

IMAGINE

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THE FUTILITY OF REFORM

This phrase is familiar to members of The Socialist Party of Canada and those of our companion parties in The World Socialist Movement. We hold that you can spend an immense amount of time, money, and energy on one issue and if you are successful, you will realize the very next day that there are thousands of other issues to deal with – poverty, minimum wages, workplace safety, pensions, benefits, health care, unemployment, welfare payments and disabled payments and so on. It is also likely that you will have to settle for something much less than you initially worked for. In addition, benefits given can, and often are, taken away by the giver. This last fact is very obvious in the present recessionary times. Attacks on wages, benefits, and pensions are on the table everywhere. For those who have lived through it, the loss of our gains from the fifties, sixties, and seventies is most disturbing but for socialists not altogether surprising. Probably the worst aspect about a reform program, though, is the loss of a socialist consciousness. The goal tends to get lost in the struggle for one issue. This has gone on for so long that many, especially those so-called workers' organizations, no longer understand what that goal is. The main object of any movement concerned with those issues above should be to remove the root cause of all of them – capitalism, and replace it with a society that is controlled by the majority and works for everyone – socialism.

So it was with heavy heart that I read on the 'event' section of my facebook page that a group called "People before Profit" was advertising a play entitled "Jail the Anglo Bankers". I'm sure that these people are genuine in their desire to address the awful effects of the austerity programs that now are common fare in most countries that generally attack workers' wages and benefits while the wealth of the owning class, the capitalists, continues to rise substantially.

Like all single- issue campaigns, this one attacks just one aspect of a vast and complex system of producing and distributing wealth. If they were wildly successful and managed to

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get a couple, or many, English bankers jailed, would it make any difference to anyone other than those jailed? The banking system, especially the development of credit, was, and is, essential to the smooth and continued operation of the production and accumulation of surplus-value through the theft of the unpaid labour of the working class, i.e. profit. Thus, other banks and bankers would simply fill in any gaps in the flow of credit. Do they imagine for one minute that Irish or French or Australian bankers would do anything other than assist in the exploitive capitalist system?

So what are such groups trying to achieve? Even the name, People Before Profit implies that as long as they get a few crumbs thrown their way, the profit system will continue. Can people really come before profit? Will capital really take less or no profit to keep unproductive plants in operation just so that the workers can continue to receive wages and benefits? Of course not! At the first whiff of higher profits elsewhere, capital flies out the window and the plants shut down. And this is a very necessary action in a profit system driven by the exigencies and competitive laws of capital. Will a few pennies on the minimum wage, more taxes on the rich to fund more health care, pensions, etc. do the trick? After the Harris government in Ontario slashed welfare benefits and froze the minimum wage, the Liberals came to power on a promise of reducing poverty and increased the minimum wage to \$10.25/hour, one of the highest in Canada. Once the recession bit, the wage stagnated for three years. At an inflation rate of 2% that would mean that wage rate is now worth \$9.65. Where's the gain? The loss is to the promotion of socialism.

That the class consciousness and knowledge of socialism is lacking and their thinking and actions flawed is obvious from the fact that

they haven't yet realized that it is the profit system as a whole that is the cause of all woes we have to endure and therefore nothing less than replacing the whole system with one that is controlled democratically by the majority in the interests of all will address the problems. Of course we must all speak out, demonstrate, and demand our right to a decent living. At the very least, it brings attention to the worst aspects of capitalism and may win some benefits, however small and fleeting. But to expect this tactic to make capitalism work for all is like trying to hold back the tide. Capitalism was designed to work for the capitalists and it's working very well, thank you. The capitalist class will use every excuse and tactic to minimize wages and benefits in order to maximize profits and a recession is a handy excuse to do that. When the City of Detroit filed for bankruptcy recently, the first thing on the agenda was cutting the pensions of city employees even though it was their money invested to fund pensions and, according to a union spokesman, the pensions only represented four per cent of the city budget. Recently, the New York Times reported that the Japanese practice of having no lay-offs is under attack. This is a benefit that dates back to the immediate postwar period when Japan was

**REVOLUTION,
NOT
REFORM**

getting back on its feet. A deal was struck that the worker would have a job for life in return for company loyalty and a strong devotion to work. It was a strategy that put Japan at the very head of the world's economic nations. But now, as Japan has been struggling to grow for two decades, companies and the government want to end the practice and replace it with a more 'flexible' work force. The Sony Corporation, for example, has created a room for those who refuse to retire early where there is plenty of nothing to do in the hope that the employees will become so bored that they will quit. In late August, it was the fiftieth anniversary of the civil rights march on Washington and the famous 'Dream' speech of Martin Luther King. The media duly played up the event calling it a defining moment in American history. The facts tell a different story. Long-time labour activist and author, Stanley Aronowitz reports that, "On a scale of 1 to 10, Americans as a whole have gone from one in 1963 to -3 in terms of economic well-being, and African-Americans today are now at -5. The point is, we have been fighting these rearguard battles for well over a hundred years and we will continue forever. Lastly, The Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, a Left Wing think tank, issued a statement, September 11, that Canada, once first among nations on the subject of gender equality, has now slipped behind due to the lack of funding and action on the problem. At the current rate of progress, the report goes on, Canada will not close its gender gap for 228 years!

The only answer is for the world's workers to take control, through legal, parliamentary methods where possible, and establish a system that works for all humanity, i.e. the common ownership of the means of producing and distributing wealth, free access to all to satisfy their needs, and production for use, not profit.

OBSCENE AND HEARD

Capitalism is an insane system but it often outdoes itself in the obscenity department.

J.C. Penney's very existence is at Risk" screamed the caption in The Toronto Star Business section on August 10. The company is experiencing its worst sales in two decades that has caused some particularly dirty infighting with investor, Bill Ackman, demanding the removal of its chairman, Tom Enginbous. The fact that J.C. Penney has done so well for so long and is an institution in the annals of merchandising, proves that there is no security within capitalism, and once that is obvious, it becomes a dog-eat-dog world.

A Prince is suing Forbes magazine because in their list of the richest people in the world, it underestimated his wealth by \$9.2 billion when reporting he only had \$20 billion. Obviously, in the prince's mind there is prestige in a higher standing in the rich league.

In April, 95,000 jobs were added to the Canadian economy that some saw as an upward trend. There were 400 lost in June but a further 39,400 were lost in July. In all, six provinces lost jobs with Quebec the highest losing 30,400. Under capitalism it never pays to raise one's hopes or to take anything for granted.

In "USA Today" it was reported (August 9) that senator Brown of Ohio expressed his concern that bank involvement in electricity sales, oil transport, metal warehousing, and other commercial businesses creates risks running from illegal insider trading to destabilizing the financial system. To quote Senator Brown, "The tentacles of this octopus could put the financial system at risk." To the working Joe, it matters little whether he is screwed by a private capitalist, a state-controlled business, the banks, the end result is the same.

In the same issue, the

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newspaper reported, “ While most companies (in the US) have stopped cutting jobs, many are reluctant to hire. That’s bad for roughly 11.9 million unemployed Americans and a major reason the jobless rate is so high four years after the recession ended.” You mean it ended already!! Tell that to the jobless. What a wasteful system that can just leave so many people with nothing to do. Of course, there is plenty to do, to maintain, and improve in society for everyone but no one will pay workers to do those jobs, especially those who reap in the most money from production and who consider it their money not the society that produced it.

The Toronto Star of August 10 focused on “The Roy”, a multi-million dollar, state-of-the-art facility for young offenders officially called The Roy McMurtry Youth Centre in Brampton, Ontario, that opened in 2009. It was built to replace the former Toronto Youth Assessment Centre, described as a ‘hellish institution’. A report issued by Provincial Youth Advocate, Irwin Elman, suggests not much has changed, except the expenditure of \$93 million. There are still violent inmates, physically aggressive guards and sub-standard basic care. “Sometimes youth do not even have identification to deal with bail or probation”, says Executive Director, Victor Beausoleil. “ In some cases these are the reasons they re-offend. Prisons in capitalism are big business and the more you can pack in with the least expenditure, the more profit the prison providers can make. Far better a system that has no need of prisons for people of any age.

Rob Nicholson, the Minister of National Defense (read war) recently waxed rhapsodic on the so-called achievements of Canada’s Peace-keeping Corps, “ It is often at great risk that the women and men of the Canadian Armed Forces defend our shared values of freedom, peace, and the rule of law around the world.” Ottawa alderman, Brian Pincott, added his valuable contribution, “ Canada showed the world a

different and better way.” A much better way would be a co-operative society where there is no need for any peace-keeping forces who can never prevent a war anyway and are often ineffective in attempting to make peace.

Many times in stores, customers are asked to donate to charity. Ken Gallinger in his Toronto Star column, “Ethically Speaking” (no Comment on that!) of August 10, makes it plain these donation programs are excellent public relations ploys for the stores, “ You make the donation, the store gets the glory.” Good point.

Quote of the month – Ralph Nader, in The Toronto Star, “ When I asked John Larson (former chair of The House Democratic Caucus) why they don’t make minimum wage an election issue when it’s good for the economy, he said, ‘they think they’ll raise less money from the Walmarts, the fast food industry, etc.’”

From the New York Times, “ The benefits of prayer are appealing, but there are risks when it replaces life in the real world.”

The Swiss government has blocked the sale of a Swiss-made ski lift worth \$6.7 million to the North Koreans, stalling a resort that was one of Dear Leader Kim Jong Un’s pet projects. The North Korean Ski Association (?) cried, “ This is a wanton violation of the UN charter clarifying that sanctions should not impose sufferings and damage on the peaceful existence (?) and activities of mankind and the people in relevant countries.” Shouldn’t they feed the people first there before ski resorts? Nobody ever said capitalism was sane!

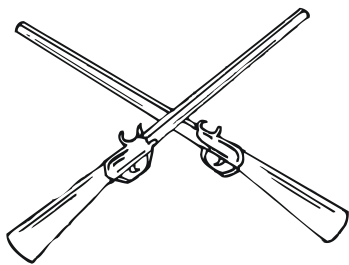
“Roach Rage Takes Hold in China” (Toronto Star headline). Apparently roach powder can be used to treat cancers, cirrhosis, and, bonus, wrinkles. Entrepreneurs are jumping on the roach bandwagon as roach powder goes for \$70 per kilogram. Never fails to amaze what money-grubbers can get up to in capitalism.

KINDERGARTEN COPS

When classes resume in the Fall at Clarksville High School in Arkansas, twenty teachers, including the principal, will be carrying concealed weapons. After a school shooting in December 2012 in Connecticut that left twenty students and six teachers dead, the idea (for want of a better word) of arming teachers against gunmen was hotly debated in the US.

True to form, the National Rifle Association, a paid mouthpiece for the gun manufacturers, declared it to be a good idea but even in the most conservative states, educators were lukewarm to the proposal, especially when insurance companies warned them that their premiums would go up.

In Arkansas, however, there exists a little-known law that allows licensed security guards on campus so the principal and his staff will be looked upon as such. A Clarksville High School superintendent said he did not see why they could not use their own staff to protect students rather than hire someone else. At least they will find it cost effective.



One can understand the fears of teachers, students, and parents when one alienated person goes berserk and unleashes a shooting spree. Something must be done to protect students and society. The gun culture that is continually rammed down everyone's throats in the US has meant that guns are readily available, over the counter, from catalogues, and even at flea markets with little or no control or background checks. Such is the influence and wealth of the

gun lobby that legislatures are unable to resist their non-stop pressure resulting in the blocking or watering down of any proposed legislation. Perhaps it would be a good idea to stop gun production altogether.

We live in a society where the pressures to survive are so great and dehumanizing, whether it be at school, at home, at work, or in the neighbourhood, that individuals may crack in a variety of ways. The personal, household, and mental problems of those who lose their jobs, for example, are well documented. It may be alcohol, narcotics, or any other reaction to stress, but it is inevitable that some will crack and such shootings will continue until those pressures, endemic to capitalism, continue to exist. It is long past the time to replace this system with one based on sanity, to remove the stress, and where that small number of people with mental illness are cared for, receiving the proper treatment as a matter of course, not based on how much money is available. In short, it is time for socialism.

RAILWAY SAFETY – CAN CAPITALISM DELIVER?

On July 5th. a freight train hauling seventy-two cars of crude oil derailed and exploded in the center of Lac-Megantic, a small town in eastern Quebec, destroying a large swath of the town's business section and killing forty-seven inhabitants. It was Canada's deadliest rail disaster in almost one hundred and fifty years.

The circumstances leading up to the crash are astonishing to those of us who never give rail safety a second thought. The whole train was operated by one person, the engineer, who must stop at some point, leave the train unattended, and find somewhere to rest. Investigators have determined that the braking force applied for seventy-

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two cars of petroleum products was not strong enough to hold on the 1.2 per cent grade where it had been left. It was not determined at the time whether it was human or mechanical error. About 1:00am it began rolling downhill into Lac-Mégantic where it derailed and exploded. Edward Burkhardt, the top executive of the railway company, Montreal, Maine, & Atlantic (MMA) had no doubts however, and immediately suspended the engineer, putting the blame on him. However, family, friends, and residents of Farnham describe the engineer as a high-calibre and experienced employee who has become the fall guy for the cheap and irresponsible business practices of the railway company. A report issued on September 11 by the agency investigating the crash states that the oil in the cars was mislabeled and was in fact much more volatile and dangerous than previously thought, pointing to company error or blatant obfuscation.

There are also questions about the type of car used to transport oil and other dangerous materials around the country. Government and industry have known for years that it is extremely dangerous to carry oil in the old "11A" tank cars that exploded at Lac-Mégantic. The government has removed common-sense safety rules. In 1994, The Transport Safety Board wrote that 11A tank cars have a flawed design and , "...a high incidence of tank integrity failure during accidents." The government has ignored repeated warnings while more and more of the old cars have been pressed into service as oil transportation has grown tremendously. Despite the tragedy, the initial response of the government has been a reluctance to review safety regulations and Larry Miller, Conservative MP who chairs the government's Transportation Committee, dismissed calls to review Transport Canada rules. (Leadnow.ca)

Canadian Rail Operating Rules require that equipment left unattended have 'sufficient'

number of handbrakes applied to hold it in place and for crews to perform a 'push-pull test'. Previous Transportation Safety Board investigations have found these tests to be insufficient and a handbrake's force depends on maintenance and the strength of the operator and has failed in the past, e.g. in 2011 at Doree, Quebec, a runaway train hurtled downhill for twenty-five kilometers, reaching speeds of one hundred km/h before fortunately stopping without incident on level ground. The thirty-five brakes applied were not enough. One month later, thirteen runaway coal cars smashed into a train seriously injuring one person when the one handbrake applied failed to hold it. The lack of clear instructions compromises safety.

The traditional practice in the industry is to have two engineers who check each other's work to cut the risk of inadequately applied brakes. MMA, a division of the railway conglomerate, Rail World Inc., was one of just two companies, however, inexplicably granted a licence to operate one-engineer trains. In addition, the company does not have a great safety record recording three derailments in seventeen years; two years ago it was fined \$30,000 for leaking oil from an unattended maintenance shop into a nearby river (showing a reluctance again to hire sufficient staff to operate safely); has an accident rate of 36.1 per million miles traveled, twice the US average; at least one top engineer has resigned citing concern over safety measures due to the company's 'slash and burn' cost cutting measures.

Railway accidents are relatively commonplace as attested to by the recent horrific crash in Santiago de Compostella where an engineer drove a train around a bend at 190k/h, more than twice the safe speed. The magazine, "Popular Science" wrote an article on railway safety (February, 2013). As examples of things going wrong it describes a few recent catastrophes.

In 2005, at Graniteville, South Carolina, an engineer parked a train on a siding but left the switch open. The next train through was diverted into the siding and collided head-on with the parked train. The engineer was killed and a chlorine car was sheared open. A dense white cloud spread through Graniteville causing the evacuation of 5,400 people roused from their beds and eventually resulted in eight deaths and seventy-two injuries.

In June 2012, two Union Pacific trains on the same track collided head-on causing three deaths. One month later, in Columbus, Ohio, seventeen cars derailed bursting open three cars of denatured alcohol. One hundred were evacuated. In August of the same year, a CSX coal train jumped the track in Ellicott City, Maryland. Six cars tumbled into a parking lot, killing two women bystanders. In November, a Union Pacific train plowed into a Veterans' Day parade at Midland, Texas, killing four. The same month a CSX train derailed on a bridge near the Philadelphia International airport tearing open a tanker of vinyl chloride sending seventy-one to hospital.

Every year 72,000 car loads of breathable lethal poisons trundle around US tracks at speeds of up to 80k/h. Chlorine and anhydrous ammonia are the most common and both can kill. Human error is involved in one third of all rail accidents. Railways operate on essentially nineteenth century technology. The combination is an accident waiting to happen, "Although the railroad keeps our 21st-century economy running, it's essentially a 19th-century technology. Rail operators have known for decades that technological fixes could prevent rail disasters caused by the kind of human errors committed at Macdonna and Graniteville, but they have been dragging their feet because those fixes are expensive and complicated. Congress is now making them get it done. But the railroads could also cheaply and humanely achieve big

safety leaps simply by improving the working conditions of engineers – something they are even less enthusiastic about doing." (Popular Science, February, 2013)

They could also put into operation an automatic system that would stop the train when the engineer 'loses situation awareness' – falls asleep, has a medical problem, etc. The Santa Fe railroad had such a system in place in 1920. In the 1980s Burlington Northern operated the first GPS-based system to make automatic stops in case of an engineer's mistake but eventually dropped it to save money. In 1990, the National Transportation Safety Board (USA) put Positive Train Control, a system relying on data radios, GPS, and cellular networks to remotely control trains, on its list of most wanted safety improvements. Unfortunately, NTSB has no regulating authority so the big five US class 1 freight railroad companies, that have revenues of hundreds of millions of dollars annually, simply ignored the request. The Federal Railroad Administration did have the power but, you guessed it, agreed with the railroads that PTC was too expensive. However, in 2007, Congress finally got around to passing a law mandating PTC but President George W. Bush refused to sign it.

In September 2008, an engineer, busy texting, missed a red signal and ran head first into a passenger train driving his locomotive fifty-two feet into the first passenger car, killing himself and twenty-one other people and injuring one hundred and one more. The publicity surrounding this horrific crash galvanized Congress into passing the act for PTC again and this time it was signed by the President. The timeline for implementation was 2015 and the railroads kept their objections quiet until the furor had died down. Their opposition came later. The Federal Railroad Administration said that PTC could cost up to \$10 billion to install and

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\$850 million annually to maintain. A lot of money even with profit margins running at that time from seventeen to forty-five per cent, but peanuts compared with military spending

Although there are technical challenges to such a system, it should be easy for a society that put a man on the moon over forty years ago, one would think. The opposition of the railroads is two-fold, cost and necessity, or reduced profits versus cost benefit analysis. In 1977, the Ford Pinto blew up regularly but, although under great pressure to do so, the auto company refused to recall thousands of cars. They had figured out that it was cheaper to pay the widows and orphans than to fix the problem. This approach caused a scandal, of course, but cost benefit analysis became a national policy under the Reagan administration and has remained so to this day. PTC would only address two per cent of railroad accidents and do nothing for the other ninety-eight caused by stupidity such as walking the tracks or driving around a barrier to beat the train, but that two per cent are the catastrophic ones that cause massive loss of life, injuries and material destruction

The Federal Railroad Administration calculated the costs – wrecked equipment and the loss of human life and estimated an economic value on a life - \$5.8 million dollars. PTC would save an average of seven lives and twenty-two injuries per year, i.e. just \$92 million compared with the annual maintenance fee of \$800 million. Obviously, a ‘no brainer’, that is, in a capitalist society and as long as you or your loved ones are not in the train that crashes.

So the problems become clear – in many cases, old or worn equipment, e.g. rails, tank cars, is left in use because the company does not want to spend money in replacing it; work crews are stripped to below the bare minimum – in the 1970s, five-man crews were the norm, two engineers in the cab, a head brakeman, a rear

brakeman, and a conductor in the caboose. Now it is a two-man crew and sometimes, as in the Lac-Megantic accident, just a single engineer; engineers are often not given a schedule but are ‘on call’ so they do not know when to sleep, often work split shifts, have no lunch break and must eat at the controls, go to the bathroom over the side while on a long slow incline, must leave the train unattended at the end of the shift and find somewhere to sleep. Easy fixes such as putting some common sense into the work schedules are ignored and any attempt at legislation is fought hard by the railway companies’ lobbyists. Positive train control is too expensive to even contemplate.

All of the above points involve spending money that would have to come out of profits and this is something to be avoided at all costs, even lives. The thing is, all of this avoidance of doing anything turns out to be the right thing in capitalism. Smaller profits mean smaller dividends for the investors who naturally would look for somewhere else to invest their money leaving the company high and dry and unable to make the investments needed for higher profits or even keep up with competitors. It’s also clear that governments often agree with the railroad companies and are slow to do what is necessary, preferring to do what is good for profit. This is no surprise to socialists as we hold that the modern state with its central legislative body is the creation of capitalism to look after its interests first and foremost. So, is capitalism up to the task of railway safety? Obviously not, and never will be owing to the competitive exigencies of the system, so, until the system goes, do not expect and major changes any time soon. In a sane society, systems would be put in place that had driverless trains controlled from central control rooms and with our knowledge of technology it is, or soon could be, possible, and create an entirely accident free system. Your choice!

TOO LATE OR NOT?

In recent years scientists have insisted that global warming is proceeding at a faster rate than had been previously thought. This has now been confirmed by images from an automated webcam scanning the North Pole that revealed a lake where ice used to be. According to Dr. James Morrison of the North Pole Observatory, "It looks amazing, it looks like Lake Tahoe or something." The 'or something' may well be the loss of thirty to forty centimetres of ice over the last few months.

On the Canadian side of the Beaufort Sea, an aerial reconnaissance mission this month spotted an alarming number of ponds where solid ice used to be. We are already witnessing the devastating effects of climate change in the form of widespread, often unprecedented, flooding around the globe and, conversely, droughts experienced in other parts. With the diversion of the Gulf Stream, the UK, Norway, and even New York could become ice-bound by global warming!

This is very much in the interests of the world's capitalist class that wants to excavate the oil, gas, and chemicals hitherto unavailable because of the Arctic ice sheet. Even the small fry capitalists of Greenland are happy because they can grow fruits and vegetables there that was previously an impossible task. The vast resources

of the Arctic have already caused those nations circling the North Pole to jockey for the most favourable spots at the profit table beefing up military operations over that region to bolster their claims. To calm concern over the effects of global warming, the capitalist class has brought its 'A' game to the table using all media to deny, challenge, and outright lie about what is really happening. For example, our local paper here, "The Northumberland News", the editorial (syndicated throughout Ontario) claims, "Climate Alarmists Change Tune". The author claims the next report of the United Nations

Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change is late because the scientists are confused and in disagreement over how much effect human action is to blame for global warming. The truth is that the vast majority, as much as 97% do believe it but the apologists for capitalism who get paid well to confuse the public get the space to spout the party line.

If the capitalist class is quite content to see global warming and are not going to do anything meaningful about global warming, then only the world's working class, acting politically and consciously to bring about a socialist society, can, and must. The most disturbing thing of all is that if a socialist society were established, it might be soon too late to reverse the damage done to the environment. It might, but even in that case it would be worth establishing such a society, based on democracy and sanity, before things get even worse.



HAVE A NICE CRUISE

Carnival Corporation Cruise Lines recently made public on its website data about one hundred and twenty-seven alleged crimes reported on its North America-based cruises in the past three years. Royal Caribbean and Norwegian Cruise Lines had earlier posted data about alleged crimes on their boats. These disclosures were made in response to pressure from Congress, in turn responding to pressure from victims.

The data covers a three-year period between July 2010 and June 2013 during which time the three cruise lines carried 77 million passengers. The alleged crimes included five suspicious deaths, thirty-eight rapes, and twenty thefts over \$10,000, missing persons, kidnapping, assault with serious bodily injury, other sexual assaults, and tampering with a vessel.

The usual procedure is for alleged crimes to be reported to security personnel who, if they are out of their depth, report them to the Coast Guard. Carnival Cruise Lines pointed out that the numbers are miniscule compared to the millions who take cruises and below average crime

rates for the general population. A Carnival spokesperson commented, "The majority of these are never substantiated as actual crimes after the initial investigation." This means that the minority of crimes is substantiated and that would heighten feelings of insecurity among potential and actual passengers.

After a stress filled year in the factory or office, working people like to have a vacation that recreates them as it is supposed to do. Crime in the present day system is capable of surfacing anywhere and everywhere and escape from its tentacles is virtually impossible.



RESPECT FOR THE LAW, BUT WHOSE LAW?

An article in The Toronto Star of August 3, 2013, focused on an investigation by The College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario in a response to a complaint received from The Ministry of Community and Social Services regarding Dr. Roland Wong. It is alleged that Dr. Wong lied to help patients on welfare gain access to special diet allowances. The committee concluded that "Advocacy should not trump one's professional integrity." His punishment will not be decided for months.

Almost 900,000 adults make use of Ontario's Social Assistance System with 464,154 using

welfare and 430, 858 using disability support. A recently released report initiated by the University of Toronto described food insecurity as, "The inability to obtain adequate food due to financial constraints." In other words, if you haven't got the money, you can't buy any, so starve! In another moment of sheer genius, the report said that lack of food was 'a public health issue'.

The report also found that more than twelve per cent of Canadian households, or 1.6 million people, experienced some form of food insecurity in 2011 and there were 450,000

more Canadians facing food security issues than three years earlier. Individual adults on welfare get \$230 a month for basic needs and \$376 for shelter but the allowance for basic needs will rise to a whopping \$250 a month on October 1!

Dr. Wong deliberately exaggerated patients' disabilities on forms he filled in enabling applicants to get extra food. He commented, "I know the benefits are not enough to live on." Something that is painfully obvious to anyone who cares to look at the figures and the cost of living. Opinions on his actions are greatly divided. Mayor Rob Ford, who does not look like he is starving, said, "A doctor is there to be a doctor not to advocate for the poor or to be the official opposition in government through taxpayers' money." Ford's track record in office has shown a singular indifference to workers' plights as he moves toward privatizing municipal services and the consequent lower wages and the usual great concern for the taxpayers' money, so his comments are not to surprising. Of course, socialists understand that taxpayers' money is really the money the capitalist class must take from profits to pay for the services and infrastructure necessary to keep the system ticking and are not paid for by the worker.

Wong did indeed cause problems for them by billing the government \$1.8 million over a four-year period without appropriate notes to back up his diagnoses. Candice Malcolm of the Canadian Taxpayers' Federation stated, "This guy is no Robin Hood. We're all taxpayers, so when you rob taxpayers you're hurting everyone." Here is a person right at the heart of the matter who cannot see the forest for the trees. Taxes are deducted from wages and salaries. How many people pay their own wages?

Valerie Tarasuk, a professor of nutrition at The University of Toronto, who co-authored the abovementioned report, commented, "Making sure those people have enough money to obtain

adequate food is, in fact, a doctor's issue."

John Clarke of the Ontario Coalition Against Poverty (what an indictment that we have to have such an organization in a rich country in the twenty-first century!), said, "The doctor deserves a medal and the keys to the city. One decent man stood up to ensure that people lacking the basic necessities of life could get nutrition and health and to punish him would be to intimidate anyone else who might follow his example."

Dr. Wong is totally unrepentant saying, "It is done and a lot of people benefited from it." It is safe to assume that if 'advocacy should not trump professional integrity', then, as far as Dr. Wong is concerned, if people can't get the help they need, integrity be damned. Dr. Wong obviously went outside the legal system to help the needy. To attack him for that would be to ignore that the legal system, in all its ramifications, is the law of the capitalist class that perpetuates its property ownership. This it does, not by the law alone, but by the judiciary, the police, and the armed forces that enforce the law.

As it is the capitalists' law, it doesn't care that people are starving so those who are as well meaning as Dr. Wong are forced to break the law in their attempts to help those who are malnourished. Although John Clarke's tribute is glowing, it must be borne in mind that he is fighting against poverty within capitalism, the very system that creates it. Any socialist would agree that Dr. Wong's actions are commendable but, nevertheless, only in so far as they go, which isn't nearly far enough. What is needed is a society where nobody has to go outside the law to help anyone. The sane way to look at the facts in this article makes one wonder why, when we can abundantly and nutritiously feed everyone on earth, anyone should feel food insecurity. When all will have access to whatever food and medical care they need, there will be no need to bring a Dr. Wong to 'justice'.

PUBLICATIONS ORDER FORM

The Impossibleists: A brief profile of the SPC	\$12.00	X	_____
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