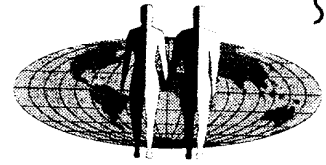


IMAGINE



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CAPITALISM OR COMMON SENSE

John Ayers

There are many aspects of our daily lives that just don't make sense. For example, we have tens of thousands of people without homes. This doesn't just mean the obvious ones laying on downtown sidewalks or living under bridges, but includes those placed in motels or temporary shelters, the invisible statistics. At the same time, we have many empty houses and buildings waiting for tenants, and we certainly do not lack the materials and skilled workers to build adequate housing for all.

The plight of the homeless is in the news with the current recession and the growth of tent cities, as those unable to pay their mortgages are thrown out of their homes.

Forty percent of those who have recently lost their homes in the U.S. are renters who paid their rent, only to see their landlords foreclosed. They are turfed out of their homes to live in tent cities or shelters, while their homes remain empty, waiting months or years for a buyer. Similarly, there are hundreds of thousands of Canadians who cannot afford adequate food for themselves and their families. They include many who have full time, low-paying jobs, unable, after paying rent and other expenses, to buy all the food they need. For those growing numbers without jobs, unemployment and welfare rates are designed to keep the industrial reserve army, the necessary labour pool that can be drawn on in boom times, barely active until the next call to work. Hence, the constant and expanding line-ups at the new growth industry, food banks.

While these families go without food, all grocery stores are packed to the ceiling with every conceivable food item, and, again, we do not lack the ability to provide food for everyone.

Then, there is the constant scourge of poverty, the condition that every government promises to abolish, or, at least, reduce, but one that continues to grow. For example, Ontario's Liberal government promised to reduce poverty in the province by 25% over five years on taking office for its second term, but now are backpedaling furiously, citing the economic climate. Perhaps, they meant some "other" five years, sometime in the future and not the next five years! Poverty means lining up at food banks for hand outs; wearing shoddy, used clothing; neglecting health problems; foregoing educational opportunities or 'luxuries', like eating in a restaurant, or going to the movies, and many more indignities that make you a second-class citizen. For those in poverty, it is a life of despair and struggle, wasted lives, wasted talents.

Would anyone wish homelessness, hunger or poverty on someone else? Not likely, yet, it continues to exist and we feel helpless to do anything about it. The problems are just too large and complex to contemplate. Some do make contributions, and some try to rouse the politicians to action, but to no avail. Why, then, doesn't the government solve these blights on society? The answer is that to do so, in this system, would require a lot of money for programs that could not be squeezed from the barely adequate wages that most workers receive and therefore, would have to come from the only other source of wealth, profits. Here, the dictates of capital take over. In a system whose very

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existence is for the accumulation of wealth in the interests of the small minority that own the means of wealth, production and distribution, taking large amounts of money from the goal without creating more money, not only goes against the grain, but would destroy the purpose of the system itself. Although I am sure most of the owning class would, themselves, like to see people adequately fed and housed, and many do contribute to charities for that purpose, the system of constantly expanding production for constantly expanding capital, simply cannot tolerate using money for purposes other than increased profit. We are seeing in today's recession the results of contracted production and contracted profit expectations.

To deal with the above problems, then, and many others in our society, the current 'production for profit only' system must be replaced by production for use, to meet human, not capital needs. That can only happen when ownership and control of wealth, production and distribution is in all of our hands. Until then, the problems will persist forever, and promises and rhetoric to the contrary, are just that.

A DIFFERENT KIND OF PARTY

Eds.

Like all other political parties, The Socialist Party of Canada, would like to solicit your vote with a view to sending representatives to parliament. All similarities with other parties end there. The SPC, founded in 1905, formally adopted the Declaration of Principles of The Socialist Party of Great Britain in 1934, and since then, has campaigned and promoted just one party platform – the establishment of a socialist society based on the common ownership of the means of producing and distributing wealth, organized democratically, in the interests of all humanity. We do not change our platform to conform to perceived public opinion, nor do we support reforms and palliatives of capitalism. While we are happy to see working conditions, health care, and social programs improve the lot of the worker, we hold that reforms will never bring a fair share of the social wealth produced by the worker to all, never end inequality and exploitation, or change the subordinate position of the working class in relation to the capitalist class.

Reforms, in any case, are just as easily taken away as given, as the auto-workers and others are

discovering today. Our party is run democratically, as a socialist society would be. We have no leaders, and therefore no followers, only elected officials who carry out the wishes of the members. Thus, we have a treasurer, a general secretary, etc. and a General Administrative Committee for organizational purposes. Every member stands equal in discussing party matters and anyone may bring criticisms, ideas or rule changes forward to be discussed and voted on. There is no elite cadre surrounding a leader to decide the right path for the party and then tell the rank and file members what they are to believe in and how they should vote. We accept only class-conscious socialists as members, requiring the successful completion of a questionnaire to demonstrate this as a requirement for membership. All other parties enter the election field with a view to capturing power and then use that power to 'rule' for the next five years. Those parties, including the ones who purport to be socialist/communist, see the party leaders as the elite who will run the new society, telling others what to do.

The SPC enters the election field to gain legislative power in order to enact a socialist society, i.e. replace the private ownership of the means of producing wealth with common ownership to devolve power to local and regional elected councils; to

convert parliament from an instrument of oppression ~~by~~ the capitalist class, into an agent of emancipation of the working class and thus end the class system forever.

Elected representatives of the SPC would be answerable to the party members and look to them for guidance on voting in parliament. After the task of establishing socialism is satisfactorily completed, the party will dissolve, as political parties, expressions of class interests, will no longer be relevant.

In capitalism, it takes money and people to run in an election. If you are fed up with voting for parties and seeing no real change, and, if you agree with our ideas, the SPC solicits your support for this purpose, and to continue its educational programs. Socialism needs you, and you need socialism.

*While the world has been devouring
reality television shows, many
Argentines have been opting this
Christmas for reality board games,
such as 'Eternal Debt', involving the
International Monetary Fund.
<http://tinyurl.com/yeavzt3>*

*Israel will begin distributing its entire
population with gas masks in two
months, though no reason has
officially been given by the Israeli
government.
<http://tinyurl.com/yeggkvu>*

THE PARADOX OF EDUCATION

M. Zink

“On the one hand, a change of circumstances (is) required to establish a proper system of education. On the other hand, a proper system of education (is) required to bring about a change of social circumstances...” Karl Marx

The Socialist Party of Canada promotes action to overcome capitalism, but there is little doubt that education will play a key role in any democratic socialist revolution. Almost all socialist thinkers have made their commentaries on education as well as theorizing about the necessary changes to the system before and after a socialist society is established. Despite the agreement regarding the importance of education, there are conflicting views about the very definition of education, and more so when it comes to what exactly should be taught and how. Part of this disagreement is due to over 150 years that these thinkers have spanned, which began when the public education system was in its infancy, and pedagogy was a rare field of study. Great advancement in developmental psychology, sociology and other sciences, provided us with greater insight into education that was not available to socialist thinkers of the 19th century. We now possess the knowledge and resources to properly educate all members of society. The thing we must first agree on is a definition of socialist education. For this, I will use Horace Mann’s (a non-socialist American educational reformer) ideal for education.

“By the word ‘education’, I mean more than the ability to read and write. I comprehend under this noble word such a training of the body as shall build it up with robustness and vigor. . .enabling it to act formatively upon the substances of nature – to turn a wilderness into cultivated fields. I mean, also, to include a cultivation of the intellect as shall enable it to discover those permanent and mighty laws which pervade all part of the universe.” This encapsulates several points of agreement between socialist educators.

1. Education is more than the ability to read and write.
2. Education must include training of both the mind and body.
3. Education is not memorization, but rather teaching students how to think for themselves.

Out of all the points, the last one is the most important for socialists. Our highest priority must be to teach children how to think for themselves. This is where we reach the great paradox that Marx realized almost 150 years ago. For to bring about socialist change, we need a large majority of people who can think rationally about their surroundings. The paradox is that such an educational system is not possible unless we already have a highly enlightened populace.

There is one key barrier to this, the fact that the current system is set up to benefit the ruling class. They are the ones who formed it, fund it, and set the limits of it. This

is obvious from the very formation of public schooling. When the economy was agriculturally-based, the farmers did not need formal education in order to plow a field, as this is a skill that can be learned at home. Once new technologies were developed, it was necessary to provide workers with a basic education, reading and writing, so they could follow instructions and operate machinery.

Just as today, it has become necessary to train students on computers to be able to operate in the workforce. Public schooling was only formed out of economic necessity, not for idealistic principles of educating the masses for the betterment of the whole society. Prior to this, children were employed in factories while their parents often stayed at home unemployed. This was because children could be paid less than adults. Besides causing conflicts in families, it resulted in many industrial accidents when children fell asleep operating machinery for 14 or 16 hours a day. That meant stopping the machinery and affecting productivity, hence, children were deemed less effective.

Now, the question is, what should be taught in a socialist society? This, of course, will be decided by the people when socialism is established. However, there are some obvious things that should be on the agenda. Education must include training of both mind and body. Physical education, through training and co-operative sports is one way to achieve this. Also, once an appropriate age is reached, training in agriculture and other forms of production would

aid in skills and physical development. Knowledge of appropriate diet and learning good eating habits from a scientific point of view, the effects of toxins etc. must be fully understood as clearly as the positive effects of other foods.

As for the mental side of learning, reading and writing must be emphasized as early as possible, not as an economic need, but to take advantage of the wealth of human knowledge that has been acquired to this date in history. The value of literacy does not rest in what words are prepositions, adverbs, etc., but in focusing on the content, meaning and the usage of words to express ideas. This is something that is not present, or seriously lacking, in many classrooms. All literature appropriate to the age group should be available for study. The teaching of sciences is the easiest to select as something needed by society. Natural sciences must play a large role in schools. e.g. a group trip to the country to witness and participate in agriculture, plant seeds, watch them grow over time, harvest the grain, convert it to flour, and make bread. This inclusive, cross discipline approach is one that should be taught. The current curriculum is fragmented and compartmentalized with little attention to interdisciplinary comparisons.

There is a common thread in subjects throughout the years, but it is separated by school semesters and similarities between subjects are not emphasized. It is likely that the physical school and the term system we now know will be replaced with a continuous learning experience

wherever the children learn best. A greater emphasis must be placed on the interaction of the school with society at large. Currently, the school itself is an artificial and awkward invention. It is devoid of creativity and life for the most part and is viewed as a separate part of the community where access is limited. Social studies, geography, and history of the student's local area (as well as the world at large) should be taught. Sociology, the study of society, its function, its members, and the role of the individual in society can be introduced as soon as comprehension is possible. History would take a very different form than that taught today. The value of history is not in the mere knowledge of dates and names, but in the principles that can be drawn from it to guide society in the future. Of course, the 'great man' version of history would be replaced by using the principles of historical materialism, logic and reasoned argument. All subjects should be taught totally, from every view, in relation to all other subjects, and without bias. This mental education, alongside physical education, would ensure a freethinking, functional population to further the ideals of a socialist society.

Most Britons have little confidence in official statistics and believe that they are distorted by politicians, according to a survey for the Financial Times. Only about 10 percent of adults believe that official figures are accurate, while a similar portion think that figures are produced without political interference, according to the survey conducted by Harris.
<http://tinyurl.com/ySsmti>

THE BUCK STOPS HERE – OR, DOES IT?

Steve Shannon

The above expression was made famous by U.S. president, Harry Truman, and certainly, most people blame politicians for the vicissitudes of the economy. When the crash of 1929 caused a world-wide depression, both the Republican government in the U.S. and the Labour government in Britain, were voted out of office in the next elections.

The companion parties of the World Socialist Movement have explained for a century, that, since capitalism is a market economy based on the profit motive, economic slumps and booms are inevitable and there is nothing politicians can do to prevent the former, or bring about the latter. Scientific socialists had seemed to be the only ones to espouse this analysis, so it comes as a pleasant surprise to read in the BBC's March issue of their history magazine, that we are not alone. In his article, "The Politicians Are Unable to Save Us", Dominic Sandbrook, who is no socialist, makes some surprising comments. These include, "In fact the depression of the 1930s is an excellent example of the silliness of holding politicians responsible for every twist and turn in the international economy. Its causes were so complicated, that no single man or group can be held responsible..." it's not nearly as complicated as Sandbrook thinks. Then we read, "If politics was a purely rational, cold-blooded

business, then voters would take all this into account and make allowances for the vicissitudes of economic history.” One can think rationally about the economy and we can wonder what he meant by ‘allowances’ – perhaps returning the same politicians? Not that voting new ones in will save anything.

Sandbrook quotes ex-prime minister of the U.K., Harold Macmillan, “... so many imponderables and so many uncertainties that economic management was like bicycling along a tightrope.” That’s a good analogy if you attempt to run the capitalist economy. Even the term ‘run the economy’ is laughable. When writing of the British political scene, Sandbrook concludes, “Yes, David Cameron (leader of the opposition Conservative party) says that the current crisis is all Mr. Brown’s fault; yet, the latter says that only he can steer Britain to safety. But perhaps, the only consolation for the rest of us, exhausted from their Punch and Judy name calling, is that neither of them is anything like as important as he thinks he is.” Sandbrook, of course, is right. When one thinks of Brown’s failure to solve capitalism’s problems, which would be Cameron’s failure were he prime minister, then it becomes obvious how important to the world economy they really are. As Sandbrook describes them, “..... forgotten, just as the Frankish kings and the Byzantine emperors are hardly household names today.”

Since the beginning of the industrial nation state, politicians have tried to run the economy and all have failed. Some may have studied capitalist economics more

than others (note that PM Harper is quick to cite his education and background in economics, but has been unable to prevent Canada going into recession) some may have been more well-meaning than others, some may have had more brains than others, some may have been more educated than others; we’ve seen governments of the Left, Right and Centre; we’ve seen democratically elected governments, and we’ve seen dictatorships; we’ve seen private enterprise of varying degrees; we’ve seen state-controlled economies, and we’ve seen mixed economies. Through all that, there has been one common thread that links all politicians and their governments together – the failure to control the economy. When capitalism is experiencing a boom, many members of both the working class and the capitalist class think it will last forever and that the government is running the economy well, but they experience a rude awakening as the events of 1929 and 2008 have proved, not to mention all those recessions in between, and prior to 1929. Many a person may read detailed analyses of the present crisis that threatens to get worse, and conclude it’s too complicated to fathom and leave it to the politicians to get us out of the mess. The plain fact is, that it’s not so complicated to figure out.

To put it in very simple terms - Imagine, if you will, a town in which 50,000 males live. Clothiers want to sell shirts to them. Market research shows that, on average, each male will buy four shirts per year. So, 200,000 shirts are there for the selling. Various capitalists, competing against each other, attempt to sell their shirts. As no one

knows what their competitor is producing or selling, 400,000 shirts have been produced and are available for sale. This means, 200,000 shirts sell and 200,000 will remain unsold. Thus, some companies will lose money, some may go bankrupt, some will cut back on production, and there will certainly be worker lay-offs. Now, imagine this occurs everywhere and pertains to many different industries. In such a situation, workers, employed, semi-employed, or unemployed, will get into debt. This situation was recently exacerbated by financial institutions selling bad debts around the world, bringing the market crashing down like a pack of cards. As profitability drops, so does investment and production. The result is, quite simply, a general recession. If the recession is not preventable, can politicians do something to get us out of it?

The Great Depression of the 1930s, ended when the Second World War broke out, resulting from Hitler’s drive to regain economically strategic areas lost by Germany after WWI and colonize new areas for resources and markets. But, we wouldn’t want to start a world war to get out of a recession. Of course, not every politician is like Hitler. In the U.S. Roosevelt implemented his *New Deal*. Here again, Sandbrook shows clear-sightedness, “One of the first things students learn about Roosevelt’s New Deal, after all, is that, while it had all sorts of other worthwhile consequences, it did not even come close to hauling the American economy out of the depression. Recovery only came with the massive economic mobil-

ization of the Second World War – and, no matter how dire the current crises, surely nobody wants a repeat fixture.” We can agree with that!

So, if nobody wants war, and politicians can’t get us out of the mess, just how do we get out of it? In a slump, companies go bankrupt, and their unsold products, machinery, and even buildings, are bought cheaply by other companies that haven’t gone bust. With so many unemployed, labour-power can be hired cheaply. In a slump, interest rates fall and that has a significant impact on profit. Raw materials, no longer in demand, undergo price decreases. Finally, the stockpiles of consumer commodities are reduced and demand rises, and, all of these factors together, present an opportunity for capital to be invested again and expect a profit. Production is stepped-up, more workers are employed and the demand for goods increases. After a period of steady growth and a new feeling of confidence, consumer spending increases and production expands to move into the boom period again.

Why would anyone want a life in such economic uncertainty? There’s no choice for the worker under the capitalist system. In a socialist society, none of this turmoil would exist. Production of wealth would be carried out for use with the interests of all humanity in mind, not purely for profit. With the abolition of money, and the establishment of free access to whatever one needs, all the insecurities and the ensuing psychological problems, will vanish. With the removal of fear and

competition, people will be able to relate to each other positively and work, and life will become a joy rather than the struggle it so often is today. Goodwill and cooperation will become a major motivator in improving and building communities.

How can socialism be established? When the majority understands and wants socialism, it will be a simple transition, using the infrastructure we have now and applying socialist principles in the interests of all humans.

Why not study our case and join us? Perhaps, Mr. Sandbrook may do so.

DIARY OF A SOCIALIST

A socialist with a decent knowledge of Marxian economics/scientific socialism as espoused by The World Socialist Movement, will have the ability to analyze the capitalist mode of production and distribution of wealth. It also gives one a completely different view of life. Things start to make sense, or nonsense, as the case may be, as one follows the usual rhythms of the day. Here is one person’s musings.

New item: Ice dams are expected to create the highest levels on record for Manitoba’s Red River. Firefighters and volunteers are filling, transporting, and piling sand bags in a desperate attempt to contain the rising waters. I wonder where the Emergency Task Force is? Where is the Army Engineering

Corps, trained and equipped to handle such a potential disaster? Billions of dollars are spent to maintain a force to defend our current economic system, but they are conspicuous by their absence when needed for civilian duty.

News item from CNN: Local renovation guru and TV celebrity, Mike Holmes, is down in New Orleans with his crew to renovate a house for some lucky victim of the hurricane. He is astounded with the difficulties of getting the authorities to cooperate, and, with the lack of progress made so far. He notes that there are thousands of construction workers out of work (probably losing their own homes). Such is the stupidity of a dysfunctional system.

Good news – The Princess Margaret Hospital, cancer hospital for Toronto, announced the creation of a Rapid Diagnostic Centre, able to diagnose breast cancer in a matter of hours and thus avoid the anxious weeks of waiting now endured by patients. The bad news – we had to wait for a \$12.5 million private donation to get the ball rolling. While we, the working class, create all the world’s wealth only to have it appropriated by the parasite class, we must wait for their hand-outs to get the decent health care that they can easily afford any time.

Observation – “The Doctors” is a new ‘hit show’ on television, with all the hype, loud music, audience participation, and glitz of “American Idol” or “Dancing With the Stars”. Last night they had a brief piece (everything is in three minute bites) on health care and insurers in the U.S. system. A young couple with a child requiring expensive treatment,

U.S. system. A young couple with a child requiring expensive treatment, asked the financial expert present (yes, *financial*) whether they should, in view of their crippling expenditures, declare bankruptcy or walk away from their home. "Great question", answered the expert, but other than examine their insurable limits, offered no real answer. However, the show ended on a high emotional note as \$20,000 was donated to the couple to keep the creditors at bay for a while. The audience went predictably wild. Not once was the stupidity of such a system questioned, not even by the doctors. It is simply the way things are for most people.

THE DAY WON'T COME Steve Shannon

On a TV show, many years ago, comedian, Jackie Vernon, responded to an environmentalist's dire predictions by saying, "The day will come when the day won't come." Since Vernon made this gloomy prediction, that day may be quickly coming. Capitalism's rapid, rampant and remorseless rape of the environment is such that our planet may not be habitable in the not-too-distant future.

The main focus of environmental destruction, has been, as we all know, global warming. Though socialists welcome such attention to world problems, other aspects of destruction, such as, deforestation and poisoning of land and water, are being ignored. One example is

the threat to the Great Lakes of North America. In June, 1984, a conference was held in Toronto to discuss the water needs for competing capitalist enterprises to gain access to the lakes, and how it could be done without damaging them ecologically. They were in a pretty bad way then, especially as they had been used for years as a dumping-ground for chemical waste. Lake Erie was killed in this way. Various plans were expressed such as, piping water six hundred miles to the Missouri River basin. Naturally, this was opposed by those living and operating close to the lakes, both in Canada and the U.S.

The conference ended, as one would expect, with competing interests squabbling over access to the resource. It's typical that the effects of capitalism create a problem for everyday, normal functioning and then its apologists panic when it affects them.

For many years the world was haunted by the fear of nuclear war and its potential to destroy humanity. Throughout this time, the companion parties in The World Socialist Movement, alone, pointed out the destruction of humanity could occur without nuclear war, and that, capitalism was doing just that. Now, it is becoming abundantly clear. In 2005, more than sixty scientists endorsed a report that said that the Great Lakes eco-system, is so stressed, it is 'nearing collapse.' The lakes are immense, covering an area greater than the states of Michigan, Indiana, and Ohio, combined. They were formed after the last Ice Age and are not renewable, and very

fragile, despite their size. They are used to ship products, for hydro-electric power, for irrigation, for drinking water, and as a dump for industrial and social wastes. Since the lakes provide drinking water for 35 million people, you might think their health would be a concern to our politicians, as they are, but, way down on the list, far below profits. In fact, the Great Lakes are so polluted that where their waters empty, the Gulf of St. Lawrence, one quarter of the Beluga whales have cancer.

The opening of The St. Lawrence Seaway brought companies, like Domtar Paper and General Motors into the area, which proceeded to poison the fish with mercury and PCBs. Alcoa pumped so much fluoride into the air, that, on the surrounding land, cow's teeth grew brittle and broke, even resulting in death. Pollution also forced farms in the vicinity into bankruptcy. Furthermore, evaporation caused by global warming and shoreline deforestation, much of it on lands formerly owned by First Nations peoples, can be added to the list of problems. The failure of the 1984 conference and the subsequent twenty-five years of pollution, have clearly shown that the politicians who seek to preserve and further the interests of the competing sections of the capitalist class will do little or nothing to save the lakes. Nor will the Greens achieve anything substantial because they are concerned with dealing with the effects of pollution, not the cause, i.e. the ownership of the tools of production (the resources, the factories, the land, the transportation systems, the

mercantile and banking systems, etc) by a minority, and the need to produce commodities with a view to profit, that rides roughshod over environmental concerns and other human needs. That destruction of the planet also affects the capitalists themselves, merely highlighting the insanity of the system. For a business to survive, it must show a profit quickly and maintain its profitability to compete with other companies. In such a situation, human needs, including those of the capitalists, become meaning-less.

In a socialist society, with the abolition of the profit motive, very different priorities will be apparent. Whereas, water and anything else people need may be moved from one place to another, environmental and human considerations would be prime motivators. The latest technology and safe, clean practices would be demanded, and care of the eco-systems on which human life depends, would be possible as the drive for profit and all that entails, would have disappeared.

HAITI - AFTER THE EARTHQUAKE

John Ayers

The Haitian disaster was shocking on many levels – the extent of the destruction and staggering loss of life; the abject poverty of the people underlined by their gerry-built houses, and buildings that collapsed like a pack of cards; the obvious lack of public infrastructure, clean water, sewage, health care, the absence of home-grown emergency response systems; the slow response of the

international community in getting food and medical supplies and care on the ground. That begs the question-Why a country situated just a few miles from the world's richest superpower could live in such deplorable conditions?

Socialists would point out that since the production and distribution of wealth is carried out in the interests of the tiny minority that owns the world's resources and the means to turn them into commodities (wealth), then poverty and gross inequality are natural consequences of our economic system. Haiti is just one of many poor countries around the globe that are exploited by the economic superpowers.

Haiti's troubles began long ago with the appearance of the Europeans. The aboriginal population was quickly eliminated, and replaced by slaves brought from Africa to work the sugar plantations that made Haiti one of the richest colonies providing France with almost half of its foreign earnings in the eighteenth century. The brutal and degrading conditions of a slave-based economy, finally led to a slave rebellion in 1804, when the owners were ousted and the plantations burned. Napoleon dispatched an army to quell the rebellion, but, remarkably, the slaves emerged victorious. The consequences of that victory were dire for Haiti. The French gave up on New World colonies and even sold the massive Louisiana territory to the U.S. for a fire-sale price. This gave the expanding American nation, a seaport to the Caribbean, New Orleans, and the chance to extend its influence through the Americas. Thus, Haiti, unwittingly, was the 'midwife at the birth of a superpower'. (5). France,

using her superior sea power and with the help of the U.S., blockaded the island and refused to let exports out unless reparations for the sugar plantations were paid. This, with interest, has been estimated at between \$25 and \$40 billion, and took until 1922 to pay off. (2).

A twenty - two year American occupation followed, a period when a few elite families took control of the country's political and economic systems to further their own ends. A period of brutal dictatorship by the Duvalier family was enforced by the brutal Ton Ton Macoutte police force, supported and funded by the U.S., as long as the dictator declared himself to be anti-communist. In the meantime, the usual aid in the form of loans from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) had the usual consequences –structural reforms, such as currency devaluation to make exports attractive, reduced role of government, privatization of public services, lax labour laws, etc. Coupled with the tactic of flooding the country with cheap, subsidized food staples, effectively making a self-sufficient lifestyle uncompetitive, the agrarian population was forced into the cities where the sweat shop jobs awaited, creating a cheap compliant work force compelled to work for less than \$5.00 a day. The IMF has reported, that, half of Haitian families exist on 44 pennies a day. (1)

A popular movement, Lavalas, arose and, in 1990, John-Bertrand Aristide, a mild reformer, was elected. This proved too much for the elite class and Aristide was ousted by a military coup. He was allowed to return to Haiti in 1994 and won another landslide election victory, followed by yet another coup. In 2004, the U.S. invaded the island, ostensibly responding to reports of

chaos, resulting in further reforms, such as – the banning of Lavalas, and the veto of minimum wage of \$.5.00 a day.

This brings us back to the earthquake disaster and its management.

Although, many Search and Rescue teams were assembled in many countries in a matter of hours, only a few got into the airport while it was still under Haitian control. Once the U.S. military took over operations, military and security concerns took priority over aid and humanitarian flights. Most of the daily two hundred flights were reserved for the U.S. military e.g. Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF) had five planes with medical supplies turned away. The Toronto Star reported the journey of an inflatable surgical hospital that was rerouted to the Dominican Republic, and then loaded onto a truck for an overland journey of several days before reaching the earthquake zone. Valuable time and resources were thus wasted and lives that could have been saved by rescue or prompt medical attention were lost.

CNN reporters, Anderson Cooper and Dr. Sanjay Gupta, filed nightly reports asking where was the aid?, as people died around them for lack of medical care. In the first week, only seventy people were rescued from the rubble and the few foreign rescue teams that managed to get there were concentrated mainly on saving foreign personnel at the U.N. headquarters, or on hotels that were known to be frequented by foreigners. World Food Program's air logistics officer, Jarry Emmanuel, confirmed that "most flights were reserved for military purposes and that sealed the fate of thousands, ..."their priorities are to secure the country. Ours are to feed." (1)

The security aspect seems to have been vastly overblown. Isolated incidents were widely reported by the government-friendly, compliant media, but the experience of those in the field, told a different story. Dr. Evan Lyon of Partners in Health, at the Port-au-Prince General Hospital, said "...there's no insecurity...I don't know if you guys were out last night, but you can hear a pin drop in this city. This question of security and the racism behind the idea of security has been our major block to getting aid in." (1). Commenting on reports of widespread violence, Cine Institute director, David Bell, said. "I'm told that lead stories in major media are of looting, violence and chaos. There could be nothing further than the truth. I have traveled the entire city daily since my arrival. The extent of damage is absolutely staggering, but NOT ONCE have we witnessed a single act of aggression or violence. A crippled city of two million awaits help, food, and water. Most haven't received any. Haiti can be proud of its survivors. Their dignity and decency in the face of this tragedy is itself staggering." (1). A CBC report told of a truck-load of supplies arriving at one community desperately waiting for help. The truck was unloaded only then to discover that it was really bound for someone else. The truck was reloaded and sent on its way while the people waited for their turn. How the people of Haiti have coped in the absence of any leadership or authority is just one more example of how people will get on with the job of taking care of themselves and their fellow human beings.

The story of Haiti, like so many other disasters, tells a tale of capitalism. I have heard from several people the common sense suggestion that disaster response centers should

be established throughout the world, equipped and ready to get to any disaster within hours; that a central authority, such as the UN should be primed to take charge and coordinate relief efforts. This would surely be the way in a socialist world, rather than, as now, allowing one super power to amass and use necessary resources as it pleases, according to the dictates and interests of its capitalist class.

Buildings in earthquake zones can be specially constructed to withstand the shocks, "In contrast (to the collapsed buildings around it), all eleven stories of the Telecom Company headquarters remain intact and structurally sound. It was built to be earthquake-proof. While concrete crashed down and cars flipped up on the street below, employees on the ninth floor felt the tower sway gently from one side to another." (4). In capitalism, it's a matter of money whether a building is so constructed, and, therefore, most are not built adequately. In socialism, the common ownership of the world's resources and the means of producing wealth from them, would guarantee that there would be no regions such as Haiti, and many others around the world, with inadequate infrastructure that compounds a natural disaster and hampers proper response that would mitigate its worst effects.

Capitalism sees tragedies such as this one, as simply another opportunity for capital growth. If it follows the usual plan, the reconstruction of Haiti will be financed by massive loans from international banks and the IMF that will demand high interest rates that ensure the permanent indebtedness of the borrower and economic liberalization that will ensure a cheap and 'flexible' work force for the sweatshop economy. In other words,

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The Socialist Party of Canada

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

The Socialist Party of Canada holds:

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 interest, 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 of 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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