as they move their employees in, they destroy more forest with highway, railway and settlement building. The forests used to be an enormous water reservoir but clearing reduces this amount through increased evaporation. The risk exists that the forests could become deserts. What is now the Sahara desert was once a forested area, brought about natural climate change. Imagine what is now possible with man's helping hand! In 1992, The Food and Agricultural Organization (FOA) estimated that, globally, tropical rainforests were being lost at the rate of 65 000 square miles a year. The World Resources Institute disagreed and said it was 70 000square miles. In 2007 it was discovered that deforestation has created huge volumes of carbon dioxide by destroying much of the cooling belt around the equator. The Stern Report

on climate change estimated that deforestation produces twenty-five per cent of the greenhouse gases that are responsible for global warming. By focusing on the direct production of carbon dioxide emissions, politicians are turning a blind eye to deforestation. The Stern Report also comments, " ... that the destruction of the tropical forest during the four years 2008 to 2011 alone is set to pump more carbon dioxide into the atmosphere than every flight in the history of aviation until at least 2025." According to Castleden, " Another environmental report has stated bleakly 'If we lose the forests, we lose the fight against climate change.' The people most directly affected are the 1.6 billion of the world's poorest people who live in or near the rain

forests, and get their living from them. Poorly armed, educated, and organized, they are no match for the governments who force them off their land or for the multi-nationals who take it from them. What can be done within capitalism to save the rainforests? It would seem precious little, considering it isn't high on any politician's agenda, including those who are fighting a losing battle against global warming in general. The reason the forests are being destroyed can be summed up in one word, profit. Whether it is wood and paper products, food products, mining, or energy projects, it all means the same thing – commodities that can be sold for profit. Nor can anyone expect any capitalist enterprise to consider long-term consequences. A profit must be made quickly for them to

remain in business. Though profit may be the very lifeblood of the capitalist system, it is also a destructive force, whether it be the deaths of members of the working class in wars, or, in this case, destruction of the environment. Some may well ask if the members of a socialist society wouldn't need the products that capitalism is plundering the world to produce. We most certainly would need those things that are essential to our modern world, but production and production techniques would be devised that wouldn't include the blatant rape and devastation of our natural world. The vast majority would, through elected representatives, ascertain needs, materials, clean methods of production and distribution, and fuel that minimizes or eliminates damage

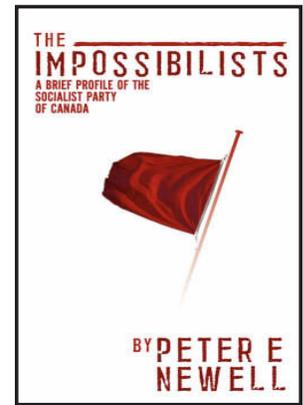
to our environment. The first citizens of a socialist world will be confronted with the mess that capitalism has made of this planet. They will have to reclaim the forests, irrigate the deserts, and clean the air, land, and waters. With present day technology and future innovations and discoveries, they will probably succeed. Then a world will exist where humankind can live in harmony with nature. Who would not want such a world? So why not organize politically to speed the day.



Book Review

The Impossibleists – A Brief History of The Socialist Party of Canada

By Peter E. Newell, Athena Press, UK, 2008.



S. SHANNON

In writing his highly informative and readable history, Newell has accomplished something that biographers of The Socialist Party of Great Britain (of which Newell is a member) have failed to achieve in one volume. Newell describes, in detail, the events and controversies that have occurred in the SPC's history and captures the spirit and flair of the colourful personalities that played a conspicuous part in its history. Readers will consider themselves fortunate that the author persevered over a long period to complete this work.

Though the title includes the word brief, absorbing the voluminous information contained in the 400 pages and six appendices, it's hard to think of it as such. Marxist activity, as opposed to Reformist and Christian socialism began in Canada, mostly in the Western provinces, around 1900. Many were British working people who (like the founders of SPGB) had been members of the Social Democratic Federation, but had quit, disillusioned and disgusted because it had become increasingly reformist. Several parties claiming to be socialist were founded, two of which deserve mention here. The Revolutionary Party was formed in late 1901 or early 1902. They contested a by-election in Nanaimo, BC, in December, 1902. Their platform was the abolition of capitalism and the wages system, not immediate demands or reforms. Interestingly, Newell claims this was the

world's first completely revolutionary Socialist Party. In 1901, the Socialist Party of British Columbia was formed in Vancouver, which was a mixture of revolutionaries and reformers. By January, 1903, the former had sufficient power to suggest (probably for the first time) that in elections, where there were no socialist candidates, workers should write 'Socialism' on their ballot papers. In February, 1905, the above parties and various others throughout Canada, merged to form the SPC. In the early days, the bulk of the membership and its most active ones, were in British Columbia. The most influential members advocated the need to educate workers 'to their class interests and demand the collective ownership of the means of production.'

Newell quoted another biographer, Ross McCormack, "By refusing to demand reforms in its platform, the SPC became unique in North America." An outstanding early member was Eugene Kingsley, as a speaker, organizer, and writer, who, when asked about reforms, declared, "Go after the earth and the first thing you know, you will have palliatives galore from the cowardly capitalist tribe, fleeing for their lives, from the wrath to come." Another early member was Jim Pritchard, an immigrant from the UK, who had, for a time, worked in Manchester at the Ermen and Engels Textile Mill. Pritchard had led the drive to organize coal min-

ers on Vancouver Island into the Western Federation of Miners, where he worked as a miner. In 1903, he was blacklisted and he moved to the city of Vancouver. He died in 1952, aged 90 and still a member of the SPC. However impressive the above may seem, the plain fact was that there were reformers among the members who would eventually create discord. In 1911, various groups of reformists left to form the Social Democratic Party of Canada, leaving the SPC at a very low ebb.

Newell recounts some of the SPC's achievements, which are quite an eye-opener, even for present-day members. On August 6th, 1914, two days after Britain declared war on Germany, the SPC drew up an anti-war manifesto that was published in the Western Clarion on August 15th. Its most significant paragraph being, "inasmuch as all modern wars have their origins in the disputes of the international capitalist class for markets in which to dispose of the stolen products of labour, or to protect themselves in the possession of markets they already have, the motive of the anticipated struggle in Europe is of no real interest to the international working class." This was published ten days before the SPGB's own anti-war statement. In May, 1917, three months after the Russian czar's abdication and six months before the Bolshevik coup, the Western Clarion included what

may be the first correct analysis by a Marxist party on the events in Russia "...although events in Russia were encouraging in that they were moving the proletariat towards emancipation, the historical juncture for the co-operative commonwealth had not arrived."

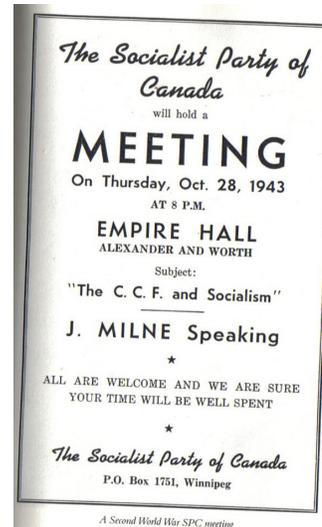
Among the companion parties of socialism, the SPC alone has had some electoral success. Between 1905 and 1920, five candidates were elected (two of them twice) to the provincial parliaments in British Columbia, Alberta, and Manitoba. It must, though, be honestly said that the majority of votes cast were both on a Labour Union and Reformist basis. Newell gives details of the differing attitudes among members towards unions, including IWW, which has not resolved itself today. The Winnipeg strike of 1919, was not organized by SPC, nor was socialism an issue. Nevertheless, SPC members were involved, including strike committee members George Armstrong, Dick Johns, and Bob Russell, all of whom served prison terms for their involvement. Bill Pritchard, the son of the previously mentioned Jim, was not on the committee, but was jailed anyway for his involvement.

Newell devotes an entire chapter to the strike, which (like the rest of the book) is absorbing reading. As an aside, this reviewer would like to add that at the "Museum of Man" in Gatineau, Quebec (across the river from Ottawa) there is an exhibit devoted to the strike. It includes an exact replica of the Strike H.Q., the literature of the time, such as *The Western Labour News* and life-sized cardboard cutouts of some of the leading personalities involved such as Helen Armstrong, wife of George, herself an SPC member and member of the strike committee.

The Bolshevik seizure of power had a devastating effect on the SPC. Some

quit to join Bolshevik-style parties. Others were "...subject to the anti-red propaganda and persecution, whether they were sympathetic to the Russian upheaval or not." In 1919, the 'One Big Union' was founded, largely by SPC members, some of which devoted more time to it than to the SPC itself..."the Canadian state closely monitored the activities of prominent members of SPC and OBU. Some of them left the country, either for a few months, or, in some cases, permanently." Some became reformists, Bill Pritchard being a perfect example. By 1933 he "was heavily involved with the newly established Cooperative Commonwealth Federation." He eventually returned to the fold in the US and, in 1969, wrote an excellent analysis of the Winnipeg strike, in commemoration of its fiftieth anniversary.

For the SPC it was too many setbacks and, in 1925, without consulting the membership, the executive dissolved the party. At no time did socialist activity by ex members cease. A number of small locals continued to function, a proletarian club was founded in Vancouver, and a science study club was founded in Winnipeg. By 1931, former members re-organized the SPC and, in 1931, accepted the SPGB's object and declaration of principles. Since then, the SPC has struggled through the depression, WWII, the cold war, the prosperity of the fifties and sixties, and subsequent recessions, constantly stating the case for socialism without compromise. Like all parties, it has had its controversies, one of which was in the 1960s. This concerned internal democracy – some Vancouver members were expelled and joined with the To-



ronto local, which resigned to form the World Socialist Party of Canada. A previous reviewer criticized Newell for devoting a whole chapter on this and, I'm told, Newell agreed. For my part, it was something that happened and the effect was terrible for a small party that could ill afford such schisms. If one is going to

it had to be dealt with in detail. One topic that I question, that had to be dealt with in detail, is an appendix of 15 pages devoted to Daniel De Leon and The Socialist Labour Party. Possibly, Newell didn't want any confusion concerning SPC differences with SLP. There may be some confusion when one sees De Leon's name on the back cover. This, I'm told, is the publisher's doing. Another topic that I feel has too much space is Charles Lestor. He was a colourful member, active in the twenties and thirties in Canada and Britain, whose socialist understanding was questioned by both parties. Newell sums up, "Daniel De Leon and Trotsky were, apparently Lestor's great unsung heroes." Besides De Leon, there are appendices on SPC pamphlets, an electoral history of SPC, locals after 1931, locals 1933-1939, and Canadian Socialist and Canadian Social Democratic groups and parties since 1939. "The Impossibleists" ends on a couple of high notes – the publication of a new journal, "Imagine", and the other being the final sentence, "At the time of writing, the SPC appears to have moved up a gear or two – only time will tell." "The Impossibleists" is indispensable reading for those interested in the history of the labour movement in Canada and the movement for socialism everywhere.

Obscene and Heard

Health

A big issue for Canadians is the preservation of our universal “free” Health care. Especially as half the 1.5 million American families that go bankrupt each year do so due to medical causes. In Canada we have creeping privatization as for profit clinics keep popping up contravening the Canada Health Act but never challenged by any level of government. These clinics are slowly stripping the health care system of doctors, nurses, other health care professionals, and resources. They charge fees that most Canadians cannot afford, such as \$13-20 000 for knee surgery.

On health, cigarette manufacturers, virtually chased out of the shrinking tobacco market in North America, have found new ones in the Third World (will it ever get to Second place?). China is the land of cheap cigarettes with ads such as, “This special product was created...as an appreciation to all women in style. Because you deserve the best” (message on packs of ‘low side stream lady’ rose flavoured cigarettes, Toronto Star, 25/10/08). Apparently it’s going well as smoking kills over a million in China every year!

Work

In China – Toronto Star headline, “Crisis Slows China’s March to Capitalism”. Ignoring the fact that they have always been capitalist, the story tells how a business couple saw the writing on the wall for their company so they took the money and ran, throwing 6 000 employees out of work. This is portrayed as ‘raw

capitalism’, China style. Is it any different from the Canadian manufacturing companies who, over the last five years, have run from Canada to greener (as in green money) pastures, throwing 300 000 workers out of a job.

On November 19th. the leaders of the US auto industry left Washington without any bail out money for their companies, but traveled in their private jets. Each flight cost about \$20 000. As one observer commented, “there is a delicious irony in seeing private luxury jets flying into Washington with tin cups in their hands saying they are going to be trimming down and streamlining their business.” Kinda like seeing someone show up at a soup kitchen in a top hat and tux. With GM and Chrysler close to collapse, some 2 to 3 million workers will become unemployed, probably none of whom will pick up their dole money (if they qualify) in a private jet. An article on disappearing auto jobs (Toronto Star, 14 Nov 2008) revealed that the average assembly worker in that industry produces \$300 000 worth of value per year and receives \$65 000 in pay. That means on an eight-hour shift starting at, say, 7:00am, the worker has earned his wages by 8:45am. Hope they all figure this out and come to our conclusion!

Poverty

The Ontario Association of Food Banks (yes, in Canada) released a report showing poverty’s total costs to the Ontario economy amount to \$38 billion, “The simple truth is that the poor are a drag

on the economy, and by giving them crumbs instead of lifting them out of poverty, we ensure they will continue to live miserable, yet expensive lives.” Just how they are going to be lifted out of poverty is never stated. Once again, Captain McGuinty rides to the rescue of the poor. His Government has raised welfare rates, for example, a single person would receive \$572 per month, up from \$560. This increase brings them up to the recommended level, FOR 1988! As the average rental in Toronto is around \$1 000, you can see the difficulties. This is from a government committed to fighting poverty! Increasing numbers are lining up at food banks and debt-burdened post secondary students figure prominently. A report on poverty by the Ontario Association of Food Banks suggests the obvious – that poverty affects more than the homeless and for the ten thousandth time states that investing in childhood development, early education programs, literacy, job training etc would be a good investment. The plain fact is that governments have been trying to eradicate poverty for decades without success. Socialists know that capitalism itself is the problem and investment is needed to establish socialism to solve the problem.

Top US army officials said, “A \$160 billion future combat systems modernization program managed by Boeing Co. and SAIC Inc. was on budget and on track.” (Socialist Standard, Nov. 2008). Yet \$30 billion a year would eliminate world hunger. So much for capitalism’s priorities. A November 20th. article in the Toronto Star by Da-

vid Hulchanski, quotes, “It wasn’t too long ago that our language did not include terms like good jobs or bad jobs or the working poor. How could you work and be poor? Times have certainly changed. In the early 1970s about two-thirds of the city of Toronto’s neighbourhoods were middle income – within 20% of the average individual income. By 2006 that percentage had declined to just one third. The point is that in the 1970s most people thought that prosperity was here to stay, the fact being, within capitalism prosperity and security are all too fleeting.

On December 11th. Anderson Cooper, then a guest of Regis Philbin and Kelly Ripa, mentioned that one million sharks a year are killed. They are caught, their fins removed for sale, and, still alive, are thrown back into the ocean. Without their fins, the sharks lose the ability to balance, sink to the bottom, and die. This is causing havoc on the ecosystem and endangering the species, but who cares? Big profits justify such reprehensible actions.

Madonna recently settled her divorce with ex-husband, Guy Ritchie, by parting with 50 million pounds, CA\$93 million (Metro News, 16/Dec/2008). Ritchie also keeps the couple’s West London pub and their country home. The couple was reportedly worth US\$525 million, most of which belonged to Madonna. “I’d assume it’s one of the largest payouts ever in a divorce settlement,” lawyer Rosenberg commented. Contrast that with the recent movie, “Slumdog Millionaire” which is set in the slums of Mumbai. In fact to use the word ‘slums’ is a masterpiece of understatement. One sees the squalor of homes made of cardboard and corrugated iron, of communal toilets that are simple pits, and the sheer hopelessness on the people’s faces. The film portrays unscrupulous men capturing children and maiming them to qualify as beggars, and, in one case, even blinding a young boy. All this in the main industrial city of a country that is becoming one of the world’s leading industrial powers. Do not these vast differences in wealth suggest that something is very wrong in capitalist society? In a socialist society, no one will live in slums anywhere as money will not be needed and no one will be able to accumulate vast fortunes that are used to further enslave the working class.

Declaration of Principles

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.

Declaration of Principles

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 labour alone wealth is produced.

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.

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.

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.

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

6. That 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 an agent of emancipation and the overthrow of plutocratic privilege.

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.

8. The Socialist Party of Canada, therefore, enters the field of political action determined to wage war against all other political parties, whether alleged labour or avowedly capitalist, and calls upon the members of the working class of this country to support these principles to the end that a termination may be brought to the system which deprives them of the fruits of their labour, and that poverty may give place to comfort, privilege to equality, and slavery to freedom.

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