

IMAGINE

ISSN 1710-5994



Whats Inside

*Why You Should Work For
The Establishment
Of Socialism* 1

*Good Intentions,
Unexpected Results* 2

*What Happens in the Arctic,
Doesn't Stay in the Arctic!* 3

*The WSP(US): Working For
Socialism Since 1916* 4

*The Story of Lead -
The Story of Capitalism* 6

Obscene and Heard 7

Tweak And Ye Shall Find 8

Declaration of Principles 9

*Our Companion Parties in the
World Socialist Movement* 9

*Capitalism and
The Environment* 10

To Repair Or Not To Repair? 11

WHY YOU SHOULD WORK FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF SOCIALISM

Many times we, and other member parties of The World Socialist Movement, have written that socialism is a society based on the common ownership of the means of producing and distributing wealth, organized democratically in the interests of all human beings. This would necessarily mean a classless, moneyless, society where necessary goods are produced by all as and when needed, not just when profit might be made. Free access to all goods and services for all is guaranteed based on every individual's own assessment of their needs. This all sounds well and good, but what does it mean to you in everyday life? Of course, it will be up to the majority who establish socialism to work out the details bearing in mind the impact on others and on the world.

As far as work is concerned, there will be a huge surplus of labour for the necessary jobs as many occupations deemed essential to capitalism will be redundant in a socialist society. As free access and common ownership are integral tenets of socialism, money, trade, and exchange will be not be necessary and the work of millions who toil away in banks and financial institutions, advertising, or spending hours collecting money on sales would be obsolete. They would be freed up for useful work. Socialism is a world cooperative system so the two hundred states competing against each other that we have today will give way to a seamless world eliminating the cause of war – economic competition. Thus the millions involved in the military-industrial complex will also be able to engage in productive work. Personal or property damage would simply be put right as a matter of course, so those working in the insurance industry would be released from that work...and so on, you get the picture. Instead of all this surplus labour sitting idle for months or even years until capital decides it is profitable to hire them again, they would be absorbed usefully into the workforce producing the necessary goods as needed. Thus the hours for each worker would be very much less than today – perhaps just two days a week or one week a month as deemed best by the majority of that society. With the financial restriction on automation and robotics lifted – today it's a lot less money for capital to employ workers in the 'Third World' for a few cents per hour than to spend millions on robots – automation could go full steam ahead and reduce hours even further. Displacing workers would be a societal benefit freeing them for other important work rather than the tragedy of thousands sitting idly unemployed as it is the case today.

Weighed down by large mortgage payments? House poor? Worried about losing your job and not making the payments and losing your investment? In a socialist system good housing would be a right. Simply choose from the list of available accommodations that suit your needs. Upgrading and repairing damaged homes would be the continuous job of skilled tradesmen. Likewise the improvements in your regions infrastructure. No more electing a council whose hands are tied by the lack of funds and continually doing patch- up jobs instead of the necessary work to the highest standards. We all know it costs less whether you are talking money or labour and materials to do the job right the first time.

...CONTINUED

**We welcome
correspondence
from our readers.
Send email to
spc@iname.com
or write us at
PO Box 31024,
Victoria, BC
CANADA V8N 6J3**

SPRING 2016 ~ IMAGINE

Volume 14 Number 1

All education, of course, would be free and available to all to reach their potential. No more huge student loan debts to pay off for the next twenty years. With the equivalent of five days a week to recreate oneself, there would be ample opportunity to learn new skills. Health care would be available to all, as deemed necessary by the individual. With a huge surplus in labour, more doctors, nurses, and support staff could be trained, more facilities built to eliminate the long wait lines we experience today due, again, to lack of proper funding. Local clinics, health centres, and hospitals with the very latest equipment would be there at the request of society. Research laboratories and workers could be vastly expanded and linked world wide to share best practices and new information.

This would also be true for science, the expansion of human knowledge. Instead of privately funded research where work is kept secret in order to get a jump on the market and reap extra profit, knowledge and research would be shared for the benefit of humanity. Millions more scientists could be trained to attain ever greater steps forward to benefit society. And, best of all, those benefits would be available to all mankind, not just those who can afford to pay for them. Thomas Crapper invented the toilet some time in the nineteenth century but today, 2.4 billion don't have one! One of the first jobs for science after the revolution would be to tackle the environmental problem of global warming into which we are now heading. The current climate change deniers who do so because of economic interests, would be free to admit the truth and there would be no capital interests working to put doubt in the minds of governments and individuals.

Travel would be a matter for the individual to decide, as today, but without the restriction of having adequate money to do what you want. Go wherever you choose, no borders, no passports, no money required. Find a place to stay and then volunteer your labour for your two days a week to help produce the necessary goods for that community.

All of the above would be in place or in the works from day one in a socialist society. After all, we run the system entirely now, and we would have the legacy of capitalism's means of production and distribution of goods already in place. For the human race to progress fully and fairly, to eliminate most, if not all, the major problems facing mankind today – war, poverty and hunger, lack of even the basic necessities for many millions – we need to dump capitalism and start a system designed for everyone. If this sounds good, the sooner we start, the sooner we can all reap the benefits. But do not expect us to lay everything on a plate for you. It is up to the vast majority to learn about, understand, and want such a system to make it happen. You can start by joining the Socialist Party of Canada and working with us to be strong enough to put forward candidates and the case for socialism.

GOOD INTENTIONS, UNEXPECTED RESULTS

By the time you read this, Mothers' Day will be close so it is a good time to look at its origin. Anna Jarvis, a West Virginian, began to campaign to make the day a recognized holiday in the United States in 1908. She wanted people to show appreciation, love, and gratitude for their mothers by writing personal letters to them. Simply put, Jarvis wanted an expression of sentiment and no more. Jarvis was inspired by her mother's example in caring for wounded Civil War soldiers until her death in 1905.

Jarvis wrote letters to the government and launched promotional campaigns. During her struggle, she found two powerful allies in capitalists John Wanamaker and H. J. Heinz, and that should have set off warning lights. In 1914, she finally succeeded when president Woodrow Wilson signed a bill creating Mothers' Day as a national holiday to honour mothers on the second Sunday in May.

To Jarvis' horror, florists, stores, restaurants, and printers of greeting cards saw the holiday as an opportunity to make extra profit and were in like lightning to capitalize. Embittered, disillusioned, and horrified, Jarvis campaigned equally ferociously against this exploitation of her intentions, "It was supposed to be about sentiment, not profit." she protested. Jarvis organized boycotts and threatened law suits in her attempts to stop what she considered to be crass commercialization.

In 1923, she crashed a confectioners' convention in Philadelphia to protest and in 1925 she was actually arrested for disturbing the peace at a meeting of The American War Mothers who raised money by selling carnations. All of Jarvis's efforts were, obviously, to no avail and it is doubtful if she ever got the point – that the capitalist class have plenty of time for sentiment, especially when they can make millions from it.

**We welcome correspondence from
our readers. Send email to
spc@iname.com or write us at
The Socialist Party of Canada
PO Box 31024,
Victoria, BC V8N 6J3**

WHAT HAPPENS IN THE ARCTIC, DOESN'T STAY IN THE ARCTIC!

A report on a new booklet from the National Academy of Sciences National Research Council (US) appeared in the Toronto Star (April 18, 2015). The gist of the book is that we know that global warming is affecting the Arctic more dramatically than other regions of the globe, but hardly any of us travel there so it is easy to put the problem at the back of one's mind and get on with the daily needs of survival within capitalism.

The report tells us that four factors will change that response. Firstly, more research confirms that the weather is changing faster between the mid and high latitudes. As the Arctic is warming faster. It affects the jet stream that carries our weather. It could slow down resulting in persistence in particular weather patterns such as intense snow, heat, rain, or cold. Last winter, for example, the jet stream dropped below the Great Lake into the northeaster US bringing prolonged cold and a parade of snowstorms to the New England region. The city of Toronto issued a record thirty-nine cold-weather alerts (below -15 Celsius or -20 wind chill factor), twenty-three in February, almost the whole month!

Secondly, the fishing industry will have to adapt to warming Arctic and North Atlantic oceans that will change the location of the spawning grounds of such commercial species as the arctic cod, herring, and capelin. Currently, about half the US fish catch comes from sub-arctic waters. As with everything in capitalism, scarcity will mean higher prices and,

more importantly, more nutrient rich food off the diets of the less wealthy.

Thirdly, the well publicized rise in seas levels as melt waters from the ice caps and glaciers spread around the world will become more and more of a reality for more people. The complete melting of the Greenland ice sheet would cause a general rise of six metres in sea levels, a catastrophic event for humans that would trigger mass dislocation and migration around the globe. That this will not happen until well after our lifetimes gives us no cause for celebration! There is also growing speculation as to what a freshening of the seas in that region could do to the Gulf Stream and its effects on northern Europe that relies on it for its moderate climate.

Finally, changes in the Arctic will increase global warming further by thawing the permafrost that is packed with carbon – about 1,330 gigatons worth – that would be released into the atmosphere. While the capitalists may be licking their lips at the opportunities to make massive profits out of the more accessible Arctic, the bottom line is that the Arctic is the canary in the mine. If we ignore that warning and fail to reduce carbon emissions, and limit temperature rise to less than two degrees, we are going to see a planet that will be very unfriendly to humans (and millions of other species) habitation and existence. The planet will survive, we may not!



THE WSP(US):

WORKING FOR SOCIALISM SINCE 1916

The World Socialist Party of the US (WSP(US)) grew out of a group of “Michigan Marxists” that came together in Detroit during the summer of 1916. Their goal was to establish a party “determined to wage war against all other political parties, whether alleged labor or avowedly capitalist ... [to] call upon all members of the working class to end the system which deprives them of the fruits of their labor, so that poverty may give place to comfort, privilege to equality, and slavery to freedom.” [Adapted from the Declaration of Principles of the SPGB.]

These “Michigan Marxists” consisted of about 43 individuals who had been attending classes taught at Duffield Hall by SPGBers Adolph Kohn and Moses Baritz. Nineteen of them had been members of the Socialist Party of America, from which they resigned in a bloc, supported by John Keracher, who had originally come to Detroit from Scotland via Canada.

The SP of A having legally prohibited their using the name “Socialist Party of the United States,” the group at first voted to call itself the “Workers’ Socialist Party” and then in 1919, “The Socialist Education Society.” The SES reorganised itself on December 12, 1930, resuming its old name of Workers’ Socialist Party. A later, and final, name change was prompted by the refusal of the Trotskyists in 1947 to consider choosing another name for their newly-formed Socialist Workers’ Party. And so The Workers’ Socialist Party became “The World Socialist Party.” We are proud to have been the first organisation to coin the phrase “World Socialist” — though, as the recent appearance of a “World Socialist Web Site” demonstrates, when Trotskyites smell a good name, they aren’t too bashful about borrowing it.

For various reasons the early WSP had only modest success in attracting new members; a preponderant influence may have been that reforming capitalism was just beginning to enjoy a wild surge in popularity in the run-up to the Russian Revolution. After that, reformists couldn’t even talk about revolution anymore without equating it with patching up capitalism. The capitalist class, for its part, was improving its public relations skills even as it revolutionised technology and expanded markets.

Another reason, however, is more deep-seated: the world socialist movement’s Object and Declaration of Principles uncompromisingly reject policies of ameliorating capitalism and neutralizing its worst effects. Against a backdrop of working-class credulity before the glib lies of its employers, the Left has added grossly to the confusion by preaching the feasibility of making capitalism work in the interest of

the majority. Some, like the SP-USA, sport “ultimate aims” and sectarian bureaucracies, captiously proposing to give the capitalist class more grassroots action than it bargained for. But in the real world, making socialists is not so easy, and the rewards are few.

Some of the founding members were Bill Davenport, the first Secretary; Bill Gribble, the first organiser; Lawrence Beardsley; George Ramsay, Walter Green; and Isaac Rab, who outlived all the others and remained a stalwart of the WSP for the rest of his life.

During the early Detroit years, the membership grew as Rab held classes and soap-boxed at the Ford auto plant where he worked despite strictures from his employers. Frank Marquart, later a major figure in the UAW, joined the WSP after Rab’s return to Boston.

As the 1920s approached, anti-Red feeling in the U.S. forced the small organisation to curtail some of its activity, but Detroit, New York and Boston Locals were soon all going strong. In New York/New Jersey, Sam Orner (the inspiration for “Lefty” in Clifford Odets’s play, *Waiting for Lefty*), was a colorful and dedicated socialist for many years. The NYC Local was the most active, and events often included Louis Boudin as guest lecturer. The party published an irregular organ during the 1930s, *The Socialist*, which was launched in November 1929 and continued publication with the Socialist Party of Canada, evading the long fingers of wartime censorship, sent all its materials for publishing its journal, *The Western Socialist*, to Boston, where it became the joint organ of both the SPC and the WSP.

All during the 1930s, under the impetus of the Great Depression, the party experienced considerable growth in numbers: “around 70 new members joined Boston Local of the Workers’ Socialist Party between 1933 and 1939,” writes Karla Rab in *Role-modeling Socialist Behavior*. Total party membership, however, probably never came to much more than 150. It was a period when capitalist fears of revolution were taken up and exaggerated by various sectors of the working class. The WSP benefited from this upsurge of revolutionary sentiment, but it proved to be a transient exception.

This was nevertheless a period of vigorous activity. Boston Local held outdoor and indoor meetings, debates and economics classes six days or evenings a week. The WSP, however, made little headway elsewhere in the United States, although Locals were founded in Los Angeles and San Francisco. During the Depression years, Boston Local’s

membership grew until it became the largest and most active group within the WSP. In fact, it was without doubt the most active and widely-known organisation professing Marxism in New England, outside the “Communist” Party. Also during that time, WSPers were active in the workers’ movement, especially the United Auto Workers, which a number of WSP members helped form, as well as in the International Ladies Garment Workers Union and the International Typographical Union in New England.

The 1940s undermined most of the gains in socialist consciousness, as the war dislocated the labour movement and everything politically derived from it. Worse still, the same Angst that had gripped the capitalist class in the Depression made them paranoid after the war; though they continued to cringe before the “Spectre of Communism” and carefully remolded themselves in the image of the New Deal, they saw themselves beset by a gigantic beast they labeled “The International Communist Conspiracy” and launched a wave of Red-baiting hysteria that dwarfed the Palmer Era in scope and ferocity. The infamous House Un-American Activities Committee and the Congressional goon squads led by terrorist Joe McCarthy used the Communist bogeyman to slide the working class into a political straightjacket. The bulk of the working class, for its part, passively went along with this, lulled into a false sense of security by easy promises of indefinite prosperity; which left organised labour a sitting duck for the union-busting to come. (From the capitalist perspective, labour unions are now gratifyingly down to just above 10 per cent of the work force.)

The Left immediately caved in and never recovered its pre-war cachet, though it did manage to stave off collapse for a few decades. And although the World Socialist Party was never called on to betray a Left to which it did not belong to begin with, and merely bored the FBI spies who came around, the WSP was caught in the same general web of dispirited apathy as the Left. Matters did not improve when, during the activist upsurge of the sixties and seventies, the party lost a golden opportunity to make socialists, displaying an unfortunate lack of empathy with a younger generation poised to repeat the very same mistakes as their parents (and grandparents). This was not for lack of enthusiasm or clear thinking, however; in general, those who joined the WSP took it on themselves to make the case for socialism and so make socialists. On the organisational level, party activity once again became robust, if at reduced levels compared with the thirties and forties. Socialists had good reason to be optimistic, and they tried, in the sixties and seventies, to spread socialist ideas wherever they could, including a good deal of radio exposure and even a TV show or three — not to mention frequent speaking engagements for visiting SPGBers, which continued on into the nineties.

But the rate at which new members joined did not compensate for the deficits inflicted by McCarthyism. The

result, ultimately, was the decay of the party’s few Locals, with Boston the last to fold in the eighties. The WSP(US) is now an organisation of members-at-large. Even in Boston, there is no longer an organised local. However, we continue to exist as an organisation.

In the years since what now seems like “the dark ages” of the 1980s, the World Socialist Party of the United States has reinvented itself. Cde. Rich Foland in Michigan began publication of the World Socialist Review in 1986 as a successor to the old Western Socialist (which had ceased publication in 1980), and Ron Elbert took over as editor soon after. Elbert breathed new life into the organisation when he moved to Boston in 1987.

In 1997, five comrades — three from Boston, one from Pennsylvania and one from Illinois — determined to re-establish a more formal structure within the loose connection of members-at-large which was all that was left of the WSP at that time.

The following year, the first meeting of a new National Administrative Committee took place. Elbert and K. Ellenbogen (now K. Rab) were joint National Secretaries that year. The NAC met via telephone conference call, instead of in any particular city.

Most WSP(US) work now is done over the Internet. The WSP presence on the Internet has become our largest single source of new members, and we are currently taking in about the same number of new recruits each year as the Party did in its heyday. But in addition to those new member comrades, hundreds of people are exposed to the case for socialism on our Website every day. Although the number of those people who feel ready to commit themselves to the WSM remains small, we are planting more seeds than socialist comrades of the party’s heyday could. The latest incarnation of the NAC is in the process of exploring video conferencing via Skype and other applications. But even with the Internet, local activities are as ever in organising for socialism, and what we most especially need to do is talk up socialism on the ground.

Given this situation, it is hard to measure the growth of the socialist movement. Even in the years when there was lots of social activity in Boston Local, as well as study classes, public meetings, speakers on Boston Common, etc., there were always more sympathisers than official party members. People who visit our site, and the Websites of other organisations of the WSM, are potential sympathisers. When the time comes, it will be no surprise if those sympathisers make up a big part of the conscious political majority needed to establish Socialism. Ø

NOTE. Thanks are due to Comrade Alan Johnstone (SPGB) for writing a first draft from which this article is in part derived.

THE STORY OF LEAD - THE STORY OF CAPITALISM

By the early twentieth century, the search for a definitive age for the earth had been going on for a century. The best dating methods using carbon-14 dating only went as far back as about 200,000 years for rocks. English scientist, Arthur Holmes, measured the decay of uranium into lead to better calculate Earth's age. In 1946, he announced that the Earth was at least three billion years old and possibly much more. The announcement was met with scepticism – was that the age of the Earth, or just the materials that it was made of? Then Hanson Brown at the University of Chicago developed a method for counting lead isotopes in igneous rocks (those created through the medium of heat.)

Brown passed the tedious work of laboratory dating of rocks to Clair Patterson who, as was his nature, persisted with the process until 1953 when he arrived at the age of Earth at 4.550 billion years, give or take 70 million years, a figure that has stood up for over sixty years. In the process, Patterson had noted a high concentration of lead in our atmosphere and he wondered how it got there and what effect it had on humans. He was astounded to find out that knowledge of that effect was minimal and mostly wrong or misleading.

He further discovered that that every study of lead's effects on humans had been funded exclusively by the manufacturers of lead additives, mostly Ethyl Corporation, in whom General Motors, Standard Oil, and Du Pont had investments. For example, one study by a doctor, having no special training in chemical pathology, induced volunteers to breathe in and swallow lead in heavy quantities for five years! Then their feces and urine were tested and found to be absent of any lead. Thus the toxic element was given a clean bill of health. Unfortunately, as Patterson realized, the result was a foregone conclusion as lead is not excreted from the body but deposited in the blood and bones.

Patterson realized that the large concentrations of lead in the atmosphere came from automobile exhaust pipes (about 90%) and to prove it he took ice core samples from the Greenland ice sheet. He discovered that prior to 1923, there was almost no lead in the atmosphere but since then the levels rose steadily and dangerously. Incidentally, his work with the ice cores was the foundation of the ice core science so well-known today on which modern climatological work is based.

Patterson now set about trying to get the lead content out of gasoline. Here, he ran into the power of Ethyl Corporation's capital muscle who had friends and allies in high places. His research funding dried up and the American Petroleum Institute cancelled a research contract with him, as did,

egregiously, the US Public Health Service! Imagine, this is a scientist who accurately discovered the true age of the Earth that eluded scientists for decades, the discoverer of a public health hazard! They ought to have given him a medal for his work. Instead, Ethyl Corporation allegedly, offered Patterson's university, Caltech, to endow a chair, 'if Patterson was sent packing'. Incredibly, when the National Research Council finally got around to investigating the dangers of lead poisoning, Patterson, probably the world's leading authority on the subject, was left off the panel. That this was the work of Ethyl Corporation or some other party with a financial interest, leaves little room for doubt.

Fortunately, Patterson was not a quitter and his continued efforts eventually contributed to the passing of the Clean Air Act and the removal of all lead from gasoline in the 1970s. Immediately, lead levels in the blood of Americans fell by 80%. Because lead in our bodies does not get excreted, we all have about 625 times more lead in our bodies than people did a century ago. Anyone looking for a cause of the elevated levels of cancer? Eventually, lead was also removed from paint but levels in the atmosphere continue to grow due to mining, smelting, and industrial activities. As late as 2001, Ethyl Corporation continued to hold that research has failed to show that leaded gasoline poses a threat to human health.

The story of lead poisoning is a familiar one that echoes the fight to prove that tobacco causes cancer, among many other ailments (Hitler's scientists were aware of the link between smoking and cancer and ill health in the 1930s and took steps to limit smoking that occurred only recently in North America and Europe), the fight to prove that a myriad of drugs were harmful and should never have been put on the market, the fight against coal pollution that led to the 'clean coal' adverts, and the fight to prove the environmental damage of the Alberta Tar Sands that led to the 'green tar' advertisements. This is an aspect of the fight against capitalism and its necessary drive for more and greater profits over human and environmental health. It is one that will continue until capitalism is dumped in the trash can of history.

Source: "A Short History of Nearly Everything" by Bill Bryson

OBSCENE AND HEARD

Capitalism is a crazy system at the best of times but still provides many examples to leave you shaking your head. Here are some example.

Any climate deniers left standing will have a hard time with this report from The New York Times (Jan 10, 2016), "As scientists, it's a little humbling that we've kind of been saying this for twenty years now, and it's not until people notice daffodils coming out in December that they start to say, 'maybe they're right'. Maybe it's time to act!"

As workers of the world struggle with job security, accessing food, health care, education, and a host of other necessities of life, we are constantly told that there is not enough money in the pot to maintain, let alone improve the services. The recently released Panama papers puts the lie to all this. It is estimated that eight per cent of the total world's wealth, \$7.6 trillion (US), is stashed away in tax havens to avoid paying tax that would amount to \$200 billion. As the capitalist system is designed to rob the worker to pay the capitalist, I suppose you could say it's working very well!

Eager, or desperate, to promote the gun culture among children, The National Rifle Association in the US has re-written the fairy tales it wants young people to read and armed the characters with guns. Grandma says, pointing her rifle to the slaving wolf, "I don't think I'll be eaten today, and you won't be eating anyone again." Gun rights supporters say stories such as "Little Red Riding Hood (Has a Gun)" and "Hansel and Gretel (Have Guns) are a more peaceful version than the disturbing original stories. Of course, it's all in the interests of promoting guns and selling more firearms to the American public.

A Toronto scientist contends that it is moderate temperature changes kill people more often than the wild extremes. He plans to study this effect on the homeless to see if they are at risk. Since homelessness, a condition related to systems based on private property, is itself a life risk no matter what the temperature is, we would be better off getting rid of the root cause.

In February, in response to Europe's worst refugee crisis since World War II, NATO ordered warships to transport people in transit from the island of Lesbos to the Greek port of Piraeus to receive food and shelter and put an end to illegal smuggling. Of course, this will not end the problems of any country dealing with a large influx of people needing help, nor the problem at the beginning of the journey, namely war. War is a direct consequence of the competitive capitalist system and until that is ended, there will be wars and refugees fleeing from it.

The British lawmakers are debating whether the four separate nations that make up the UK should have their own national songs to sing at sporting and other functions. With a world beset with wars, poverty, food, health, and education deprivation, time would be better spent on solving those problems. Or maybe they know it is futile where capital rules.

The Canadian army is trying to redress a gender inequality issue – there are not enough women in the army. The army will endeavour to boost the number of women by one per cent in the next decade and eventually reach twenty-five per cent of the total. Presumably, perfection will be reached when equal numbers of men and women will be trained to kill in order to protect the private property, trading rights, etc of the capitalist class.

Recently, the business section of The Toronto Star had the following headlines on the front page - "Grim Times At Heart of Canadian Oil", "Reality a Bitter Pill for (pharmaceutical) CEOs", "Alberta Posts Job Growth As Canada Sees Declines", "Inside was no picnic either - "Bombardier Suffers Penny Stock Shock", "Another Two Hundred Job Cuts For BlackBerry", "Hospitals Hurt By Predatory Pricing", "TSX Dollar Retreat On Weak Oil Prices", "Linkedin Plummets Amid Sales Disparity", "Volkswagen Delays Results As It Gauges Scandals Shock". Surely any one with a lick of sense would see there is something seriously wrong with the economic system under which we exist.

Canada is counted as a rich country but about 12.5% of households experience some form of food insecurity and nearly one million rely on food banks on a monthly basis according to "Proof", a research group studying policy options to reduce the problem. The term 'food insecurity' really means hunger and as for policy options, in a system that has vast inequality of wealth distribution, the cause and solution should be obvious.

Ontario's police watchdog is starting a review of police suicides that are on the rise in the province. It is common for police officers to experience mental health issues from their job stress and that rates of alcoholism and divorce are higher than the general population. For much of their day they have to deal with people who themselves have cracked and commit anti-social behaviour. The problem lies with the effects of a profit driven system that leaves many behind who do not fit the required mold.

...CONTINUED

The Toronto subway system appears to be making more frequent stops for 'injury on the track', a euphemism for a suicide attempt. We have to wonder about today's society that generates so many people who want opt out for good!

Walmart managers in Texas are now required to ask gun-toting customers if they have a licence (by Texas law they are allowed to do so!). The Texas Alcohol and Beverage Commission is not pleased because it prohibits carrying guns in places that sell beer and wine, including Walmart. Now, gun rights activists are boycotting stores that forbid firearms

while gun control advocates are shunning those that do. Must be a dangerous business going for the groceries! What a senseless act to permit such a crazy activity.

The building of rental units in Toronto is at a twenty year high as demand for them rises. It indicates that less and less people are wanting to be tied to a twenty-five year mortgage in such insecure times. Time to put security for everyone into place and dump capitalism.

TWEAK AND YE SHALL FIND

When the Toronto Star was founded in 1892, it then portrayed the world as it does today – the capitalist class were basically humane fellows, the workers should have rights, the government worked in everyone's interests and the workers and bosses had common interests. Of course, even to the Star, not everything was perfect but with a little tweaking here and there, things would work out just fine.

Well, one hundred and twenty-four years of tweaking has not put things right and there is obviously many disturbing factors about our system of producing and distributing wealth. For example, the Star now has to do some heavy duty tweaking to ensure their own survival in the system they have continually supported. Declining sales, due in part to free newspapers, on line news, and the continually rising price of the paper have forced them to close its printing plant in Vaughan and contract out the work, to Transcontinental Printing, something they have railed against over the years. This move will reduce the paper's annual budget by \$10 million.

This is nothing new in the newspaper publishing business. Transcontinental also prints, but does not own, The Toronto Globe and Mail, The Montreal Gazette, The Vancouver Sun, and The San Francisco Chronicle. Naturally, the management of any company in the throes of downsizing, restructuring, contracting out, whatever you want to call it, always tries to put a bright spin on it. The Star said, "This move will allow us to focus our efforts increasingly on creating great content and engaging audiences across many platforms while at the same time reducing costs and improving the production quality of the newspaper." Another executive added, "The decision represents another important step forward in the evolution of the Toronto Star." One wonders if the 285 employees who will be laid off will consider it a 'great evolutionary step

forward.' The Star's publisher did say, "...but unfortunately we will be saying goodbye to our long time Vaughan printing plant employees."

Perhaps the executives do feel some pain and, certainly, when one reviews the Star's record of calling attention to so many social evils over so many years, their reporters, editors, and publishers have shown themselves to be well meaning, but, obviously, good intentions are not enough. This only highlights the exigencies of the capitalist mode of production even more. If well meaning people have to show this type of disloyalty to 'long-term employees' by putting them out of the means of survival, then it clearly shows the system is the problem.

Capitalism is based on production for profit, and only profit, and staying ahead of the competition to survive is a necessity. All companies must lower costs to maximize profits and stay competitive even if it means laying off workers or producing shoddy goods, seeking areas with the lowest wages, or the lowest working and environmental standards.

For one hundred and fourteen years, The Star, which is, of course, a company surviving in the capitalist system and seeking ever greater profits to attract investors, has dwelt under an illusion – that capitalism can be reformed into something that works for all. Now the iron-clad rules of capitalist economics has the Star firmly in its grip and no amount of tweaking will change that.

DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES

THE SOCIALIST PARTY OF CANADA HOLDS

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

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.

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.

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 common property of society of the means of production and distribution, and their democratic control by the whole people.

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.

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

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.

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.

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 that deprives them of the fruits of their labour, and that poverty may give place to comfort, privilege to equality, and slavery to freedom.

OUR COMPANION PARTIES IN THE WORLD SOCIALIST MOVEMENT

The Socialist Party,

52 Clapham High Street, London SW4 7UN, UK.

Tel: 0207 622 3811

Email: spgb@worldsocialism.org

web site: www.worldsocialism.org/spgb

Blog: <http://socialismoryourmoneyback.blogspot.com/>

World Socialist Party of The United States,

PO Box 440247, Boston, MA 02144.

Email: boston@wspus.org

World Socialist Party

(India), 257 Baghajatin 'E' Block (East),

KolKata 700086, India.

Tel: 033-2425-0208

Email: wspindia@hotmail.com

World Socialist Party

(New Zealand), PO Box 1929,

Auckland, NI, New Zealand.

CAPITALISM AND THE ENVIRONMENT

A couple of pieces of reading recently illustrated very well why we cannot leave it to capitalism to deal with climate change. The first one tells us that there is a crisis in the Canadian concrete industry. The process for making concrete involves super heating limestone to isolate the carbon contained in it and then releasing it into the atmosphere – never a good idea these days. In addition, coal is the preferred fuel used in the heating process and that, of course, gives off even more greenhouse gases. It is estimated that for every tonne of concrete produced, 3/4 of a tonne of carbon is released.

The crisis for the industry lies in the fact that the new Liberal government has declared a commitment to the environment, sadly lacking in the previous government that turned Canada into the poster boy for climate denial and sabotaging international climate conferences. This new government is set to impose a form of carbon tax of \$100 per tonne. We can see the effect that will have as the \$30 a tonne tax already imposed by British Columbia is making their concrete uncompetitive on the world market.

Not to worry, if it's too expensive here, go elsewhere for a lower price where nothing is done about carbon emissions and the price is right. Higher rates of imported concrete have resulted, meaning that for one country to impose a tax while others do not, simply cripples the industry in that country with no effect on the global greenhouse gas emissions. In fact, climate change is a world problem and only action on a global scale will bring the necessary results.

The second reading concerns the actions of the nuclear power industry, specifically the Hanford Nuclear plant in the US and the Sellafield plant in the UK, reported in Bill Bryson's mostly humorous travel book on Britain, "The Road to Little Dribbling". However, there is nothing humorous about the actions of the people at Hanford who have, between 1943 and 1980 released millions of litres of liquid waste containing strontium, plutonium, caesium, and sixty-three other toxic substances into the ground water of the Columbia River basin. Bryson reports, "Hanford may be the single most irresponsible achievement of modern man."

Sometimes the releases were accidental or through carelessness, but more often intentional. Not satisfied with this infamous record of polluting the environment, the engineers compounded the problem by trying to cover it up. They insisted the water was clean and safe, and, to prove it, they cited tests on salmon swimming upriver to spawning grounds. The tests showed that contamination of the salmon was so low that you would have to eat a hundred pounds of it at one sitting to reach even minimum detectable levels. What they

knew, but didn't mention, was that salmon do not eat when spawning and that their stay is of short duration. Thus the fish did not show detectable levels of radiation, as reported. They were also aware, apparently, that the creatures that inhabited the ecosystem permanently, crustacea, plankton, algae, and resident fish had concentrations of radioactivity one hundred thousand times greater than national levels. Bryson wrote, "I read this with astonishment – I honestly didn't know that Americans could be so deceitful to other Americans – and hoped the British example would be better."

In 1972, Britain joined other world nuclear powers by signing the London Convention in which the dumping of radioactive wastes from ships at sea was to be prohibited. It did not mention pipelines, however, so Britain promptly pumped unknown quantities of dangerous waste products directly into the Irish Sea from the Sellafield Plant. According to environmental scientist, Jacob D. Hamblin of Oregon State University, the company (yes it was in private for profit hands) running the plant had exposed the whole of Europe to more radiation than all other nuclear sites, all nuclear weapons testing, plus Chernobyl, added together.

Although Sellafield is not now operational, there is enough unrecorded nuclear waste sitting around the site for The Observer newspaper to call Building B30 the most hazardous in Europe. When Bryson visited the site in the 1990s to record a program for television, he found a smart new visitor centre extolling the safety and reliability and excitement of atomic energy, drawing up to 200,000 visitors a year. Today, the site has closed due to dwindling numbers – even capitalism's cover ups are required to make a profit! Although the company has gone, the problem hasn't. The clean up costs are estimated at \$79 billion, a figure that far outweighs the benefits that Britain received from the plant.

These two examples teach us that capital will go to the lowest price in order to maximize profits no matter what the extraneous costs may be to people or the environment. This is the job of capital and we cannot expect anything else. Secondly, in a world where money counts, we cannot believe what is said by any vested interest. The third lesson, well known by socialists, is that as long as capital rules the results will be the same, and only a world based on the democracy of common ownership and free from the domination of capital can change this.

TO REPAIR OR NOT TO REPAIR?

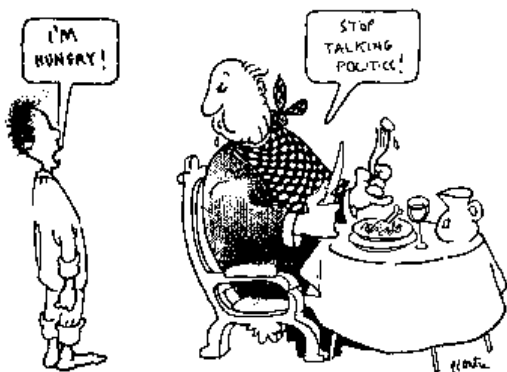
In 2016, The Toronto Community Housing Corporation has allocated a record \$250 million to the capital repair program of its housing stock, thus funding some 18,000 projects to benefit 40,500 of its 60,000 households. This may seem very impressive but when one looks into it a little closer, it becomes like so many of capitalism's reform measures – too little too late.

On December 30 of last year, The Toronto Star reported that complaints were being received from tenants who have waited for years for repairs to be completed. In one example, a house with a leaky roof causing mold to grow in the bathroom and squirrels to enter had waited in vain for years. The Star reporter who visited, noted water falling from the ceiling in the foyer and paint peeling from the walls and ceilings that were visibly damaged and containers spread around the floor to catch incoming water. Only patchwork jobs had been attempted over the years allowing the damage to require major renovation. According to other tenants, TCHC does OK with small repairs but has ignores more serious needs.

City councillor, Burnside, noted that while TCHC was in part responsible, the heart of the matter is the indifference of the provincial government in allocating funds for the problem as the TCHC was set up without a capital repair reserves. Governments of all political stripes, he added, have

expounded good intentions and how much they care but have failed to come through with the needed funding.

What we have, then, is a lack of funding from all three levels of government – local, provincial, and federal, and each passing the buck to the others. There is probably no lack of concern by individuals involved and no one would certainly like to endure such conditions. For several decades now, governments have been starved of the funds necessary to do the job everyone expects it to do, i.e. take care of the citizens' needs under its jurisdiction. Unfortunately, the first job of any government is to take care of the profit system and ensure it has the most favourable environment possible. Even governments must compete for business and must balance citizen needs with profit-making needs. Cutting taxes has long been an election ploy that has duped the working class into voting for the same results again and again. Socialists hold that workers do not pay the taxes as take-home wages are the amount necessary for a worker and his family to survive and be ready for work day after day. Paying taxes would reduce that ability and endanger the system. Thus taxes must come from the only other source available – profit. Hence, more taxes for providing the citizens' needs means less profit for capitalism. Therefore, until a class conscious majority of workers works to put the capitalist system in the trash bin and capital does not dominate every aspect of life, we will repeat this housing situation and any other benefits system until the cows come home.



We welcome correspondence from our readers. Send email to spc@iname.com or write us at The Socialist Party of Canada PO Box 31024, Victoria, BC V8N 6J3

PUBLICATIONS ORDER FORM

The Impossibilists: A brief profile of the SPC	\$12.00	X	_____
The Russian Revolution	1.50	X	_____
Pour le Socialisme Mondial	1.50	X	_____
Socialism as a Practical Alternative	1.50	X	_____
Housing and the Insane Priority of Building Profits	1.50	X	_____
How the Gods Were Made	1.50	X	_____
Some Aspects of Marxian Economics	1.50	X	_____
The Right to be Lazy	1.50	X	_____
The Market System Must Go! Why Reformism does not Work	1.50	X	_____
Marxism Revisited	1.50	X	_____
Socialist Principles Explained	1.50	X	_____
How We Live - Wm Morris	1.50	X	_____
Marxism and Darwinism - Pannekoek	1.50	X	_____
From Capitalism to Socialism	1.50	X	_____
An Inconvenient Question - Socialism and the Environment	1.50	X	_____
What's Wrong with Using Parliment?	1.50	X	_____
Socialism Or Your Money Back	2.50	X	_____

TOTAL _____

Postage extra - send postal code for an estimate of the cost. Return this form along with cash, cheque or money order to:-

**THE SOCIALIST PARTY OF CANADA,
PO Box 31024, VICTORIA, BC V8N 6J3**

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

Postal Code _____

THOUGHT ABOUT JOINING THE SOCIALIST PARTY?

For further information about membership to The Socialist Party, return this form to: The Socialist Party of Canada, PO Box 31024, Victoria, BC V8N 6J3.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Email _____

CONTACT

**THE SOCIALIST PARTY
OF CANADA
PO Box 31024,
VICTORIA, BC V8N 6J3**

BRITISH COLUMBIA

John Ames

johnrmames@yahoo.ca

SASKATCHEWAN

Mercedes Martinson

mercedes.scott@gmail.com

MANITOBA

Jaime Chinchilla-Solano

jaimech@gmail.com

ONTARIO

John Ayers

jayers4@cogeco.ca

NEW BRUNSWICK

Jeff Spicer

jeffspicer1@hotmail.com

Visit us on the web at
worldsocialism.org/canada

or

Email us at
spc@iname.com

