

A Voice of the WORLD SOCIALIST PARTY (USA)
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E D I T O R I A L .

To Our Readers,

In your hands is the first issue of the WORLD SOCIALIST REVIEW. The articles that appear in this journal have been written by members of the WORLD SOCIALIST MOVEMENT. Not all of the articles that appear, or that will be appearing in future issues, will be finely phrased. But, what we lack in refinement of style we shall make good by our deep sincerity and by the correctness and truthfulness of our principles.

We shall for the present, content ourselves with issuing the WORLD SOCIALIST REVIEW four times a year. This could, however, change. We will notify our readers if we increase or decrease the number of issues we plan to put out each year.

We do regret to inform our readers that if they want subscriptions, they will have to pay a slightly higher price of .30¢ per issue. We deeply regret this, but the high price of postage forces us to charge more to defray the cost of sending each issue to your home.

Finally, let us state that we would very much like to hear from you. We shall be pleased to consider any articles submitted to us for publication in this journal. However, please do not be disappointed if what you submit does not appear or if it gets slightly edited. We have a very hard job of deciding what is to appear and what is not to appear. Also, because this journal is an official voice of the WSP, all articles do have to represent the platform of the WSP. Hence, the need for editing. We also would like to encourage our readers to send us suggestions on how to improve our journal, to voice their criticisms of the journal or any of its articles, to comment on something they liked and to ask questions about the World Socialist Party and its principles.

Rich
(co-editor)

II.

B A S I C S O F W O R L D S O C I A L I S M

Membership in the World Socialist Party of the United States requires an understanding of and agreement with what we consider to be the basics of scientific socialism. We have always been convinced that a world-wide system based upon production for use, rather than for sale on a market, requires that a majority of the population be socialist in attitude. Events since the establishment of the World Socialist Movement have, we maintain, proved the validity of this judgement. In our opinion, if you agree, generally, with the following statements, you are a socialist and belong with us.

1. Capitalism, even with reforms, cannot function in the interests of the working class. Capitalism, by its nature, requires continual "reforms"; yet reforms cannot alter the basic relationship of wage-labor and capital and would not be considered, to begin with, if their legislation would lead to disturbing this relationship. Reforms, in other words, are designed to make capitalism more palatable to the working class by holding out the false hope of an improvement in their condition. To whatever extent they afford improvement, reforms benefit the capitalist class, not the working class.

2. To establish socialism the working class must first gain control of the powers of government through their political organization. It is by virtue of its control of state power that the capitalist class is able to perpetuate its system. State power gives control of the main avenues of education and propaganda—either directly or indirectly—and of the armed forces that frequently and efficiently crush ill-conceived working class attempts at violent opposition. The one way it is possible in a highly developed capitalism to oust the capitalist class from its ownership and control over the means of production and distribution is to first strip it of its control over the state. Once this is accomplished the state will be converted from a government over people to an administration of the affairs of man. The World Socialist Party of the United States advocates the ballot, and no other method, as a means of abolishing capitalism.

3. Members of the World Socialist Party do not support—either directly or indirectly—members of any other political party. It is always possible, even if difficult in some instances, to vote for world socialism by writing in the name of the Party and a member for a particular legislative office. Our main task, however, is to make socialists and not to advocate use of the ballot for anything else short of socialism.

4. The World Socialist Party rejects the theory of leadership. Neither individual "great" personalities nor "revolutionary vanguards" can bring the world one day closer to socialism. The emancipation of the working class "must be the work of the working class, itself." Educators to explain socialism, yes! Administrators to carry out the will of the majority of the membership, yes! But leaders or "vanguards" never!

continued on next page.....

III.

B A S I C S C O N T ' D

5. There is an irreconcilable conflict between scientific socialism and religion. Socialists reject religion for two main reasons: (a) Religion divides the universe into spiritual and physical realms and all religions offer their adherents relief from their earthly problems through some form of appeal to the spiritual. Socialists see the cause of the problems that wrack mankind as material and political. We see the solution as one involving material and political, not spiritual means. (b) Religions ally themselves with the institutions of class society. Particular religious organizations and leaders may, and frequently do, rebel against what they deem injustice, even suffering imprisonment and worse for their efforts. But they seek their solutions within the framework of the system socialists aim to abolish. One cannot understand the development of social evolution by resorting to religious ideas.

6. The system of society in Russia, China, and all of the other so-called socialist or communist countries is state capitalism. Goods and services, in those countries, as in avowedly capitalist lands, are produced for sale on a market with view to profit and not, primarily, for use. The placing of industry under the control of the state in no way alters the basic relationships of wage-labor and capital. The working class remains a class of wage slaves. The class that controls the state remains a parasitical, surplus-value eating class.

7. Trade unionism is the means by which wage workers organize to "bargain collectively" in order that they might sell their labor-power at the best possible price, and to try to improve working conditions. The unorganized have no economic weapon with which to resist the attempts of capital to beat down their standards. But unions must work within the framework of capitalism. They are useful, then, to but a limited extent. They can do nothing toward lessening unemployment, for example. In fact, they encourage employers to introduce more efficient methods in order to overcome added costs of higher wages and thereby hasten and increase unemployment. More and more the tendency of industry is toward a greater mass of production with fewer employees. Unions must, by their very nature, encourage such development although they are also known, occasionally, to resist this natural trend through what employers like to call "featherbedding." As Marx put it: instead of the conservative motto "a fair day's pay for a fair day's work," the worker ought to inscribe upon their banner "abolition of the wages system."

If you agree, generally, with the above sentiments you belong with us. Can we hear from you?

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This article
was taken
from the-

Marx's Conception of Socialism

MARX USUALLY REFERRED to the society he aimed to see established by the working class as "communist society". Precisely because he believed that "communist society" would be the outcome of the struggle and movement of the working class against its capitalist conditions of existence, Marx always refused to give any detailed picture of what he expected it to be like: that was something for the working class to work out for itself. Nevertheless scattered throughout his writings, published and unpublished, are references to what he believed would have to be the basic features of the new society the working class would establish in place of capitalism.

Voluntary Association

It must be emphasised that nowhere did Marx distinguish between "socialist society" and "communist society". As far as he, and Engels, were concerned these two words meant the same, being alternative names for the society they thought the working class would establish in place of capitalism, a practice which will be followed in this article. As a matter of fact besides *communist* Marx employed four other words to describe future society: *associated*, *socialised*, *collective* and *co-operative*. All these words convey a similar meaning and bring out the contrast with capitalist society where not only the ownership and control of production but life generally is private, isolated and atomized. Of these the word Marx used most frequently — almost more frequently than *communist* — was *association*. Marx wrote of future society as "an association which will exclude classes and their antagonism" (PP, p. 197) and as "an association, in which the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all" (CM, p. 82). In Volume III of *Capital* Marx writes three or four times of production in future society being controlled by the "associated producers" (pp. 428, 430-1 and 800). *Association* was a word used in working class circles in England to mean a voluntary union of workers to overcome the effects of competition. This was Marx's sense too: in future society the producers would voluntarily co-operate to further their own common interest; they would cease to be "the working class" and become a classless community.

No Coercive State

In these circumstances the State as an instrument of political rule over people would have no place. Such a social organ of coercion was, in Marx's view, only needed in class-divided societies as an instrument of class rule and to contain class struggles. As he put it, in socialist society "there will be no more political power properly so-called since political power is precisely the official expression of antagonism in civil society" (PP, p. 197) and "the public power will lose its political character. Political power, properly so called, is merely

the organised power of one class for oppressing another" (CM, p. 81).

Socialist society would indeed need a central administration but this would not be a "State" or "government" in that it would not have at its disposal any means of coercing people, but would be concerned purely with administering social affairs under democratic control. Marx endorsed the proposal of Saint Simon and other early critics of capitalism for "the conversion of the functions of the State into a mere superintendence of production" (CM, p. 98), and also declared that "freedom consists in converting the state from an organ superimposed upon society into one completely subordinate to it" (CGP, p. 32). In other words, once Socialism had been established and classes abolished, the coercive and undemocratic features of the State machine would have been removed, leaving only purely administrative functions mainly in the field of the planning and organization of production.

Common Ownership

Natural resources and the man-made instruments of production would be held in common: Marx speaks of "a community of free individuals, carrying on their work with the means of production in common" (Vol. I, p. 78) and, in his *Critique of the Gotha Programme*, of "the co-operative society based on the common ownership of the means of production" (p. 22) and of "the material conditions of production" being "the co-operative property of the workers themselves" (p. 25). It is significant that Marx never defined communist society in terms of the ownership and control of the means of production by the State, but rather in terms of ownership and control by a voluntary association of the producers themselves. He did not equate what is now called "nationalisation" with Socialism.

Planned Production

Another feature of communist society, in Marx's view, would be consciously planned production. He writes of a society "in which producers regulate their production according to a preconceived plan" (Vol. III, p. 256) and of "production by freely associated men . . . consciously regulated by them in accordance with a settled plan" (Vol. I, p. 80).

Conscious planning, conscious control over the material conditions of life, was for Marx clearly the essence of Socialism. In the 1840's, when he used to express himself philosophically, Marx was continually emphasising this point. This was what he meant when he said that real history would not begin till Socialism had been established; human beings were not behaving as human beings so long as they were controlled by blind historical and economic forces, ultimately of their own creation but unrecognized as such; Socialism would allow men to consciously regulate their relationship with Nature; only such a consciously planned society was

a truly human society, a society compatible with human nature.

But Marx's approach to planning in Socialism was not just philosophical. It was practical too. He was well aware that to regulate "production according to a preconceived plan" would be a huge organizational task. Indeed, that it would be, if you like, the economic problem of Socialism. Matching production with social wants would in the first instance be a huge statistical exercise. Marx emphasised that for this sort of reason "book-keeping" would be more necessary in Socialism than under capitalism — not that he envisages the books in socialist society being kept in money. Socialist society, he felt, would use some direct measure of labour-time for its statistics and planning (Vol. III, pp. 184 and 830). Calculations would have to be made of how much labour-time would be needed to produce particular items of wealth; the real social (as opposed to monetary market) demand for the various items of wealth would also have to be calculated; and all the figures put together to construct a definite plan for the allocation of resources and labour to the various different branches of production.

In a number of places Marx compares how capitalism and Socialism would tackle the same problems, for instance a long-term project which would not bear fruit in the form of finished products for some years but which in the meantime would have to be allocated labour and resources. Under capitalism, said Marx, this creates monetary problems and upsets; but in Socialism it is only a question of "preconceived" planning, of making allowances for this beforehand (Vol. II, pp. 315 and 358). Similarly with miscalculations, say over-producing: under capitalism (where overproduction means in relation to market demand) this causes a crisis and a drop in production; in Socialism (where overproduction would be in relation to real social demand) there would be no problem: it could be corrected in the next plan (Vol. II; pp. 468-9).

In his *Critique of the Gotha Programme* (p. 22) and in Volume III of *Capital* (p. 854) Marx lists the various major uses to which the social product would have to be put in a socialist society:

- 1) Replacing the means of production (raw materials, wear and tear of machinery, etc.) used up in producing the social product.
- 2) Expanding the means of production so as to be able to produce a larger social product.
- 3) A small surplus as a reserve to provide against accidents and natural disasters (and planning miscalculations, we might add).
- 4) The individual consumption of the actual producers.
- 5) The individual consumption of those unable to work: the young, the old, the sick.
- 6) Social consumption: schools, hospitals, parks, libraries, etc.
- 7) Social administration not connected with production.

This is obvious of course but it is as well to spell it out so as to show that Marx did discuss some of the practical problems of totally planned production.

Abolition of the Market

Socialist society, as Marx repeatedly made clear, would be a non-market society, with all that that implied:

no money, no buying and selling, no wages, etc. In fact it was his view that proper planning and the market are incompatible: *either* production is regulated by a conscious previously worked-out plan or it is regulated, directly or indirectly, by the market. When Marx talked about men under capitalism being dominated by blind forces, which were in the end their own creations, it was precisely blind market forces he mainly had in mind. For him capitalism was essentially a market economy in which the allocation of labour and resources to the various branches of production was determined by what he called "the law of value". Although production under capitalism was not consciously controlled, it was not completely anarchic: some sort of order was imposed by the fact that goods exchanged in definite proportions, related both to the amount of socially necessary labour-time spent in producing them and to the average rate of profit on invested capital. Under capitalism it was the averaging of the rate of profit on the capital invested in the different branches that regulated production. But this was an unplanned hit-and-miss process which was only accurate in the long run; in the short run it led to alternating periods of boom and slump, labour shortage and mass unemployment, high profits and low profits. The assertion by society of conscious control over production, and the allocation of resources to the various branches of production in accordance with a previously settled plan, necessarily meant for Marx the disappearance not only of production for profit, but also of the whole mechanism of the market (including the labour market, and so of the wages system), of production for the market ("commodity-production"), of buying and selling ("exchange") and of money.

The *Communist Manifesto* specifically speaks of "the Communistic abolition of buying and selling" (p. 72) and of the abolition not only of capital (wealth used to produce other wealth with a view to profit) but of wage labour too (p. 73). In Volume I Marx speaks of "directly associated labour, a form of production that is entirely inconsistent with the production of commodities . . ." (p. 94) and in Volume III of things being different "if production were collective and no longer possessed the form of commodity production . . ." (p. 451). Also, in Volume II, Marx in comparing how Socialism and capitalism would deal with a particular problem twice says there would be no money to complicate matters in socialist society: "If we conceive society as being not capitalistic but communistic, there will be no money-capital at all in the first place . . ." (p. 315) and "in the case of socialized production the money-capital is eliminated" (p. 358). In other words, in Socialism it is solely a question of planning and organisation. Marx also advised trade unionists to adopt the revolutionary watchword "Abolition of the Wages System" (VPP, p. 78) and, in his *Critique of the Gotha Programme*, stated "within the co-operative society based on the common ownership of the means of production, the producers do not exchange their products" (pp. 22-3) for the simple reason that their work would then be social not individual and applied as part of a definite plan. What they produce belongs to them collectively, i.e. to society, as soon as it is produced; socialist society then allocates, again in accord-

ance with a plan, the social product to various previously-agreed uses.

Distribution of Consumer Goods

One of these uses must be individual consumption. How did Marx think this would be organised? Here again Marx took a realistic view. Eventually, he said, the principle "from each according to his ability, to each according to his needs" would apply (CGP, p. 24). In other words, there would be no social restrictions on individual consumption, every member of society being free to take from the common stock of consumer goods according to their individual need. But Marx knew that this presupposed a higher level of productivity than prevailed in his day (he was writing in 1875). In the meantime, while the productive forces were being expanded, individual consumption would unavoidably have to be restricted. How? Marx made the simple point that how wealth would be allocated for individual consumption in communist society would depend on what and how much there was to allocate: "The mode of this distribution will vary with the productive organisation of the community, and the degree of historical development attained by the producers" (Vol. I, p. 78). This was another obvious point, but on three or four occasions Marx went further and referred to a specific method of regulating distribution: by "labour-time vouchers". The basic idea of such a system is that each producer would be given a certificate recording how much time he had spent at work; this would entitle him to draw from the common store of wealth set aside for individual consumption an equivalent amount of consumer goods, likewise measured in labour-time. This, as Marx himself recognised, was only one of many possible systems Socialist society could democratically agree on for allocating wealth for individual consumption in the temporary conditions of relative scarcity here assumed — realistically for 1875 — to exist. As long as the total number of vouchers issued matched the total amount of wealth set aside for individual consumption, society could adopt any criteria it chose for deciding how many vouchers particular individuals, or groups of individuals, should have; this need bear no relationship at all to how many hours an individual may or may not have worked. Similarly, the "pseudo-prices" given to particular goods to be distributed need bear not relation to the amount of labour-time spent on producing them. Marx himself described some of the defects of the *labour-time* voucher system, but also made the point that any voucher system of allocating goods for individual consumption would suffer from anomalies, being forced on socialist society by the not-yet-developed-enough productive forces in what Marx called "the first phase of communist society".

When Marx mentions labour-time vouchers in *Capital* he always made it quite clear that he was only assuming such a system as an example: "merely for the sake of a parallel with the production of commodities" (Vol. I, p. 78) or that the producers "may, for all it matters, . . ." (Vol. II, p. 358) receive labour-time vouchers. He also emphasised that these vouchers would not be money in its proper sense: "Owen's 'labour-money' . . . is no more 'money' than a ticket to the theatre" (Vol. I, p. 94)

and "these vouchers are not money. They do not circulate" (Vol. II, p. 358). (See also his discussion of so called "labour-money" in *The Critique of Political Economy*, pp. 83-6.)

Marx's point here is that the vouchers would merely be pieces of paper entitling people to take such and such an amount of consumer goods; they would not be tokens for gold like today's paper money; once handed over they would be cancelled and so could not circulate. Besides, they would be issued as part of the overall plan for the production and distribution of wealth. Finally, we repeat, any voucher system, whether on a labour-time or some other basis, was seen by Marx only as a temporary measure while the productive forces were developed as rapidly as possible to the level where they would permit socialist society to go over to free access according to individual need.

This is why this is now only an academic problem. The further development of the forces of production since Marx's day has meant that the system he always said was the final aim of Socialism — free access to consumer goods according to individual need — could now be introduced almost immediately. Socialism was established. The problem Marx envisaged labour-time vouchers as a possible solution to no longer really exists.

Conclusion

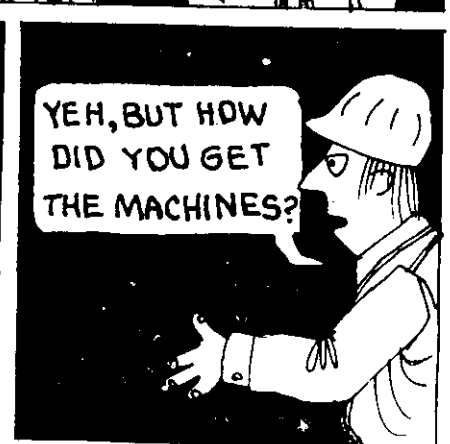
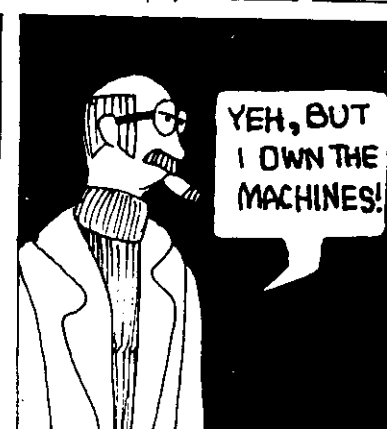
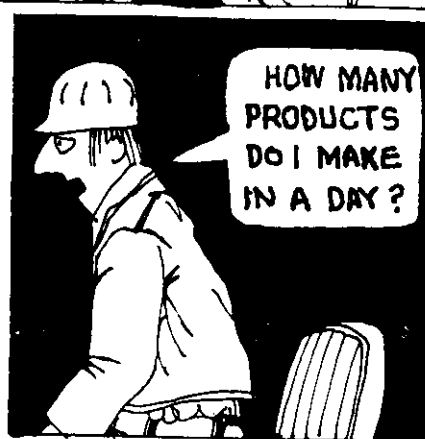
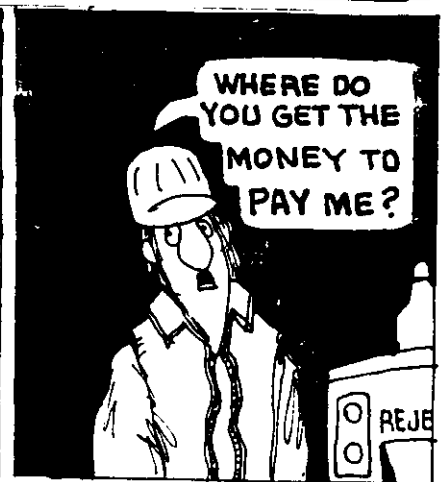
We have seen, then, that Marx held that future communist society would be a classless community, without any coercive State machine, based on the common ownership of the means of production, with planning to serve human welfare completely replacing production for profit, the market economy, money and the wages system — even in the early stages when it might not prove possible to implement the principle "from each according to his ability, to each according to his need", which, however, always remained for Marx the aim. Marx, and Engels, never drew any distinction between "socialist" and "communist" society, using these (and other) terms interchangeably. He did, however, believe that this society would only be established after a "period of . . . revolutionary transformation" (CGP, p. 32) of a number of years duration during which the working class would be using its control of political power to dispossess the capitalists and bring all the means of production under democratic social control — but to go into this in detail would require another article.

A.L.B.

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**THE
WORKING
CLASS
JOE MEETS
THE BOSS**



WHAT IS WORLD SOCIALISM?

It is a sad but true fact that many people do not know what socialism is. What is even sadder is that many people who claim to be socialists do not even know. Therefore, this short article will try to explain what basically socialism is and what it is not.

A good place to start is with the explanation of what socialism is not. Socialism is not the state capitalism that is oppressing the workers in the USSR, China, Yugoslavia, Poland or any other country that claims to be socialist. You see, these countries have wages, money and a state. These things will not exist in socialism. Socialism is also not the nationalization of industries that Sweden, Great Britain and others have set up. They too have money, wages and a state just like every other capitalist nation. To get to the fact, socialism has never been tried anywhere on the face of the earth. We could go into a more lengthy explanation of why the above systems are not socialism. However, we will let the following explanation of socialism do the talking.

To begin with, a socialist society is a stateless, moneyless, classless society based on production to satisfy human needs. A true socialist society has common ownership of the means of production. These means of production will be democratically run and there will be free access to all the goods produced.

How can the above society be brought about? It is the opinion of the World Socialist Party that this free, democratic society can only be brought about when the working class wants and understands socialism. The organization of a socialist party must of course, begin long before a majority of the working class has become socialist. The socialist party is a part of the process of discovering and solidifying socialists. When the majority of the working class wants socialism, they will through democratic elections, capture the state.

When the working class has captured the state, they will have but one option: The state must be immediately dismantled so that the building of the new socialist society can begin.

SO YOU WANT PEACE!

You take part in local demonstrations to keep the United States from getting involved in wars in central America and other areas across the globe. You've even gone to Washington D.C. to show the top politicians you mean business. Fine! But is it really peace you want!

Real peace must bring great changes. For example: there can be no peace while a tiny minority own the means of wealth production and distribution and the rest of us work for them. This sort of arrangement leads inescapably to wars between rival capitalists and to strikes, lockouts and riots on the home front between capital and labor. It also leads to squalor, poverty, preventable disease, and mass pollution of air, soil and water.

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IX.

PEACE CONT'D

So class ownership of the means of production and distribution of wealth must go! Not at some future date while-in the meantime-state capitalism operated by leaders of the Left, or the Right, takes over. There is no percentage for the majority in that sort of set-up. Don't let them kid you. Nobody, but nobody, can operate the wages system in the interest of those who must work for wages. Changing the name to "socialist" without changing the relationships of man to man is like renaming a leopard "pussycat."

Are you interested in a new and different world? One world with one race-the human race-and no boundaries to keep it apart? If not, don't talk to us of Peace!

LET'S BUILD A MASS PARTY FOR
WORLD SOCIALISM!

LET'S END THE SYSTEM THAT
BREEDS WAR!

SHORT TALKS

1. What is the WSP's position on the state?

As socialists, we see the state as the executive committee of the ruling class that makes and breaks the laws through the use of coercive power. While the state does control the armed forces, it does hold somewhat democratic elections which allows for the capture of state power by a socialist majority for the purpose of ensuring a peaceful, democratic revolution. This revolution will dismantle the state with its coercive powers so that a truly democratic administration over things, not people, can be set up. Hence, the establishment of a wageless, classless, stateless society known as; SOCIALISM! Won't you join us in this tremendous struggle for the emancipation of the working class?

2. Why doesn't the WSP ally with other parties for any object?

Because no other political party stands clearly for socialism and socialism alone.

3. What is the WSP's position on war?

The WSP and its companion parties stand in complete opposition to war. Working class interests are not served by war. War is just something that capitalism drive nations into from time to time. War arises from conflicts between nations over markets, strategic locations, resources, etc. While our party is opposed to war, we are not pacifists. A pacifist holds that when a majority of non-socialists reject war, wars will not happen. We claim this to be false. We point to the past wars where pacifists denounced war before it started, only to become the loudest supporters of "their" country's cause when war started. This shows that pacifists are as prone as anyone else to fall for war propoganda and to support and die for their capitalist masters. We would also like to state that war cannot be used to establish socialism.

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SHORT TALKS CONT'D4. Will capitalism collapse?

No. Capitalism will do one of two things. It will either stagger from one crisis to another or it will literally blow itself up. It will never collapse on its own. One just has to look at the many depressions capitalism has endured for the proof it will not collapse on its own. How then, does capitalism end? This is a very simple issue, capitalism must be ended by revolution. A socialist revolution.

THE WORLD SOCIALIST PARTY

The World Socialist Party of the United States was founded on July 7, 1916 in the city of Detroit, Michigan. It is one of seven parties belonging to the World Socialist Movement. Together, we have kept burning the vision of a new society. We encourage you to write to one of the following addresses to find out more about socialism. Write to;

W.S.P. of U.S.

Rich
P.O. Box 382
Marne, MI 49435

P.O. BOX 405
BOSTON, MA 02272

Socialist Party of Great Britain
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S-753 25 Uppsala, Sweden

Austria: Bund Demokratischer Sozialisten
Gussriegelstrasse 50
A-1100, Vienna, Austria

H A D E N O U G H ?

You know that capitalism is a sick society! But are you ready to throw in the towel after these many years of bombast from 57 varieties of self-styled revolutionaries? Are you looking for a remote desert island to avoid the Leninist-Trotskyist and whatever Bolshevik strategists and tacticians who daily assault your ears and eyes? Have you begun to suspect, with good reason, that the above mentioned are each offering the same old goods with but a change in the decoration of the package? Do they offer you capitalism, administered by the state, under the pseudo-nym; socialism?

Alternatively, there is the other hangup. Are you fed up with the learned irrelevancies of the professed socialist intellectuals who write scholarly treatises in scholarly journals of the "left"? Or the so-called democratic socialists? Do they not offer capitalism, administered by the state, albeit they claim a more benevolent state, in the manner of the Scandinavian countries or Great Britain?

continued on next page.....

ENOUGH? CONT'D

What then is socialism? If you work for wages it is not socialism. If goods and services are sold in the market place with a view for profit it is not socialism. If the world is divided into nations, it is not socialism. If there is any kind of government over people it is not socialism! Unless each man, woman and child in the world has free access to all goods and services it is not socialism.

Investigate the new thing! Establish socialism in the world today! Why settle for less?

* WORLD SOCIALIST PARTY BOOKLIST *

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THE WORLD SOCIALIST PARTY OF THE UNITED STATES

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 World Socialist Party of the United States holds:

1. That society as at present constituted is based upon the ownership of the means of living (i.e., lands, factories, railways, etc.), by the capitalist or master class, and the consequent enslavement of the working class, by whose labor alone wealth is produced.

2. That in society, therefore, there is an antagonism of interests, manifesting itself as a class struggle, between those who possess but do not produce and those who produce but do not possess.

3. That this antagonism can be abolished only by the emancipation of the working class from the domination of the master class by the conversion into the common property of society of the means of production and distribution, and their democratic control by the whole people.

4. That as in the order of social evolution the working class is the last class to achieve its freedom, the emancipation of the working class will involve the emancipation of all mankind, without distinction of race or sex.

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

6. That as the machinery of government, including the armed forces of the nation, exists only to conserve the monopoly by the capitalist class of the wealth taken from the workers, the working class must organize consciously and politically for the conquest of the powers of government, in order that this machinery, including these forces, may be converted from an instrument of oppression into the 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 interests of all sections of the master class, the party seeking working class emancipation must be hostile to every other party.

8. THE WORLD SOCIALIST PARTY of the United States, therefore, enters the field of political action determined to wage war against all other political parties, whether alleged labor or avowedly capitalist, and calls upon all 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 labor, and that poverty may give place to comfort, privilege to equality, and slavery to freedom.

SCC FORM

I would like to join the Socialist Correspondence Club

My interests are _____

Name and address _____

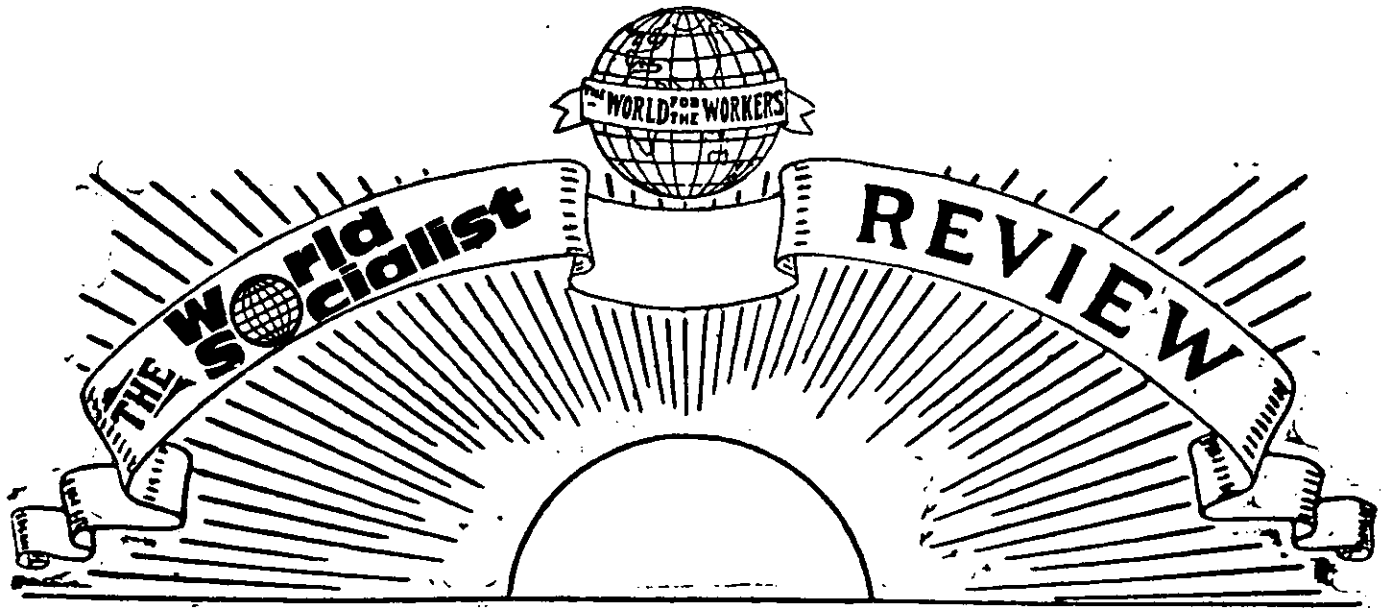
To our readers,

We would like to invite you to join the Socialist Correspondence Club. The SCC is a sort of penpal club for people from anywhere in the world who are sympathetic to socialist ideas.

If you are interested, all you need to do is fill in the form below and these details will be included on a list which is periodically updated and sent out to all those whose names appear on the list. From then on it is up to those on the list to initiate a correspondence with anyone they choose.

Please send your forms to;

Louise Cox,
Flat 3,
The Mount,
Lower St.,
Haslemere,
Surrey,
GU27 2PD
England



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C A P I T A L I S M - T E R R O R I S M U N L I M I T E D

The murder of workers in airports in Rome and Vienna, the killing of two men in a Berlin disco and the bullet which killed a British policewoman have nothing to do with freedom-fighting or liberation. Freedom does not arise from the barrel of a gun; liberation will never be the product of the killers who claim to be serving higher causes.

Capitalism is an inherently violent social system. It was founded by violence; it has expanded and prospered due to violence; its much-cherished law and order is institutionalised violence. Killing is not capitalism gone wrong, but the system running as normal. The history of capitalism is a long and bloody story of murdering and maiming and threatening and plundering so that a small minority of the world's population – the capitalist class – may own and control the major resources of the earth to the exclusion of the vast majority who produce all the wealth – the working class. In every country in the world, including the so-called socialist countries (which are state capitalist), the minority on top owe their position to violence.

To those defenders of capitalism who make noises of disgust about the violence of the unauthorised terrorist let us ask, where did the capitalists obtain their property from? They won it in the early days of capitalism by forming armies and terrorising the poor peasants and small landlords and stealing their land from them. The appropriation of capitalist property was a process of successful mugging expeditions: the European aristocracy of today are the inheritors of the muggers' plundered gains. The common lands, hitherto used by the poor, were enclosed and appropriated by capitalists who forced others to keep out. The law of

trespass ensured that non-property-owners could be killed – and many were if they tried to enter the land of the capitalists. The early history of capitalism, going on well into the last century in Britain, saw thousands of workers being killed for stealing the necessities of life. The state, which is the machine of class violence used by the bosses to keep the workers in line, has killed numerous workers who have offended against the sacred rights of property.

How was the British Empire built if not by such terror tactics? The ruling class of Britain, armed with the Bible and the bullet, plundered the earth in the quest for profits. Those who stood in their way were killed. In the sixteenth century, when Britain went to war with Spain – readers will remember the defeat of the Armada – it was nothing different from the battle of power between the gangs of Chicago and New York in the 1930s. Workers were sent to their deaths in these imperial wars in order to determine which national group of capitalist gangsters would own and control new resources, territories and exploitable populations.

In the late nineteenth century two new national gangs of European capitalists came on to the scene: Italy in 1860 and Germany in 1870. They made efforts to enter as rivals in the competition for world domination and so more workers – in their millions – were killed in wars. The workers who were slaughtered in world wars for economic interests which were not theirs were not regarded as the victims of terrorism. But that is precisely what they were.

In this century the British robber class has lost its Empire and must rest content with exploiting the workers at home. The British working class was poor when British

capitalists had an Empire and we are poor today: one thing is certain, the Empire never belonged to us.

Today two new major empires – super-powers in modern times – dominate the world: America and Russia. The President of the USA now sermonises about the evil of terrorism. The *status quo* must not be disturbed. Does this man Reagan not know that without terrorism the American state would never have been established? The revolutionaries of 1776 who threw off British imperial rule were regarded by the British ruling class as terrorists. Had they been defeated the name of George Washington would have been listed in the history books together with Gerry Adams and the PLO leaders. The rulers of Israel echo their American masters in condemning terrorism. In the 1940s these same leaders who now have state power were themselves terrorists, killing British soldiers in order to gain state power. Once the American terrorists obtained power in 1776 they became legal terrorists and many thousands of native Americans (Red Indians) were murdered callously by the state because they were in its way. In 1986, while Reagan makes complaints about Libyan-backed terrorists damaging American capitalist interests, American-backed terrorists are being given huge amounts of money by his administration in order to dislodge the elected government of Nicaragua.

The class struggle is a messy, violent process. The capitalists will stop at nothing in their struggle for more power within the world market. The Libyan government is seen to represent a new form of Islamic, Arab nationalism which could endanger existing interests in Africa and the Middle East. As

Cont'd on XII

C A P I T A L I S M ' S " M . O . "

Every successful bandit must have an "m.o." (from the Latin modus operandi). The late, famed bank robber and prison escape artist, Willie Sutton, explained that he preferred to use some sort of delivery workman's uniform as an "m.o." when on the job, because workmen's uniforms are so commonplace that they attract scant attention from passers-by. Capitalism, a glorified slave economy that masquerades under the guise of "freedom" also has an "m.o." or two or more with which to disguise itself. And so effective, in fact, are these false faces that they have proved to be dynamic in hoodwinking the population--especially the working class section of the population--for centuries.

As an illustration: capitalism, as a system of society, presents itself as a loose network of rival business operations based upon the philosophy of "Each man for himself and Devil take the hindmost," a sort of anarchistic scramble, so to speak, for assets and for life itself among the conflicting elements of the population. But something else looms in the background, something that everybody is aware of and yet which has not yet been fully understood to be a mechanism for preserving the system as a class, rather than as a genuinely free society. That something is government. Although purportedly a mechanism that represents the interests of the entire population, what government amounts to, in essence, is a modus operandi--or "m.o." for melding the various conflicting units of the economy into a unified whole as a sort of invisible, single, corporation made up of entities from manufacturing, processing, distributing, servicing, finance, &c sections. The government itself, in its various parts, plays the role of a board of directors for Corporation Uncle Sam, or John Bull, or Ivan Bear, or whatever.

As of these final decades of the 20th Century, there is still no central world authority--even though capitalism is essentially a world economy--although there is the recognition for such an institution in the generally powerless United Nations Organization and its equally powerless predecessor, the League of Nations. But it is not beyond the realm of possibility that future generations, barring a forestalling by a world socialist revolution, may even live under such a universal government. In fact, there exists today a sizable number of advocates of that sort of authority--the World Federalists--the membership of which is surely more numerous than that of the World Socialist Movement as of this time of writing. Unfortunately, establishment of such an authority would do nothing toward alleviating the problems inherent to capitalism because the predicaments and quagmires that beset us continually, are endemic to the economics of capitalism and not to the nature or the structure of its assorted types of government. For that reason, and particularly since at this stage of development, the world is rotten-ripe for genuine socialism, the establishment of a single, world government would not by any means constitute a progressive step.

So what, then, can possibly be the benefit of socialists running for political office? Even during the years that such elected representatives would be in a minority they would be occupying seats in an institution that is designed to regulate the affairs of capitalism in the interests of local, regional, national and even the international capitalist class. Good question but one that has an obvious answer.

. . . " m. o. "

Socialism will be even more of a world system than is capitalism and, as such, will require central administrative bodies to carry on an overall regulation of production, distribution, servicing, etc. for the community. There will be no national boundary lines but the different areas will certainly require differing sorts of attention depending upon such factors as geography, topography, and climate. There is nothing wrong, per se, with congresses and parliaments where representatives meet to parley over and about the problems that must be tackled. The predicament in our times is that such assemblages must, of necessity, represent the interests of the ruling class in a class-divided society.

In the meantime, socialists elected to congress--or whatever the political body is termed--can do not much more than present the case for socialism at every opportunity. Such representatives may vote for a reform measure should such bill be designed to further the interests of the working class and not be attached to another bill that does not--which is what most likely would be the case. But since the socialist representative has been elected by socialist voters (the World Socialist Movement respectfully declines the support of non-socialists) the constituency could expect nothing different. Socialists understand full well that they would be as helpless to operate capitalism in the interests of the working class as are the capitalist politicians themselves.

The rationale of the World Socialist Movement in seeking to elect its representatives to--and ultimately to capture the political state through majority representation, is that there is no other way that such control can be gained--at least not for advocates of world socialism. There are at least two good reasons why the World Socialist Movement has always opposed the advocacy of violence as a means for attaining socialism. To begin with, for the first time in all recorded history a revolution will be the work of a vast majority of the population and in the interests of the vast majority--indeed, of all mankind. Support for a society such as socialism is not something that can be rammed down throats at the point of a bayonet or even by mass bombing attacks. There must be widespread understanding of and approval for such concepts as production for use rather than for sale on a market with view to profit; abolition of national boundary lines; right of access to all goods and services by all mankind. A mass movement of working people imbued with ideas of that sort would have no reason to arm themselves with firearms or bombs. In fact, once such a movement really got off the ground--as it really never has, as yet--it would gain in momentum like a snowball rolling down a hill, sweeping all reaction before it into the dustheap of history.

But there is also a practical reason of a different sort, a fact of life in these times that dooms all working class confrontationists to failure, dismemberment and death as a result of violent demonstrations against the armed might of the capitalist state. The proletariat will never be a match for the capitalist class in the ability to possess and use weapons. The only weapon that the working class can possibly win with is a mass determination to end the wages, prices, profits, money system with such determination being made manifest at the polls. By that time, it will be a foregone conclusion that the "virus" of socialism will have "infected" large numbers among the armed forces, composed in the main of members of the working class. The sophisticated weaponry of the capitalist class can be nullified when there occurs a shortage of help to man it!

. . . " m. o. "

There are those, to be sure, who put down the World Socialist Movement as "utopian." That sentiment is predicated on a contempt for the mental powers of the working class and there is precedent for such feeling in the writings of "great men" such as Lenin and Mao tse Tung. They have both maintained that we would have to wait 500 years before a majority of the working class would understand socialism. But changing the meaning of socialism--attaching that designation to state capitalism when operated by professed socialists--is all that either of those worthies were able to accomplish and there is no indication that the working class in any of the purportedly "classless" society nations are any closer to an understanding of socialism than are the workers in the avowedly capitalist nations. It takes more than the displaying of likenesses of Marx and Engels--let alone those of Lenin, Mao, etc.--to spread the understanding of scientific socialism.

But, the vanguardist radicals protest, how do you expect socialist workers in totalitarian countries to elect representatives to their parliaments when opposition parties are not permitted? The problem here is simple. The vanguardist "revolutionists" are taking themselves too seriously. There is no indication that socialist revolution is around the corner. But there is little doubt that even in the U.S.S.R. political repression is not as pervasive as it once was. With further growth of a "middle" class (higher income working people) Soviet society is bound to become even less restrictive, even to the extent of permitting legal opposition. By and large, Soviet peoples have the same general outlook as the populations of the "free" world and once a significant section of the working class in totalitarian countries begin acquiring a socialist attitude it is certain that the ruling classes will be quick to toss political "bones" to them in an attempt to quiten them. After all, there are benefits to the rulers in bourgeois-style democracy. It is always possible to know the extent and significance of the opposition. In any case, we have seen examples in quite recent times, in the Philippines and in Latin America, of the forcible ouster of dictators through massive--and generally unarmed--action from the working class.

What then shall we do in the meantime?--a question that is of great importance to the vanguardist radicals? Our answer: In the meantime let us concentrate on building a nucleus of convinced, genuine, socialists through organization and education in order to help speed the day when government (over people) will be converted into an administration over things--an "m.o." of world socialism.

Harmo



WHAT JACK LONDON WROTE US

Below is a letter that Jack London wrote to our party (then known as the Workers' Socialist Party) shortly after it had been formed.

Altho Jack London was a great writer he was not a scientific socialist in the real sense of the term. He was very confused on the questions of war, race, "supermen", etc.

Though not actually understanding the principles he endorsed, he was imbued with a working class viewpoint. In spite of a deep but erroneous sense of pessimism, only a short time before his death he welcomed the formation of the World Socialist Party (then the Workers' Socialist Party) and its Declaration of Principles.

Glen Ellen
Sonoma County, California
September 21, 1916

To: Wm. Davenport, Secretary
(Workers' Socialist Party)

Dear Wm. Davenport,

In reply to yours of Aug. 29th, 1916 with which I received copy of the "Manifesto."

Please read my resignation from the Socialist Party and find that I resigned for the same reasons that impel you to form this new party.

I was a member of the old Socialist Labor Party. I gave a quarter of a century of the flower of my life to the revolutionary movement only to find that it was supine under the heel as it was a thousand centuries before Christ was born.

Will the proletariat save itself? If it won't it is unsaveable.

I congratulate you and wish you well on your adventure. I am not bitter. I am only sad in that within itself the proletariat seems to perpetuate the seeds of its proletariat.

JACK LONDON

NEWS CLIPPINGS

We would like to invite our readers to send us news clippings. They will serve as useful sources of information and as propaganda gems. Please do enclose name of publication, its location and date. A brief written commentary would also be helpful. Please let us hear from you! Send to;

Rich
P.O. Box 382
Marne, MI 49435



LAND OF HOPE AND GLORY

In a society that makes possible the production of wealth in profusion, it is outrageous that the vast majority of mankind is in need. To be born poor is to be cursed.

At an early age you become aware of the indignities perpetrated against you by others, which continue throughout your life because you were born into a working class family. You were told that you were poor because your father was stupid or too shiftless, perhaps, to find a decent job. When he was unemployed you were told that he was a lazy good-for-nothing; or that your mother was a bad manager and that your family should feel ashamed at accepting help from the "welfare state;" and quite often you did feel that shame. You were a pale, undernourished kid who lived in a slum and who wore shabby, threadbare, clothes--hand-me-downs from your older brother.

Your mother had the almost impossible task of handling the family budget. "Tell the rent collector when he calls that your mother is out," and when you told him that "Mother says that she's out," you received a clip on the ear for your trouble. You can recall her frequent visits to the sign of the three balls where she would pawn your grandfather's watch, given to him as a reward for his loyalty during fifty years of wage slavery by his "benevolent" employer. How your mother managed to provide food for the family was a miracle, but there were times when you all went hungry. She would have made a brilliant chancellor of the exchequer, for you were always tightening your belts.

When you started school you discovered that there were others in the same poverty stratum as yourself. You chummed up with them and participated in feuds with other boys who, although also living in poverty, were better clothed and nourished than yourself. These were considered by the teachers, perhaps, to be scholarship material. You were all taught to be patriotic, to tell the truth in order that you could become good citizens; and you were assured that if you worked hard and were ambitious, you would "get on in the world." You joined with your schoolmates in singing Land of Hope and Glory, and other patriotic songs--and their parodies--with gusto.

When you were pitched out into the world of commerce to earn a living, however, to your dismay you found that life was a different kettle of fish from that which you had been taught. If you kept your mouth buttoned while on the job it was frequently put down as dumb insolence; if you spoke out against indignities you were branded "a trouble maker." Even though it was true enough that you were still patriotic enough, you had discovered that everybody was lying and cheating, including the politicians who ran the nation, who appeared to be "good guys" when they were members of the Opposition and "bad guys" when they were occupying the seats of power. This was all very difficult to understand and you invariably found that more often than not the harder you worked the less pay you received.

You could see no way out of this dilemma and the insidious, sophisticated propaganda of radio, television and newspapers perpetuated your confusion, so that you gave up and just left everything to the glib-tongued "experts" who knew how to disguise their motives with fancy rhetoric.

... hope and glory

You were so brow-beaten that you did not think you were worthy of a full life free from anxiety, although you had begun to recognize that something was wrong with capitalist society. Nevertheless, you still voted for Liberal, Conservative, Labour (or whatever the accepted political parties called themselves)--all reformists--who represented the interests of the capitalist class, the owners of the means of wealth production. In vain you hoped that you might get a larger slice of the pie by supporting social democratic parties, advocates of what is widely thought of as socialism. But you became sadly disillusioned. After all, wasn't it the British Labour Party that coined the phrase: "The inevitability of gradualism?" Creeping paralysis would have been a better term. There have been times, of course, when social democratic parties have used phraseology generally thought of as "socialistic." But they have had their chance to govern in a number of countries and have all failed miserably to make so much as a dent in the problems of their working classes--as they were bound to fail. How could it be possible to operate an exploitive society in the interests of the exploited?

The World Socialist Movement has an alternative which we think that you really ought to examine. The words "socialist" and "socialism" have been dragged through the mud by the lackeys of capitalism. Britain, for example, is referred to as being a socialist country when the Labour Party happens to be in power; France is referred to as being socialist un Mitterand (although now, since the most recent election, there seems to be at least some confusion as to whether it is altogether or only partially socialist!); and you are told that Soviet Russia is a socialist (or communist) country. So has it been with Cuba since it threw in its lot in the world of commerce with the USSR rather than the USA. And here, there and everywhere, gun-happy, illiterate, peasants in revolt are called Marxists. It would be a huge joke if it were not so tragic. Even those workers who are paid to make us laugh--the comics--get into the act: "A socialist with a knife and fork would like to meet another socialist with a steak."

So what is socialism and what are our credentials? As defined by the World Socialist Movement, organized in Great Britain, Canada, United States of America, Australia, New Zealand, Ireland, Sweden, and France, socialism is "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 interests of the whole community." This Object and the Declaration of Principles that follow it are printed on all of our literature and is accepted by all of the members. No one can join this Movement without accepting the Object and Declaration of Principles, a fact which should make it self evident that none but socialists can belong to it. This is our strength for every member is a propagandist with the same rights and privileges as every other member; we have no leaders, only representatives duly elected by the entire membership and responsible to the general membership. Executive (or Administrative) committees are elected by the membership of the individual parties. The conferences and balloting arising from them are the highest "authority" of each organization. There are no secret meetings and the public are welcome to attend all sessions. We practice the highest form of democracy possible within capitalism. Funds are obtained from membership dues, donations, and the sale of literature.

. . . hope and glory

Our propaganda consists of indoor educational talks, debates, and outdoor meetings, where there is always free and frank discussion in which opponents can state their opposition. Understandably, the TV and radio stations are loath to broadcast our views although persistent effort to obtain a hearing through broadcast media have paid off in some parts of the U.S. and Canada. The propaganda forces arrayed against us are formidable but capitalism is, nevertheless, digging its grave. The trick is to keep it from digging yours!

We have been organized since 1904 and have seen mass parties of the so-called left come and go. We want your support now and when we put up candidates at election time, but we insist that firstly you must understand the case for socialism. We refuse to compromise, for we want the thought behind your vote and not just a cross on a slip of paper. We have held mass rallies at election time, sometimes larger than those held by the capitalist political parties but they get sparse reportage in the daily press.

Parliament and Congress are the seats of power; power for socialism, and we predict that one day you will be voting for us in your thousands because capitalism cannot solve your problems. Only a complete change in your ideas and your actions will bring about a revolutionary change in society.

Can you visualize what this will mean? Under socialism there will be a completely different world-wide set-up where all goods and services are commonly owned and democratically controlled in a classless society. The need for buying and selling, wages and profits, becomes completely unnecessary for goods will be produced for use and not for profit. The basis for production will be: from each according to his ability, to each according to his needs, and the production of goods of the highest quality will be the norm because mankind is entitled to the best. Furthermore, socialism will be a society in which war between nations will be unthinkable--there will be, in fact, no division into nations, just one World.

No! Socialism will not be a land of hope and glory but a world more conducive to the wellbeing of all. The demise of capitalism will even benefit the erstwhile capitalist class. They will finally be able to live like human beings without the need of keeping the rest of mankind in chains by holding over them the "whiplash" of poverty or of potential poverty, a condition of life which carries with it grave threats of destruction and even premature death. In a sense, they--the capitalists--also have a world to gain although, in all truth, we do not expect them to come over to us in droves!

Sid Catt

Immediate Cash is needed for insuring that there will be future issues of the WORLD SOCIALIST REVIEW. No sum you can send is too great or too small. Send your donations to;

World Socialist Party
P.O. Box 405
Boston, MA 02272

-or-

RICH
P.O. Box 382
Marne, MI 49435

THE BALLOT

You can't possibly do anything with it. Throw it away. It's only a scrap of paper." This is the opinion expressed concerning the ballot by our syndicalist friends.

The ten dollar bill is likewise merely a scrap of paper. You can't do a great deal with it any more. But you don't throw it away. It comes in mighty handy when translated into terms of groceries. Regardless of its shabby nature the shopkeeper seems glad to get it. He understands that there is something important behind it.

When we get a rent receipt, or a marriage certificate we notice that they are just scraps of paper, but we don't throw them very far. They serve the purpose of holding the line until we are able to negotiate better arrangements.

When the quarter-time has expired on the parking meter, and the cop on the motor cycle adorns your windshield with a paper plaster, you don't file it in the sewer. Even if you did the stipulated fine must be settled anyway. There's authority behind the paper.

So with the ballot. In a physical sense it, too, can be classified as a scrap of paper. But, with a thinking electorate of men and women behind it, the weight of public opinion is sufficient to effect a change from capitalism to socialism. The paper is not the objective. It's the instrument for registering what is in the minds of the voters.

SOCIALIST CORRESPONDENCE CLUB

We would like to invite you to join the Socialist Correspondence Club. The SCC is a sort of penpal club for people from anywhere in the world who are sympathetic to socialist ideas.

If you are interested, all you need to do is fill out a paper with your name, address, and interests and these details will be included on a list which is periodically updated and sent out to all those whose names appear on the list. From then on it is up to those on the list to initiate a correspondence with anyone they choose.

Please send your name, address and interest list to;

Louise Cox,
Flat 3,
The Mount,
Lower St.,
Haslemere,
Surrey,
GU27 2PD England



"Well, your grace, I've never actually come across a virgin birth, but . . ."

EQUAL TIME FOR THE CAPITALIST VIEW

With the heating up of the situation in Nicaragua, the bombing of Libya and the flood of Rambo-type films in the theatres, the subject of war is once again in the forefront of topics being discussed.

We of the WORLD SOCIALIST MOVEMENT for over eighty years have put forth our views on the causes of war. We claim that war is nothing but the clashing of economic rivalries over such things as markets, private property issues, trade routes and spheres of influence. Of course, the capitalists of various nations are always quarreling over such things, but once in a while these items cannot be resolved peacefully. When such a time comes, wars begin. We claim that wars are therefore fought for the capitalist class interests and do not, in any way, benefit the working class. Therefore, we oppose all wars during peacetime and wartime. We also claim that the only way to end wars is to end capitalism.

Now that we have presented a brief outline on our position to war, we would like to take this opportunity to give the capitalist class and its supporters a chance to present their views in our journal (something that they almost never grant us in their publications).

1. Rear Admiral French E. Chadwick, U.S.N.

"Navies and armies are insurance for capital owned abroad by the leisure class of a nation. It is for them that empires and spheres of influence exist. The great war now waging is a culmination of efforts to maintain and extend these spheres."
(NY EVENING POST, Dec. 17, 1915)

2. Lamont duPont

"War is caused by economic and political rivalries."
(NY HERALD TRIBUNE, Nov. 19, 1934)

3. NATIONAL HUGHES ALLIANCE DECLARATION, issued in 1916, signed by two ex-Presidents, T. Roosevelt and Wm. Howard Taft and 25 leading bankers and captains of industry.

"Our business is business. We are producers, manufacturers and traders, without sufficient home demands to absorb the full yield of fields and the output of factories. Year by year it becomes more apparent that the markets of the world must be kept open to American industries. We cannot extend our trade further than we are able to defend it. The rivalries that begin in commerce end on the battlefields. The history of war is green with international jealousies. Whatever the diplomatic excuse, every conflict in modern times had its origin in the question of property rights."

4. INSTITUTIONS MAGAZINE

"This is more than war of mechanical monsters clashing in the night... more than a war of production. It is a war for markets--YOUR markets! The Axis wants your business--wants to destroy it once and for all."
(Quoted from a Treasury Department Ad placed in INSTITUTIONS MAGAZINE, April 1943. Ad was captioned, "The Axis Wants Your Business")

Leaflets for distribution are available from our Boston office. If you are a member or a supporter of the WSP(US), why not order a bundle today? Help to spread socialist ideas, distribute leaflets!

. . . E Q U A L T I M E

5. Bernard M. Baruch

"Before I go any further in this expression of my views, I think it wise to remind you gentlemen of the fact that wars are not fought merely for immediate results. Each participant makes an effort to impose his will upon his enemies by military and economic destruction. But at the same time he keeps in mind the after results--new markets, new trade and new intercourse, always at the expense of the defeated and neutrals."
(Senate Comm., NY TIMES, April 7, 1939)

6. David Lawrence

"It makes one shudder to think what the sudden outbreak of peace might mean to the American economy."
(NY SUN, April 5, 1949)

7. George F. Taubeneck

"If you are one of those domestic-minded businessmen who are unimpressed with this view (that prosperity hinges on foreign trade) ponder for a bit the thinking of a gentleman who ought to know about such things.... He is R.W. Gifford, vice-president and assistant general manager of Norge Division, Borg-Warner Corp., and chairman of the board of Borg-Warner International Corp.

He'll tell you in just ten words why he considers foreign trade important to this country: Because "all wars are basically economic" and because "we actually need the business."
(from 'Inside Dope' from AIR CONDITIONING AND REFRIGERATION NEWS, Dec. 9, 1946.)

8. Woodrow Wilson

"Since trade ignores national boundaries and the manufacturer insists on having the world as a market, the flag of his nation must follow him, and the doors of the nations which are closed against him must be battered down. Concessions obtained by financiers must be safeguarded by ministers of state, even if the sovereignty of unwilling nations be outraged in the process. Colonies must be obtained or planted, in order that no useful corner of the world may be overlooked or left unused."
(as quoted in THE FORGING of the AMERICAN EMPIRE by S. Lens, 1971)

9. U.S. NAVY

"Realistically, all wars have been for economic reasons. To make them politically palatable, ideological issues have always been provoked. Any possible future war will undoubtedly conform to historical precedent.

Present differences with our world neighbors, now in the diplomatic stage, we can hope can be kept there. But after all, war is merely diplomacy by force of arms."

(official document distributed by Office of Naval Intell. to U.S. Senate Comm. on Armed Services-April 15, 1947)

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. . . E Q U A L T I M E

So, there you have it. The real causes of war, straight from the capitalist class and its supporters. Remember, the next time we have a war for "making the world safe for democracy" or for "to end all wars," that the real reason is not these ideological phrases, but instead conflicts for the benefit of the capitalists and their markets.

Let's end wars by ending the system that creates wars. Join the **WORLD SOCIALIST PARTY, NOW!**

RICH

. . . U N L I M I T E D (from pg. 1)

capitalism develops – if workers let it – more power blocs will emerge, all competing for supremacy, and one would be naive not to predict such rivalry leading to wars, both local and frighteningly global.

Workers have no interest at all in ever supporting the capitalists of the country where they live. In recent years the Arab ruling class has prospered greatly due to massive oil profits, but the Arab workers are still living in some of the most deprived conditions in the world. Arab workers have nothing to gain by the expansion of their masters' powers. In the USA, the alleged land of capitalist prosperity, it was reported in the newspaper of the Longshoremen's Union in March 1986 that government figures state that 22.2 million Americans are now living below the official poverty line and 9.1 million of them are in jobs but cannot afford to make ends meet. So much for the incentive for workers to fight to make their bosses rich.

Who are the real terrorists? Yes, the deluded workers with home-made bombs and the fanatics who fire at innocent crowds are killers, but let them not divert us from the killing which goes on with the blessing of the boss class. According to a report from the International Labour Organisation in Geneva, in 1984 10.4 million workers were injured and 28,500 were killed in accidents at work. (This is based on information from seventy countries). How many of these deaths and injuries were the direct result of capitalists making a profit out of unsafe working conditions for those they exploit? In a recent report from the Health and Safety Executive we are told that over the last three years 400 British building workers have been killed and 30,000 injured, many seriously. According to the report,

It is possible that economic pressures may have resulted in a general lowering in the degree of safety and supervision on site, and in the increase in the practice of undercutting at the expense of safety.

The recession has led capitalists in the construction industry – notoriously, some of the worst employers in Britain – to risk killing their employees for the sake of offering more competitive prices. We have read no report of Thatcher sending the anti-terrorist squad to

the building bosses to ensure that justice is done for the 400 men who have died. On the contrary, it has been recent government policy to go in for what is called deregulation in the construction industry – they have cut the number of inspectors employed to check that building sites are conforming to legal safety standards. According to Richard Peto, Reader in Cancer Studies at Oxford University,

... there will be a total of about 50,000 asbestos-induced deaths in Britain over the next thirty years . . . 50,000 deaths is a number so enormous that it is difficult to comprehend. For example, it greatly exceeds the number of murders during the same period . . .

Those who die from asbestos-caused cancer – and we have plenty of evidence to show that many workers already have – will die for profit: 50,000 sacrifices to the god of profit makes anything planned by the PLO or the IRA look like kids playing with a peashooter.

So workers must beware not to be conned into believing that the "baddies" are only those whose violence is not initiated by the capitalist rulers. While we must oppose the senseless killing of WPC Fletcher we remember the workers who have been murdered, injured and abused by the British police; we must oppose the bombers, but never forget the greater violence perpetrated in the name of profit. When 15 million children under five annually die while food is locked away or dumped in the sea the capitalists are in no position to lecture workers about what is evil. Those who have invested millions of pounds, dollars and roubles in the weaponry which could annihilate the entire planet have no right to tell workers that violence is to be deprecated. Those who allowed thousands to die and suffer at Bhopal in India because there was profit to be made for Union Carbide cannot preach about senseless killing. The numerous capitalists who have investments in bloody dictatorships, such as South Africa where over a thousand workers have been killed in the last year for protesting, are hypocrites when they take it on themselves to attack the Libyan regime. The capitalists are the people of violence and tyranny and any words of theirs against certain violence and some

tyrannies are worthless and contemptible.

Only socialists can oppose terrorism because only socialists stand in opposition to the system which causes it. There is no other way to destroy the misery caused by organised violence than to abolish its cause.

Let us consider the other choices which have been proposed. There are those who say that we need new, more responsible leaders: Mondale instead of Reagan, Kinnock instead of Thatcher. Do they really believe that Mondale, faced with a perceived threat to US power, would not respond militarily? Does anyone seriously believe that Kinnock, tied to the terms of the military agreement with the USA which allows British bases to be used for American military attacks, would have acted differently from Thatcher? The fact is that these leaders have no option but to dance to the tune of capitalism, for its logic governs them, not they it. Others rather simply-mindedly argue that more faith should be placed in the United Nations, more appropriately known as the Disunited Thieves. The class struggle cannot be fought out around a conference table and the rivalry between capitalist and capitalist will turn violent quite regardless of resolutions passed by diplomats.

Some argue that Britain should turn from alliance with the American Empire to the Russian. The Russian ruling class could never be so callous as to bomb civilians, we are told. But they have killed over 100,000 workers in Afghanistan since they invaded it and one would be naïve to imagine that Russian bombs would not carry out a similar raid to the US one if Russian imperial interests are threatened. It has even been suggested that workers in Britain should support Gadaffi because, in the words of the unfailingly foolish Revolutionary Communist Party, any enemy of the British bosses must be supported by the British workers. According to that logic workers in Britain should have supported Mussolini and Hitler – and, indeed, the RCP urged workers to support Galtieri's struggle for the Malvinas in 1982. This sort of pathetic nonsense is what passes as Marxist-Leninism. From other quarters we are urged to return to religious slumber – like born-again Christian Reagan whose interpretation of "Thou Shalt Not Kill" contains an adden-

Cont'd on XV

WEIRDER THAN FICTION

"Citizen Hughes" by Michael Drosnin, published by Bantam, \$4.50, is a classic account of power gone mad.

The author deals mostly with the last decade of Hughes life most of which was spent as a recluse in a blacked-out penthouse in Las Vegas. Drosnin's work is detailed, readable and presents a graphic account of an emaciated, meglomaniac, junky using wealth and power to satisfy his personal whims (such as buying a TV station so he could watch whatever program he wanted, when he wanted) and petty malice; and does not, like some writers, lapse into snivelling, moralizing, suggestions about preventing such men using power recklessly. Drosnin does in fact, portray Hughes as very much a product and a symptom of his times.

From his penthouse lair, the crazy billionaire sought increasingly greater power. It wasn't enough to buy one Las Vegas hotel, he bought all Las Vegas - mafia? - small fry. It wasn't enough to buy Vegas, he bought Nevada; but, it still wasn't enough, the greedy bugger, wanted all 50 states.

There was one sure way to go about it, first - buy the president: however, here things didn't exactly go to plan. Poor old L.B.J., holed up in the Whitehouse, afraid to show his face on the street, in case it got shot off, had enough problems - no deal. Nixon took Hughes' money, and with immense gratitude repaid him by testing A Bombs in Nevada and by dumping hundreds of tonnes of nerve gas in the sea off Paradise, Bahamas, while Hughes was involved in negotiations with view to purchasing Paradise.

Dicky boy didn't have the last laugh: it is the author's contention that Watergate was a result of Hughes - Nixon machinations. Larry O'Brien, ex-chairman of the Democratic National Committee, was an employee of Hughes, (how come, is a fascinating story, but I ain't telling you everything here) and as such, might know a heck of a lot about Nixon that he didn't want the whole world knowing. Hence, the screwball burglary aimed at getting info. to 'neutralize' O'Brien, and the whole colossal cock-up of a comic opera, called Watergate.

As symptomatic of Capitalism, Hughes is shown as a man of great contradictions. His company manufactured nuclear weapons, but he fought to prevent them being tested, because of his fear of contamination, even to the ludicrous extent of identifying himself with the peace movement.

His fear of contamination was so great that every document handed to him had to be sterilized first, and his aides, who handled it were required to wash their hands several times in a manner prescribed by him. Yet he never washed, cut his hair, and nails or had the bed sheets changed or washed. His room was never cleaned: there were mountains of dust and used Kleenex everywhere: his hair was lodgings for every flea in Vegas, but boy! gotta watch those germs!

Hughes considered himself anti-establishment, (don't get your eyes checked - you read it correctly), his image of himself was a corporate John Wayne cum Darryl Zanuck - a board room swashbuckler, bucking and swashling all politicians, executives, Capitalists etc., who stood in his way.

. . . F I C T I O N

Like any Capitalist, he would have liked to have had everything his own way - subservient politicians, a docile working class and no government interference or taxation: and came as close as anyone can to achieving that unblessed state of affairs.

Details are given of which politicians he bought, how much they were paid and how they earned it, by killing or delaying certain bills in senate and congress and which legislation beneficial to Hughes they had forced through, and which illegal take-over deals they had turned a blind eye to.

All books on Hughes will necessarily have the same broad, general thrust - the power of money. It is clearly shown in this one how political office is bought and how Hubert Humphrey failed to become president because he didn't have the loot. The reader is treated to a tear-jerky scene of poor Huby sitting helpless in a stalled, rented bus, broke, weeping tears of anger and frustration as he hears the private Kennedy jet roar overhead, carrying his well-healed opponent to victory in the West Virginia primary in 1960. Humphrey eventually became a Hughes man because he needed - guess what? He didn't beat Nixon in 1968 because Nixon had a lot more of Hughes money.

How the richest man in America was able to evade paying personal income tax for seventeen years, makes fascinating reading, (no kidding), and that ain't all: Hughes Tool, the holding company for his entire empire, avoided corporate income tax for three years. Like other so-called philanthropists, Ford, Rockefeller, Carnegie, Hughes discovered a way to get great acclaim from the working class for hoarding his wealth and evading taxes, he created a foundation - The Howard Hughes Medical Institute. When legislation was about to be introduced to tax medical foundations, Hughes paid so much in bribes to ensure they would be exempt, one wonders if it wouldn't be cheaper to pay the damn taxes in the first place.

Drosnin gives several examples of how Hughes would become caught in web of his own making, a typical one being when he tried to corner the market on helicopters during the Viet Nam war. He quoted the U.S. government a ridiculously low price to get their orders, which, not surprisingly, he did. He immediately tripled the price, but when various people from congress and senate started asking, "what's going on here?" Howie baby, just as quickly, went back to his original price and lost \$90,000,000 dollars.

One event which is of no profound significance, but does underline the sheer lunacy of Capitalism is when Hughes chief gofer, Bob Mahew, was in Miami, planning with the Mafia and C.I.A. an attempted assassination of Fidel Castro. Mafia boss Sam Giancana, wanted to leave Miami for Los Vegas because he'd heard his girlfriend, singer Phyllis McGuire, was having an affair there with comedian Dan Rowan. To keep Giancana in Miami, Mayhew sent a C.I.A. operative to bug Rowan's room. A hotel maid caught the guy, playing with his wires, and called in the F.B.I.

Drosnin sometimes takes his reader along a certain line of thought, but stops short of drawing a conclusion, as if to invite each reader to draw his. Such a case is the killing of Bobby Kennedy: was there a connection with Hughes? One must figure it out for one's self.

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Write to Boston address listed on last page

Whatever the answer, one thing's for sure, Hughes, his henchmen, political joe-boys and other sundry partners in crime, saw the Kennedys exactly for what they are, (the same thing as most of our folk heroes), glorified hoodlums. It's too bad the working class, as a whole, can't see through them.

In his treatment of people working for him, Hughes was a jerk. He liked to create hostile situations where there was no premise for any and constantly feed his antagonists anger while he put on an innocent, hurt act. Too much space is given to this nonsensical drivel, but if you like listening to little old ladies argue you'll love it.

The author claims that much of his book is in fact, an autobiography because it was culled from Hughes secret papers, which were stolen from his Los Angeles headquarters in June, 1974.

It is the author's contention that either Hughes or his executives acting on their own volition, were responsible for the break-in, possibly because three days previously the Securities and Exchange Commission had subpoenaed all documents relating to Hughes take-over of Air West. Nothing was more threatening to the billionaire since it was one of his more illegal than usual business deals. The Hughes people, unlike Nixon's crowd, enlisted the aid of a guy who was no plumber (and is referred to only as the 'pro'), who, on completion of the job swiped the papers for himself and tried to sell them back to Hughes cronies. They tried to find the pro, but lost interest after they S.E.C. did. Our friend the pro, stuck with his papers, bricked them up in a wall for a few years before giving them to Drosnin.

The author, who I assume, is no socialist, (I'm sure the Wall Street Journal and The Washington Post, who he worked for, as a reporter, don't make a habit of employing socialists), does not draw socialist conclusions, but his epitaph for Hughes is deeper than he could have imagined, "he was an American folk hero, a man who lived first the dream, then the nightmare - in that sense, perhaps the single most representative American of the twentieth century."

Ray Rawlings

... UNLIMITED (from pg. XII)

dum: "unless under instructions from the White House".

Gadaffy is a Muslim, a believer in the faith of Islam which is the Arabic word for submission. It is time for workers to reject the posture of submission for it has been the position of the wage-slave class for too long. There are no answers to violence within the system of violence and that is why peace and security depend entirely on the establishment of a worldwide socialist society now. Tomorrow might be one bomb blast too late.

STEVE COLEMAN

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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 the whole community.

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DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES

THE WORLD SOCIALIST MOVEMENT holds:

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 the 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.

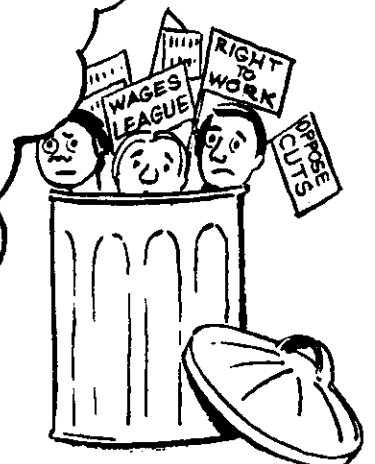
That as the machinery of government, including the armed forces of the nation, exists only to conserve the monopoly by the capitalist class of the wealth taken from the workers, the working class must organise consciously and politically for the conquest of the powers of government, national and local, in order that this machinery, including these forces, may be converted from an instrument of oppression into the agent of emancipation and the overthrow of privilege, aristocratic and plutocratic.

That as all political parties are but the expression of class interests, and as the interest of the working class is diametrically opposed to the interests of all sections of the master class, the party seeking working-class emancipation must be hostile to every other party.

THE WORLD SOCIALIST MOVEMENT, 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 the world to muster under its banner to the end that a speedy termination may be wrought 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.



*"Instead of the conservative motto
'A fair day's wages for a fair day's
work' they ought to inscribe on
their banner the
revolutionary watchword
ABOLITION OF THE
WAGES SYSTEM!"*



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a voice of world socialism

IS THERE WORK AFTER CAPITALISM?

Under capitalism work is necessarily drudgery; and, though the production of commodities (on which capitalism is based) is not drudgery in itself, even the most gratifyingly direct forms of commodity production--that done by artisans, for example--rest on what is at the very least an emotionally repressive basis. A commodity is made to be exchanged: that is its purpose. Work as a human phenomenon, on the other hand, is carried out solely to satisfy human needs, and because people must work together to accomplish this, work is an inherently collective phenomenon as well.

A human community works to satisfy its needs, and that is what the genes and instincts of human beings are programmed to render gratifying about work. Consequently, we can consider only those labor processes which satisfy this condition as "gratifying." And obviously, the labor required to produce commodities does *not* satisfy it, since it is labor done not directly for purposes of satisfaction but indirectly, for purposes of *exchange*. Just because work is organized into complex production processes does not therefore make it "toil." And just because it is simple and psychologically stimulating is not enough to make it gratifying.

When capitalism, late in the period of commodity production, arrives on the scene and revolutionizes the production process from top to bottom, "socializing" it, pushing artisan labor to scattered points on its periphery, work has already been steeping in the brine of drudgery for several millennia. The universalization of wage labor (including its refinement, the professional salary) enforced by capital means the locking of the prison door for the "free laborers", the "working poor," who have been literally whipped, beaten and badgered into the condition of having no longer any commodities to exchange on the market (long since taken over by the capitalist class). All they have left is their ability to do work; and all the work they can find to do centers on profit.

Work done under such unnatural conditions

cannot but be unpleasant. The worker has no control over any aspect of it, and industrial production in particular is a brutalizing torture. Not only that, but labor performed for the sake of profit itself becomes capital accumulated out of profit, causing the capital to grow in magnitude relative to the workers whose labor generates it.

The accumulation of capital, for its part, becomes a source of ever greater complexity in the production process, pushing workers further and further away from any ability to control the "world of work" in which they are trapped. To human beings it has every aspect of a process operating independently of human intelligence and defying society's best efforts to control it.

But (as the song goes), is that all there is? Supposing no one works for anyone else anymore and no one is forced to find a job to get the money to obtain the things they need: will society still be stuck with the kind of inhuman labor processes it has inherited from commodity production? The answer is quite simply, no.

The commodity, implying as it does the setting aside of wealth from the consumption needs of the community, contains the germ of discontent in its very being. Abandoning wage labor means eliminating commodity production: regaining control over wealth production. It also means deciding what kind of organized, coordinated efforts people will be prepared to make for the sake of obtaining satisfaction, and on what scale they will be willing to carry this out. But having done that, they will have created a society that runs on labor processes which are voluntary in nature and in which labor is no longer a chore--a socialist society.

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Of Contras, Pros... and Socialists

From the inordinate amount of attention being given to the Reagan Administration's double-dealing in the two affairs of arms to Iran and the diversion of funds to the *contras*, you would think something really big was happening in US capitalism these days. For Irangate/contragate has become a major media event.

Despite the apparent ferocity of the clashes currently taking place between rival political factions within the capitalist class, from one angle they are actually beneficial to the capitalist class as a whole: they obscure from view the more basic scandal of the division of the world into political entities or nation-states; they deflect attention from the more insidious ongoing misappropriation constituted by the monopoly of the capitalist class of the means and instruments of wealth production.

Media-generated concern over the poor little Reagan Administration's predicament masks (or perpetuates) the working majority's confused identification of its interests with those of the "top ten" per cent of the population making up the owning class. And--every bit as much as the more flamboyant histrionics of *Dallas* or of *Dynasty*--this fondling of the rich and the powerful belies a pernicious cult of personality on the part of the media around the world (and one by no means limited to Russia and China).

The World Socialist Movement, for its part, does not find much of an issue in all of the hoopla. Its one and only reason for existence is to disseminate information relating to the functioning and

foundations of capitalist society as well as to sow the seeds of socialism. The crises that shake our planet and even threaten the viability of life on it do not spring from the actions of conniving, dishonest politicians--though these latter certainly may help to trigger catastrophes.

The real problem is rather the continuation of the system of producing goods and services for sale on the market (ie, commodities) with a view to profit. The real solution is a socialist organization of society, the introduction of a worldwide society based on production for use.

So while we as socialists may derive some enjoyment from watching the capitalist class being forced to do its dirty laundry on TV (there is after all no reason why its own propaganda can't occasionally degenerate into farce), we ought not to imitate the reformists and ignore the real issue that we never find presented in the media: the urgency of common ownership.

Short of that, all that is really possible is the replacement of one governing party or regime by another. Socialism, or common ownership of the means of production, will on the contrary only come about through the conscious action of the working class around the world, aimed at replacing the entire system of exploitation, and it is only in helping to bring this about that socialists can ever hope to distinguish themselves from both the witting and the unwitting supporters of capitalism.

--Editorial Committee, WSP (US)

A Socialist Lexicon

COMMODITY: Anything produced for sale on the market with a view to profit. It is not itself a thing, but a thing expressing a definite social relationship.

VALUE: A concept of measurement needed in a society based on the production and exchange of commodities. *It is a social relationship.* (It is a mistake to think that under socialism the worker will get the full value of her/his toil since, in a socialist society, there can be no such concept as *value*, given that goods and services will not be produced for exchange on a market.)

EXCHANGE VALUE: The proportion in which one commodity is exchanged for another. It is not a synonym for value, given that it refers to tangible items

rather than to a social relationship as such.

USE VALUE: Intrinsic utility of an item. Use values exist in all societies. Value and exchange value won't exist under socialism.

LABOR POWER: The mental and physical abilities workers possess.

LABOR: The use value that the employers of labor power derive from the exercise of that labor power by the workers. Workers cannot "sell" their labor because it belongs to the capitalist as a consequence of the sale of their labor power (see below).

WAGES: The price that employers of labor pay for the workers' labor power. On the average, wages represent the cost of producing and reproducing the various types of labor power (skills or non-skills).

SOCIALLY NECESSARY LABOR

TIME: "The labor time required to produce an article under the normal conditions of production, and with the average degree of skill and intensity prevalent at the time." (1)

CAPITAL: Wealth used to produce more wealth with a view to profit through the exploitation of labor. A *capitalist* is any individual or group of individuals who make their living from the accumulation of capital. "...Capital is the means of production transformed into capital. [But] in themselves, these means of production are as little capital as gold and silver are in themselves money." (2)

(1) Marx, *Capital*, Vol. 1.

(2) *Capital*, Vol. 3, Ch. 44.

No Shmoos Is Good Shmoos

Al Capp, the cartoonist, told a story about a creature called the shmoo, which was ten inches high, something like a pear in shape and creamy-white in color. It had no arms, tiny feet and big whiskers under its nose. The shmoo had only one desire: to serve the needs of human beings, and it was well equipped to do so. Its skin could be made into any kind of fabric, its flesh was edible, its dead body could go brick-hard and be used for building, and its whiskers had more uses than you can imagine. If you looked at a shmoo with hunger in your eye, it dropped dead in rapture because you wanted it, after first cooking itself into your favorite flavor. Since they multiplied rapidly, there were plenty of shmooos for everybody.

But the capitalists hated the shmooos, for the shmooos provided everything people needed; nobody had to work for capitalists anymore, because nobody had to make the wages to buy the things capitalists sold. And so, as the shmooos spread across the face of America, the capitalists began to lose their power. So they took drastic action. They got the government to tell the people that the shmoo was un-American. It was causing chaos, undermining the social order. The President ordered the FBI to gather the shmooos and gun them down. Then things went back to normal. But a country lad, called Li'l Abner, managed to save one female and one male shmoo. He carried them off to a distant valley, where he hoped they'd be safe. "Folks aint yet ready for the shmoo," Li'l Abner sighed. But Li'l Abner was wrong. Folks were ready for the shmoo. It was the capitalists that weren't. The shmoo spoiled their monopoly over the means of existence.

Some capitalists defend their ownership of the resources we need for survival by saying that they got them through their own talent and effort. But everything the capitalist now owns either is or is made of something which once nobody's private property. With what right did anyone transform it into private property in the first place?

Never mind the doubtful origin, capitalists may say. Whatever started capitalism off, the system benefits people, for the following reasons. Capitalist firms survive only if they make money, and they make money only if they prevail in competition against other firms. This means that they have to be efficient. If they produce incompetently, they go under. They have to seize every opportunity to improve their productive facilities and techniques, so that they can produce cheaply enough to make enough money to go on. They don't aim to satisfy people, but they can't get what they are aiming at, which is money, unless they do satisfy people, and better than rival firms do.

Well, improved productivity means more output for every unit of labor, and that means that you can do two different things when productivity goes up. One way of using enhanced productivity is to

reduce work and extend leisure, while producing the same output as before. Alternatively, output may be increased while labor stays the same. Let's grant that more output is a good thing. But it's also true that for most people what they have to do to earn a living isn't a source of joy. Most people's jobs are such that they'd benefit not only from more goods and services but also from shorter hours and longer holidays.

Improved productivity makes possible either more output or less toil, or, or course, a mixture of both. But capitalism is biased in favor of the first option, increased output, since the other, toil reduction, threatens a sacrifice of the profit associated with greater output and sales. When the efficiency of a firm's production improves, it doesn't reduce the working day of its employees and produce the same amount as before. Instead, it makes more of the goods it was already making, or, if that isn't possible, because the demand for what it's selling won't expand, then it lays off part of its workforce and seeks a new line of production in which to invest the money it thereby saves. Eventually, new jobs are created, and output continues to expand, although there's a lot of unemployment and suffering along the way.

Now, the consequence of the increasing output which capitalism favors is increasing consumption. And so we get an endless chase after consumer goods, just because capitalist firms are geared to making money, and not to serving consumption itself.

I'm not knocking consumer goods. Consumer goods are fine. But the trouble with the chase after goods in a capitalist society is that we'll always, most of us, want more goods than we can get, since the capitalist system operates to ensure that people's desire for goods is never satisfied.

Capitalism is supposed to be good at satisfying our needs as consumers. But people have needs which go beyond the need to consume. One of those needs is a person's need to develop and exercise his or her talents. When people's capacities lie unused, they don't enjoy the zest for life which comes when their faculties flourish.

Now, people are able to develop themselves only when they get a good education. But, in a capitalist society, the education is threatened by those who seek to fit education to the narrow demands of the labor market. And some of them think that what's now needed to restore profitability to an ailing British capitalism is a lot of cheap, unskilled labor, and they conclude that education should be restricted so that it will supply that labor.

The present Chancellor of the Exchequer, Nigel Lawson, said in a speech a couple of years ago that we should now think about training people for jobs which are, as he put it, "not so much low-tech as no-tech." What sort of education is

contemplated in that zippy statement? Not one that nourishes the creative powers of young people and brings forth their full capacity. Nigel Lawson thinks it's dangerous to educate the young too much, because then we produce cultivated people who are unsuited to the low-grade jobs the market will offer them. An official at the Department of Education and Science recently said something similar. He said: "We are beginning to create aspirations which society cannot match...When young people...can't find work which meets their abilities and expectations, then we are only creating frustration with...disturbing social consequences. We have to ration...educational opportunities so that society can cope with the output of education...People must be educated once more to know their place."

What we've got here is a policy of deliberately restricting educational provision so that state schools can produce willing sellers of low-grade labor power. It's hard to imagine a more undemocratic approach to education. And notice that to prefer a *democratic* distribution of educational opportunity you don't have to believe that everyone is just as clever as everyone else: Nigel Lawson isn't saying that most people are too dim to benefit from a high level of education. It's precisely because people respond well to education that the problem which worries him arises.

There's a lot of talent in almost every human being, but in most people it remains undeveloped, since they don't have the freedom to develop it. Throughout history only a leisured minority have enjoyed such freedom, on the backs of the toiling majority. Now, though, we have a superb technology which could be used to restrict unwanted labor to a modest place in life. But capitalism doesn't use that technology in a liberating way. It continues to imprison people in unfulfilling work, and it shrinks from providing the enriching education which the technology it has created makes possible.

Is it possible to create a society which goes beyond the unequal treatment that capitalism imposes? Many would say that the idea of such a society is an idle dream. They'd say that there's always been inequality of one kind or another and there always will be. But I think that reading of history is too pessimistic.

There's actually much less inequality now than there was, say, 100 years ago. Then, only a few radicals proposed that everyone should have the vote. Others thought that was a dangerous idea, and most would have considered it to be an unrealistic one. Yet today we have the vote. We are a political democracy. But we're not an economic democracy. We don't share our material resources, and most people in this country would regard that as an unrealistic idea. Yet I think it's an idea whose time will come. Society won't always be divided into those who control its resources and those who have only their own labor to sell. But it'll take a lot of thought to work out the design of a democratic economic order, and it'll take a lot of struggle, against privilege and power, to bring it about. The obstacles to economic democracy are considerable. But just as no one, now, would defend slavery, I believe that a day will come when no one will be able to defend a form of society in which a minority profit from the possession of the majority.

-- G. A. Cohen, Chichele Professor of Social and Political Theory at Oxford University
(G.A. Cohen presented "Against Capitalism," from which the above extracts are taken, in the "Opinions" programs examining capitalism made for Channel 4 by Panoptic Productions.)

Ed. Note: The above article appeared in The Listener (Great Britain) for September 4, 1986. We thought it took an interesting approach to a subject that merits everyone's attention: world socialism. Let us hear any of your comments.

THE WORLD SOCIALIST MOVEMENT

The following parties adhere to the same Object and Declaration of Principles (see page six):

WORLD SOCIALIST PARTY OF AUSTRALIA

PO Box 1440M, Melbourne, Victoria 3001
PO Box 8279, Stirling Street, Perth, W. Australia
PO Box 2291, Sydney, NSW
PO Box 1357, Brisbane, Queensland

AUSTRIA: BUND DEMOKRATISCHER SOZIALISTEN
SOCIALIST PARTY OF CANADA

Gussriegelstrasse 50, A-1100 Vienna
PO Box 4280 Station A, Victoria, BC V8X 3X8
CP 244, Pointe-aux-Trembles, Québec H1B 5K3

WORLD SOCIALIST PARTY (IRELAND)
SOCIALIST PARTY OF NEW ZEALAND

41 Donegall Street, Belfast
PO Box 1929, Auckland, NI

WORLD SOCIALIST PARTY OF THE UNITED STATES
SOCIALIST PARTY OF GREAT BRITAIN

PO Box 405, Boston, MA 02272
52 Clapham High Street, London SW4 7UN

The *Discussion Bulletin*, published by the Discussion Bulletin Committee in Grand Rapids, Michigan, consists largely of letters and articles contributed by various representatives of DeLeonist groups and others whom the Committee designates as "third force" socialists (those adopting neither a Social-Democratic nor a Leninist outlook).

Since the re-making of the Socialist Labor Party's philosophy by Daniel DeLeon and his adherents around 1905, its basic position has been that no "pure and simple" socialist political party can effectuate the Revolution; that there must exist, along with the party, an industrial union organization to back up the ballot with economic force (because the ballot is, after all, "as weak as a woman's tears"--a sentiment attributed to DeLeon) and to organize and carry on the business of the new society.

Just how far from *new* this SLP-envisioned order would be, however, becomes evident when one notes that the DeLeonists always seemed to regard the parties of Social Democracy as "pure and simple" *socialist* political parties rather than as pure and simple parties of capitalist reform. As far back as the March 1915 issue of the *Socialist Standard**, for example, we find a lengthy editorial-article which examines and dissects an official letter from the SLP of America addressed to "the Affiliated Parties of the International Socialist Bureau." Although the SPGB had never been a member of that organization (the British Labour Party represented it), the SLP had nevertheless taken it on itself to send the SPGB a copy of the letter.

The crux of their argument was that had the "Socialist" parties of Europe paid heed to the DeLeonist message of the need for industrial union organization, Social Democracy would not have found itself in the mess that it did in 1915, with its various

Despite our long-standing opposition to the DeLeonist analysis, we of the World Socialist Movement are at least encouraged to air our viewpoint in the pages of the *Bulletin*. The editorial committee of the *World Socialist Review* feels that the following contribution to DB #21 (adapted as an article for this issue of the *Review*) deserves a wider audience

member parties supporting their respective national governments in the slaughter of World War I.

The gist of the SPGB's response was simple: the SLP of America did not seem to realize (as DeLeonists today do not comprehend either) that organizing workers on the basis of individual industries is really *dividing* rather than uniting them; that an economic organization is, to be sure, important and even essential but that it should be based upon *class* rather than on sectional-industrial interests. It ought to be apparent that when workers in the millions are ripe for socialism, labor union membership will be top-heavy with workers who are socialist-minded.

Not only has the SLP (like the various splinter groups that have broken off from it) shown little ability to distinguish *socialist* organizations from reformist ones: in January 1917 it even went so far as to attempt the consummation of a merger with the SPA, participating with it in a joint conference in New York City.

At the conference both organizations agreed on the questions of aim and of reform policies, but the attempt at unification failed because the SPA delegates refused to accept the SLP's economic program. A *Weekly People* editorial for January 13, 1917 claimed that the rock upon which the Unity Conference foundered was that of industrial unionism.

But lest this not be regarded as sufficiently conclusive evidence that the SLP advocated (then as now) a conception of socialist

for the important information it contains on the history of the Socialist Labor Party of America, as well as for its unambiguously stated views on the subject of DeLeonism. Any reader desiring back issues of the *Bulletin* can obtain them from the *Discussion Bulletin*, PO Box 1564, Grand Rapids, MI 49501.

society which was fundamentally no different from that of Social Democracy, let us turn to the SLP's "thinking" on the subject of the Soviet Union. Here again the same self-deception reproduces itself on a political scale: anyone having a minimal acquaintance with SLP history after 1917 knows that even prior to the Bolshevik Revolution, DeLeonism showed a disregard for the need to concentrate on class consciousness as the crucial factor in a socialist revolution (as opposed to sectional recognition for the existing divisions of wage labor).

On the question of "vanguards" and class consciousness, for instance: during the period of World War II the SLP berated Stalin for "betraying" the Revolution. This kind of language makes no sense from a socialist perspective--*unless* it were true that (1) the SLP regarded the Bolshevik Revolution as a genuinely socialist upheaval and (2) it really believed that a socialist revolution *could* be brought about without a majority of class-conscious workers in the population understanding and approving the basics of socialism. Does this not imply that the SLP and its splinter groups are themselves to all intents and purposes believers in "vanguardism"--the same as the Bolsheviks? It is difficult to think otherwise.

Or concerning the nature of Soviet society: though some DeLeonists seem to have come to the awareness that something is definitely rotten in the state of the Soviet Union, they seem equally bent on compounding their previous error. Rather than

decide that it is long past high time to start calling a spade a spade, they instead tend to regard that land as an example of DeLeon's "industrial feudalism."

The problem they evade is that certain important, basic features serve to define a society--features such as the predominant social relationships among the members of the population, for instance. In the USSR the preponderant relationships are those of wage labor and capital; from which the only intelligent conclusion one can draw is that the USSR is *capitalist*. It is as incongruous to label the form of society found in the USSR "industrial feudalism" as it would be to call it "capitalist socialism."

But apart from such abuses of language, whatever we might predict for the way in which socialist society will organize production, one thing is certain: once there is a solid majority of class-conscious socialists in the population and this has become manifest to the capitalist class, the era of class societies will come to an end in short order. We can assume that those workers who up until that moment have operated the industries will continue to do so--but it will be in the interests of the *entire population* rather than for the benefit of private or corporate owners (which includes state capitalist bureaucrats). Even the need for labor unions (of any variety or designation) will vanish.

If Marx's materialist conception of history makes sense, it should follow that the only really worthwhile task for socialists today is to make more socialists (and good ones at that); it is certainly not to turn out prescriptions for what in the end are really just idealized versions of already existing social formations.

--Harmo

(*) Journal of the Socialist Party of Great Britain (SPGB).

From a Recent Pamphlet

WHAT UNEEMPLOYMENT MEANS

Is massive unemployment here to stay? Many workers think so. They point to the closures of shipyards, steelworks and scores of factories as big corporations pack up their bags and head for places where low-paid labor forces hide behind every tree. There appears to be no letup in the round of layoffs and sackings that turn whole cities into colonies of the jobless, much less that these places of work will come back to life again in the future. This pessimism is supported and rationalized by some journalists, politicians and economists in newspapers and on television.

It has happened before

Socialists have long memories. We can remember the 1950s and 1960s when the "experts" assured us that unemployment was finished forever because governments had learned how to control it. Most workers believed them. They were wrong, and we told them so at the time. They are equally wrong now. Massive unemployment will not last forever--although it may last a very long time, as it did in the 1930s.

And those who say that things are different now because of the microchip are wrong too. Automation of jobs does not in itself cause long-term unemployment. The effect is to shift workers from one area of employment to another. Fewer are needed to do the purely manual and routinely bureaucratic tasks increasingly carried out by the new machines, but more are needed to design, construct, program and maintain them. The rate of unemployment has been much higher than now at times when labor-saving machines were far fewer--notably in the Great Depression of the 30s.

What is employment?

It is impossible to understand unemployment properly without understanding employment itself.

Employment (a "job") is, in fact, a buying and selling relationship, in which one human being sells his or her ability to work to another human being for a day, a week or a month. Like all buying and selling, the sale of working abilities is generally governed by "the market." The seller (the worker) tries to get the highest price (wage or salary) that he or she can, while the buyer (the employer) tries to pay as little as possible.

The great majority of men and women in the industrialized nations of the world can only make a living by trying to sell their mental or physical skills and energy. They have no option but to put themselves on the labor market for most of their lives, because they have nothing else to sell.

Who or what employs us?

In this respect, our lives are very different from the lives of that small proportion of the population who own enough wealth to live off their investments. But investments are not some magical trick which "makes your money." Investments (that is, capital) buy the brain or muscle power of the workers. The big investors, therefore--in private industry or state bonds--are the ultimate employers. It is to them that workers try to sell their intelligence, punctuality and willingness to work hard.

So there is a direct relationship of buyer to seller. What one gains the other loses. But for workers it is their livelihood--sometimes their life--that is at stake.

The owners of wealth only invest if there is a good prospect of making an acceptable profit, but factories and machines and materials do not produce anything by themselves--certainly not a profit. It is only workers who produce, and transport, and maintain machinery, and sell goods, and manage other workers--and produce all profit.

(Continued on last page)

THE WORLD SOCIALIST PARTY OF THE UNITED STATES

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 World Socialist Party of the United States holds that:

1. 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 labor alone wealth is produced.
2. IN SOCIETY, THEREFORE, there is an antagonism of interests, manifesting itself as a class struggle between those who possess but do not produce, and those who produce but do not possess.
3. 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. 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. THIS EMANCIPATION MUST BE the work of the working class itself.
6. AS THE MACHINERY OF GOVERNMENT, including the armed forces of the nation, exists

only to conserve the monopoly by the capitalist class of the wealth taken from the workers, the working class must organize consciously and politically for the conquest of the powers of government, in order that this machinery, including these forces, may be converted from an instrument of oppression into the agent of emancipation and overthrow of plutocratic privilege.

7. AS POLITICAL PARTIES ARE but the expression of class interests, and as the interest of the working class is diametrically opposed to the interest of all sections of the master class, the party seeking working class emancipation must be hostile to every other party.

8. THE COMPANION PARTIES OF SOCIALISM, therefore, enter the field of political action determined to wage war against all other political parties, whether alleged labor or avowedly capitalist, and call upon all members of the working class to support these principles to the end that a termination may be brought to the system which deprives them of the fruits of their labor, and that poverty may give place to comfort, privilege to equality and slavery to freedom.

Technology, Private Property and Revolution

The idea of a wageless, classless, moneyless society is ultra-modern; in fact it may come of age simply because technology is making it more and more difficult to possess anything. Each time an entrepreneur figures out a way to "own" a product and sell it for profit, someone else figures out a way to take it for less. Satellite dishes beam in broadcasts that are meant to be sold and show them for nothing; a \$400.00 computer program can be copied and distributed without paying the fee; books are easily pirated and sold sometimes for a fraction of the publisher's cost; virtually every product in the market can be, and sooner or later is, stolen, copied and counterfeited on so vast a scale that the government can no longer enforce ownership and copyright laws, and the only effective recourse of private companies is to try and maintain their ownership by more and more sophisticated technology: scrambling devices, counterfeit detectors, etc. As this race continues, the absurdity and futility of institutionalized possession becomes more and more evident.

Socialists argue that Socialism, by which they mean production of goods and services for direct distribution without the impediments of ownership and money, can only occur when a majority of people act politically to make it happen. They will not do so unless this idea makes sense to them; unless it seems practical and workable, the only common sense solution to the crisis now wracking this planet of ours.

The problem is that enough people don't yet see it that way: but the need for Socialism is so obviously urgent the insight can't be very far from the surface.

-- Stephen Butterfield

Unemployment (cont. from p.6)

The profit scramble

Prospects for profit, however, are affected by an enormous range of factors throughout the world, and the market is constantly adjusting prices to balance these. Capitalists shift their wealth around the world (or their stockbrokers do it for them), seeking the highest rate of profit at an acceptable risk. As more and more profits are made and re-invested as new capital, production expands, building up into a boom. At such times, more workers are employed than at any other time, more and more goods and services are offered for sale on the market, and yet more capital tries to share in the profits of the boom--and then the whole frenzied mass of investments collapses in crisis and slump, as such a spiral must do.

This *trade cycle*, as it is called, operates throughout the world now, including the "Eastern Bloc" nations. It has occurred periodically through the whole history of the present economic system, increasing in scale as the world market has expanded. Governments are powerless to control it, and so are agencies like the United Nations or the International Monetary Fund. Slumps are not only inevitable--they are necessary, for capitalism. They restore profitability--eventually.

What can be done?

Many politicians (particularly among the Democrats) push what they euphemistically describe as a "full employment policy." This is dishonest. The record shows that no matter who is in office, the business cycle keeps right on going. In an effort to save face, some economists and politicians claim to have discovered "structural unemployment"--which is virtually an admission that unemployment is not subject to government fiat. The hard fact is that there is no cure for unemployment as long as the system of employment lasts.

The best that workers can do, by being active in their unions, is to prevent themselves being played off against one another by employers and to resist the downward pressure on wages and conditions that employers and governments exert particularly ruthlessly in slumps. But this is limited in scope, and it is no comfort those who are thrown on the scrap-heap. When the labor market is a "buyer's market" and supply exceeds demand, workers who are trying to sell their skills are in a weak position.

Working-class strength

And yet the working class as a whole has enormous strength. It is workers--high and low paid, "white collar" and "blue collar" who produce all the goods, who build and distribute and administer everything in society. It is workers who staff the armed forces and police forces all over the world. It is workers who teach children what to think and believe about society. And, of course, it workers who vote overwhelmingly at elections to keep handing over the wealth they produce to the capitalist class, to maintain nations and weapons and wars, to hang on to the system of employment--and unemployment.

We can end unemployment

We workers who have formed the World Socialist Party and its overseas companion parties urge our fellow workers to give careful consideration to our analysis of modern society. Whether you are working your way through unemployment benefits or "earning," whether you are paid \$500 a month or \$50,000 a year the facts are the same. We reject the explanations of the paid experts. We reject the nostrums of the left as much as the quack formulas of the right and the vote-getting placebos of the "middle-of-the-roads." We do *not* call on workers to march or demonstrate for jobs. It is futile. We do *not* promise to lead workers out

of their problems. That is a con trick.

What we *do* say is that workers *can* solve the problem of unemployment--by understanding it and by organizing themselves as a class which has overwhelming strength. Our analysis makes it clear that the system of employment is now obsolete. It not only causes waste and misery: it stands as an obstacle to technological progress. The working class has the power to consign the employment system to the scrap-heap of history--without shedding a drop of blood. It has the power to run the productive forces of society to meet the needs of everyone. To produce solely for use--not for sale and profit.

Read our literature. Discuss with us. We understand what is happening--and so will you. Work with us to unify the working class so that it can take control of the future--sooner--and end unemployment for good.

Questions of the Day	\$1.00
Historical Materialism	.50
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Socialism and Trade Unions	.70
Marxian Economics	.70
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a voice of world socialism



the october revolution revisited

In This Issue:

Let Them Eat **Glasnost**

Burying Tsarism

Is Russia a New Class
System?

Profit and Pragmatism

A Revolution Still to be

Made

Let Them Eat Glasnost

Everyone knows the old joke about Russia's top-down brand of state capitalism: capitalism is the exploitation of man by man, whereas communism is the opposite. In fact, of course, there are no socialist republics (socialism not being compatible with government), nor are any of the Soviet Union's republics examples of socialism (which requires a classless, moneyless society functioning on a worldwide basis), nor are there even any soviets (councils acting as the workers' democratically elected delegates) in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. What's in the name, then? An immense majority who go to the market everyday to sell their only commodity--their ability to do work--to a small minority who...roll up their shirtsleeves and plunge into the "work" of supervising and directing the country's capital investments so as to make them yield a profit (some-one's got to do it, after all!).

And now that the USSR's workers, women and men alike, have glasnost, Mikhail Gorbachev's policy of "openness," they will presumably become happier and more productive and, not least, more accessible to multinational penetration. For even the spectre of communism has at last been incorporated into the marketplace!

Common Ownership

It is no academic exercise to point out that the word "communism" means only common ownership of the means of producing wealth: the right to decide on the use of the mechanisms by which society recreates and reproduces itself. The state is designed, on the contrary, to enforce the will of a minority against the wishes of the majority (in modern times, perversely enough, through the use of "majority rule"). As "open" as the CPSU and its politburo may now be projecting themselves, all the glasnost in the world (though there isn't that much of it floating around anyhow) will not make them communists.

Are We "Commies"?

As communists (socialists) ourselves, our policy has often been confused with theirs. During the second world war, when the Allied Powers calculated it was to their advantage to court Russia's ersatz ruling élite, a great deal of treacle and syrup poured forth from the US government about the heroic Soviet Union, led by that epic working-class genius, Joseph Stalin.

If you were too young during the days of world war II, or not yet born, there are books and articles readily available dealing with the cooperation and friendship between the bolshevik-style Communists on the one hand, and the professed champions of "democratic" capitalism on the other. (For starters, try The Pocket Book of the War, Quincy Howe, Ed., Pocket Books, Inc., New York, 1941.)

However, when the President of the United States and the Prime Minister of Great Britain were wining, dining and dealing with Stalin in the Kremlin, the World Socialist Party and its Companion Parties in other countries were openly opposing the war as a carnage not worth the shedding of a single drop of working-class blood. When the secret police of the Soviet Union and the secret police of the United States (the forerunner of the present CIA) were acting in unison, we were speaking out and writing articles attacking the war.

When the Communist Party was recruiting for the war effort, selling Victory Bonds, waving the flag and singing the national anthem of America, as well as that of Russia, we of the World Socialist Party were speaking from the rostrum on Boston Common as our comrades in England spoke in Hyde Park; continuing to urge our fellow workers to organize for the abolition of capitalism everywhere--the basic cause of war.

Are They Communists?

Thus, we are not Communists in the popularly accepted meaning of that much-maligned word. We do not support or sympathize with Russian or Chinese or Cuban or any other state capitalism. We are communists, though, in the classical meaning of the term. We are scientific socialists who advocate the complete and immediate abolition of the buying and selling system in all its forms around the world and the immediate introduction of a system of production for use.

If the workers of the Soviet Union want an "opening" that is socially authentic, they would do well to press for the immediate elimination of the system that keeps them exploited in more or less the same way as it does everywhere else. Perhaps glasnost will inadvertently give them some space in which to think about organizing for a real socialist revolution. ◊

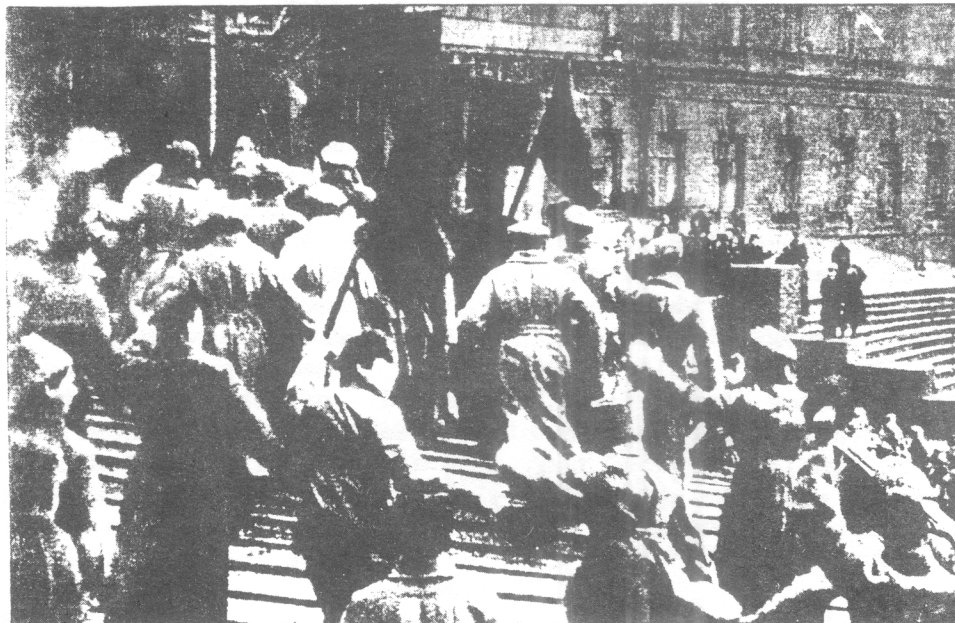
The World Socialist Review

a voice of world socialism

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To socialists it has long been apparent that the overthrow of the Kerensky régime in 1917 was not even remotely related to socialism. Accounting for the Bolshevik Revolution which overthrew it, however is greatly complicated on account of the Leninists' avowed Marxism. As a matter of fact, even the anti-Bolshevik wing of the Russian Social-Democratic Labor Party (RSDLP/Menshevik) and their comrades of the official socialist and labor parties around the world recognized them as Marxist even while disapproving of their methods—especially their scrapping of parliamentarism for a one-party dictatorship.

But the question of whether classical Marxism really lay at the foundations of the Bolsheviks' various programs (beginning from the time of their November revolution by our calendar) should have been given first priority at the outset. The Bolsheviks and their sympathizers in fact



70 Years Ago

Burying Tsarism

represented only a small part of the population in 1917, and it makes for very questionable Materialism to assert, as they did, that on the one hand the working class worldwide is a revolutionary class and then to attempt on the other to "lead" a revolution in which that same class admittedly forms no more than a minority within Russian society. A Peasant-Based Economy

The fact is that the Russian working class in 1917 represented less than ten per cent of the population, the Russian system being mainly a peasant-based, agrarian economy burdened with holdovers from feudalism. The classical impetus to early capitalism in the West—brutal, outright dispossession of the peasantry from their means of livelihood by evicting them from their smallholdings—was still missing in the Russia of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. (Russian serfs even had to wait until 1861 before being officially "emancipated.")

The whiplash of poverty and destitution that drives workers into the factories (after first expelling them from the land, making them an available pool of "free labor power") was not nearly as pervasive as it had been in Britain and Western Europe. Poor as the Russian peasants were, it was not an absolute case of having to work for wages or starve to death in a hurry. Landed estates continued to be a major element of the Russian economy right up until 1917, with peasant laborers beholden, generally, to absentee landlords.

Moreover, even when it comes to the articulation of class interests, the most popular of the radical political parties among the peasantry was not the Bolsheviks—a party rooted nominally in the Marxist tradition of a wage-worker/proletarian-based revolution—but the Socialist Revolutionaries: a non-Marxist, populist-style party with at least some orientation toward indivi-

dual terrorism; and there were others, some traditionally "right-wing" and centrist parties angling for the peasant vote as well.

Nor does the resistance offered the Bolsheviks everywhere in the cities outside Petrograd indicate they were overwhelmingly popular among the workers. But Petrograd fell with hardly a shot being fired, and Petrograd, as the capital of Russia, provided the sinews of war with which the new (Bolshevik) régime could operate.

Kerensky's Fall

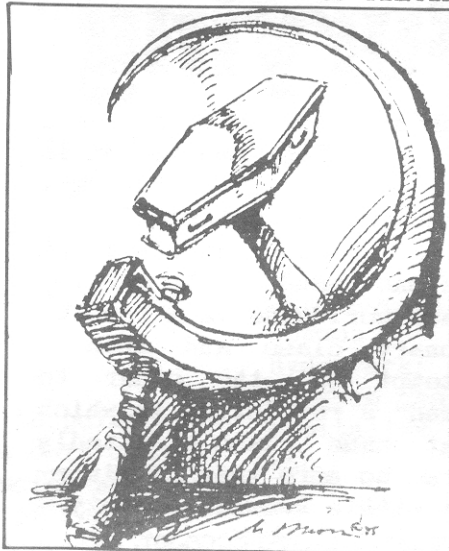
The toppling of the Kerensky-led Provisional Government in Petrograd the night of November 6-7 and its sequel are interesting in themselves for the light they shed on Bolshevik theory. The sequence of events went something like this:

The Bolshevik (majority) wing of the RSDLP had won the support of the majority within the Petrograd soviet, which (as was the case with other city soviets) had an arsenal of weapons at its disposal—a fact which in itself gives an idea of the extent of the powerlessness of the central government, or *duma*. Bearing in mind that the Russia of 1917 was extremely backward in its communications and transport facilities—a condition that made it all but impossible for a national government to get rapid assistance from other centers,—we can see how the capture of the Petrograd soviet's support proved to be the Leninists' *coup de maître*. For they were able to issue arms to their sympathizers and to re-occupy the offices of their newspapers, which had been seized by Government troops. They were also able to gain control of bridges and main

thoroughfares, railway stations, the State Bank and the central Post Office. Kerensky found himself deserted and had to escape from the capital to seek support elsewhere.

By 10 AM, the Revolutionary Military Committee had announced the overthrow of the Provisional Government. The population was assured of the immediate proposal of a democratic peace, the abolition of landed proprietorship, workers' control over production and the creation of a Soviet government.'

During that night of November 7th, the Bolshevik forces took over the Winter



Palace, which was the seat of the Provisional Government and arrested most of the remaining ministers in the Kerensky government. The Bolshevik consummation of Russia's capitalist revolution was accomplished with a death toll of some twenty persons and a handful of wounded.

That statistic, however, pertains only to the actual transfer of political power and would almost seem to indicate a lack of organized opposition to the Bolsheviks. But the situation was quite different during the days and weeks to follow. In Moscow and a number of other

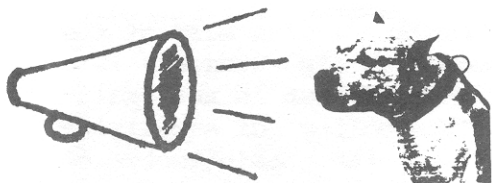
cities and towns where the Leninists proceeded to take power, they met with varying degrees of opposition from the respective populations. But the acid test of just how popular the Bolsheviks were among the Russian masses was made with the occasion of the Constituent Assembly elections, which circumstances had more or less forced them to guarantee.

Election Results

The Provisional Government had been unenthusiastic about calling these elections but had finally set the date, after a number of postponements, for November 25th; and the Bolsheviks permitted them to take place as scheduled. They were not pleased with the results. Of a total of approximately 41,700,000 votes cast, the Bolsheviks polled only 9,800,000 (23.5%); the Cadets (a right-wing party) 2 million (4.8%); and the Mensheviks or minority faction within the RSDLP, which by now were acting more or less as an independent party, got 1,360,000—3.3% of the vote. The Socialist Revolutionaries, on the other hand—including both Russian and Ukrainian—polled a large plurality (41%) of 17.1 million votes. By the numbers alone, it was their revolution.

When the Assembly met, there were (out of a total of 703 deputies), 380 regular Socialist Revolutionaries, 39 Left Socialist Revolutionaries, 168 Bolsheviks, 18 Mensheviks, 17 Cadets, four Popular Socialists and 77 minority representatives. This was clear evidence that the Bolshevik (November) Revolution was no majority revolution but only another example of a minority organization (and a faction at

(cont. p.14)



YOU SAID IT

Our Masters' Voice

WHAT MAKES BUSINESSMEN SO SMART?

"A US slowdown would deal a crushing blow to economic prospects for the heavily indebted developing world," thinks the author of a special report in Business Week [11/9/87], speaking of the recent stock market crash. And even worse,

A new round of Latin American recessions would hurt the struggling democratic régimes in Brazil and Argentina. And economic setbacks could trigger a fresh outflow of capital from the region.

Forgotten, of course, is the period when exactly the same thing was said about the struggling "moderately authoritarian" régimes in the same countries. Dictatorships are actually quite useful for maintaining workers in a state of abject submission to their exploited condition. What bothers the capitalist class is something much less human than that:

Now, unless stock prices turn back up, the evaporation of nearly \$1 trillion in shareholder wealth could contract spending by about \$45 billion over a couple of quarters or so....[Business Week, 11/2/87]

And what is so bad about that? you might ask. Citicorp Chairman John S. Reed, in an interview in the same issue, gives us the big picture--

I was assuming three per cent economic growth, and now I'm assuming 0.5 per cent. You can't take that much out of the economy [sic] without an impact.

If you're wondering by this time where you as an "average person" fit into all of this high-level shop talk, the answer is, you don't; the economy will keep on going with or without you. Gary S. Becker coolly informs us that

The Commerce Dept. estimates nonhuman wealth [sic] at about \$13 trillion. Thus a \$1 trillion fall in the value of stocks reduces this wealth by less than eight per cent--and total wealth by less than two per cent. [11/9/87]

Well, after all...who but the politicians ever told you it was your system?

THE BUSINESS OF RUSSIA IS BUSINESS

It shouldn't have taken anyone 70 years to spot the error in asserting Lenin was a communist; but Mikhail Gorbachev wants to make sure that everybody understands the Soviet Union is a mainstay of the international capitalist system. What, he asks us,

is the world going to be like when it reaches our revolution's centenary? What is socialism going to be like? What degree of maturity will have been attained by the world community of states and peoples? [Boston Globe, 11/9/87]

The chief spokesman for a whole class of investors of capital might well ponder this question of "maturity." Since a joint-venture law to attract capital from investors in other countries was decreed last January [Business Week, 11/9/87], the capitalist class of the Soviet Union has received 250 joint-venture proposals from interested parties. But

the Soviets are moving carefully because they want to ensure that the first ventures make money.

The trick is how to find a modus vivendi which will allow foreign investors to retire their profits without creating a hard-currency problem for the Soviet economy. Although "the Soviets have proved more flexible" than Western companies represent them as being, and while the joint-venture law represents a "skillful device for neutralizing the hard-currency problem" (in one instance), the Vanguard of the Proletariat still needs some coaching:

Sometimes US companies have had to stop and give lectures on profit and loss and balance sheets. The Soviets have been soaking this stuff up like sponges. [Quoting Sarah Carey; Business Week, 11/9/87]

But the road to the "new world, the world of communism" (as Gorbachev terms it) also seems unfortunately to be littered with Just Wars:

In exchange for helping Ethiopia crush rebellions in Eritrea and successfully counter Somalia's attempts to "liberate" Ethiopia's Ogaden province in the late 1970s,

the Soviets reportedly demanded and received part of Ethiopia's coffee production, the impoverished country's principal foreign exchange earner. [Forbes, 11/2/87]

To be sure, wheeling and dealing in the world's markets does also have its shameful parts:

The heavy drinking in the Soviet Union simply means that the satisfactions and opportunities available to the Soviet working classes today are comparable to those available to the heavy-drinking English working classes at the time of the Poor Laws. [National Review, 11/6/87]

Working classes? What working classes? It is "not easy," Gorbachev assures us [Boston Globe, 11/9/87], to ensure "a possibility for continuous progress." So while "the Soviets" wine and dine international competitors and sign arms deals on the backs of starving children, the "road to communism" as trodden in Russia just gets longer and longer.

...the upper and middle classes with higher cash incomes and access to specialized supplies enjoy both subsidized food from the state and expensive food from the city markets; the lower classes do not have access to special supplies and can not afford market prices. And so it goes for public health care, public education, etc. [National Review, 11/6/87]

Without a doubt, as Gorbachev says, they "shall never turn off that road."

WRONG BOARD, RIGHT CHAIRMAN!

If there can be socialism in (only) one country, why can't there be socialism in (only) twenty or thirty? All the working class has to do is get used to waiting. Another waiting-room was added not long ago by the successor Gang to the Gang of Four in China—

Zhao Ziyang, the Chinese Communist Party leader and prime minister, has told delegates to the 13th Party Congress in Beijing that the stock and bond markets recently revived in China are not incompatible with Marxist principles. [Boston Globe, 11/9/87]

There are, it appears, a lot of other things which are also "not incompatible" with them: did Chairman Mao tell us everyone would get the same pay regardless

of their position? Just a slip of the tongue, says economist Liu Guoguang in a recent article, "Socialism is not Egalitarianism"; for "the policy of equalizing incomes contradicts the basic tenets of Marxism." [The Christian Science Monitor, 11/18/87]

He is quoted as stating that

The slogan of equality attracted thousands upon thousands of people to the struggle for socialism as equal distribution of income and confused socialism with egalitarianism.

The same Liu also advocates allowing "some people to become wealthy first as part of the goal of common prosperity" and believes that

China should tolerate aspects of capitalism [sic] 'so long as they benefit the growth of the socialist forces of production and do not impinge on the primacy of public ownership.'

Wherever the Leninist parties have come to power, the result has always been the same. They maintain capitalist institutions on the justification that ultimately this will result in the "emancipation of the working class." The goal of the Chinese Communist Party is not (and never will be) to accomplish this "ultimate" goal as its next step.

Using the language of Marxism as a justification for this (however much they blunder through the exercise) has become second nature to these old pro's. All the CCP seeks to do is make China "a modern socialist power, prosperous, democratic and highly cultured," in Zhao Ziyang's words. [Le Monde, 10/27/87]

But it is absolute twaddle to speak of "reforming" a revolution, given that the term "revolution" itself implies only the laying of a basis for subsequent changes which had long been necessary anyhow: which is precisely the sort of revolution embodied in the term "common ownership" (a.k.a. communism). The "nine-years' reform" of Deng Xiaoping is no more than a reordering of the China's state-capitalist agenda. The advantage of the reform (that it "can attract more people as it gives them more chances to engage in the State's management" [China Daily, 10/30/87]) is an advantage only to the accumulating minority which lives off the backs of the wage-earning majority.

—Ron Elbert



IS RUSSIA A NEW CLASS SYSTEM?

For years the Socialist Labor Party of America (SLP) had a rather unclear, ambiguous attitude towards Russia. In the 20s and 30s they gave the impression that they thought it was some sort of "proletarian" régime, but from the time of the 1939 Hitler-Stalin Pact onwards it was denounced as "Soviet Despotism" and "Industrial Feudalism." Only in the 1970s was the need felt to embrace an overall theory as to the nature of Russian society.

Given that the SLP had always correctly rejected the view that Russia was socialist, they were faced with three choices: to say that Russia was some sort of deformed "proletarian régime" (as they had tended to do in the 20s and 30s and as the Trotskyists still do); to say it was a form of capitalism (i.e., state capitalism); or to say it was a new type of exploitative class society.

An SLP pamphlet, The Nature of Soviet Society, based on a series of articles that had appeared in the Weekly People in 1977 on the occasion of the 60th anniversary of the Russian revolution, discusses these three theories in a fairly objective way before coming down in favor of the third, that Russia is "a new form of class-divided society... fundamentally different from capitalism."

Since we in the World Socialist movement have always held that what exists in Soviet Russia is a form of capitalism, we welcome the opportunity to reply to objections raised in the SLP pamphlet to our view.

Preliminary Comments

Before doing so, some observations are in order. It is true, first of all, that some state capitalist theories are quite inadequate for explaining their subject: for example, the Maoist view that Russia suddenly became state capitalist when Stalin died in 1953. Nor, secondly, is it sufficient to point to the existence of exploitation, class privilege and the state in Soviet Russia and the West to draw the conclusion that the USSR has the same system as in the West, even if this is based on the fact of government rather than private ownership. For these could also be the features of some hypothetical new class society, which is precisely the point at issue: is Russia a new exploiting society, or is it a form of capitalism? If we are to demonstrate that Russia is (state) capitalist we must show, in the pamphlet's words, that its "economic laws of motion" are the same as those operating under capitalism.

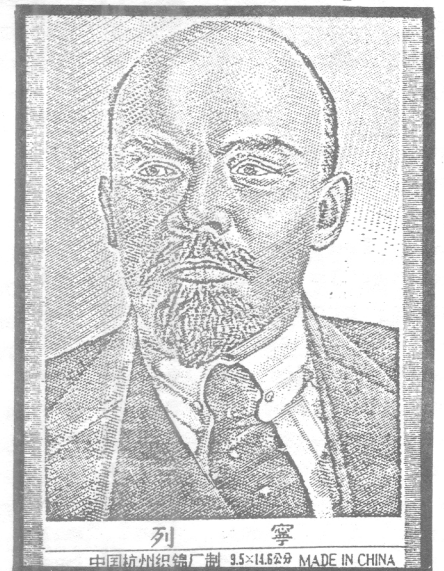
The Nature of Soviet Society mentions three aspects of the Soviet economic system which it sees as being incompatible with capitalism:

(1) "The regulating motive in a Soviet enterprise is not production for sale with a view to maximum profit for the enterprise, or maximum return on investment, but production according to the specifications of a bureaucratic plan."

(2) "...all basic decisions...are made in a centralized fashion by a mammoth state apparatus. These decisions do not reflect the logic of a capitalist market—that is, they do not primarily reflect the workings of the law of value—but the interests and whims of bureaucratic allocation."

(3) "...the absence of classic periodic crises is powerful evidence that the USSR is not a capitalist system or a variation of the mode of production described by Marx."

Individual enterprises in Russia, it is true, are not autonomous, profit-maximizing units in the Western sense. Even though they are engaged in production for sale (i.e., in commodity production), they do not necessarily seek "the maximum profit for the enterprise" but rather to produce





"according to the specifications of a bureaucratic plan." But, as we shall now see, this plan seeks to maximize profits for the Russian economy as a whole.

We deny the validity of the second objection, in other words, and assert that, on the contrary, in Russia "all basic economic decisions...do...primarily reflect the workings of the law of value." Talking about "the interests and whims of bureaucratic allocation" gives the impression that somehow the ruling class in Russia ("the bureaucracy") has a completely free hand when it comes to making economic decisions and is not subject to pressures acting on it with the force of what Marx called "external, coercive laws." It suggests that in Russia there exists a system of production for use, but one only accessible to the ruling class, such as existed (for instance) under feudalism and other pre-capitalist societies.

If this were the case, then goods and services would take the form of simple use-values. But a basic feature of the Soviet economy is that nearly all goods—producer goods as well as consumer goods—are produced for sale, as commodities, and therefore have an exchange-value in addition to their use-value. It is just not true, as the SLP pamphlet claims, that "market relations" have been

"suppressed" in Russia by "a bureaucratic plan." This rests on a misunderstanding of the nature of "planning" there: what the Plan tries to do is precisely to coordinate market relations between enterprises, to organize and orient commodity production. In other words, it does not abolish the market and production for sale at all but merely attempts (and none too successfully, by all accounts) to control and direct the process.

It is not simply commodity production that exists in Russia. Since labor-power too is a commodity there, wage-labor exists, and, as Marx put it in a well-known passage from Wage Labor and Capital,

capital presupposes wage labor; wage labor presupposes capital. They reciprocally condition the existence of each other; they reciprocally evoke each other.

In other words, wage labor, under conditions of generalized commodity production, produces a surplus value which is re-invested as capital in the exploitation of wage labor. This too exists in Russia, and it is such surplus value that the ruling class there is obliged to seek to maximize as the price of staying in the competitive rat race (economic and military) with the other states in the capitalist world system.

So the Russian ruling class does not have a free hand in economic matters but is obliged to seek to maximize the amount of surplus value extracted from the wage-working class under its control. Interestingly enough, a 1985 SLP leaflet, "Socialism versus Soviet Despotism," does make the same argument:

The Soviet economy, like the capitalist system, is based on wage labor, which is to say, on the exploitation of wage labor...Every Soviet factory, every Soviet mine, every Soviet mill is expected to show a profit. This profit must come from the wealth Soviet workers create over and above their wages—just as the profits of General Motors and Westinghouse and IBM come from the surplus value produced by their respective wage slaves. And, just as GM, Westinghouse and IBM strive constantly to increase that share of the workers' production that is appropriated as profits, so, in the Soviet Union, the bureaucratic exploiters of the workers put the pressure on factory managers to turn the screws on the workers.

Bureaucratic Greed?

If this is the case (and it is), then we should ask ourselves whether this occurs just to satisfy the "whim" or the greed of the "bureaucratic exploiters"—or whether it is an expression of the economic laws of motion of the Soviet economy, of which the bureaucrats are but the agents, the same as the capitalist owners in the West with their stocks and bonds.

To maximize the surplus value extracted from the working class—which, we emphasize, is not a whim, but an economic necessity for the Soviet ruling class—

these latter must first have some measure of value and surplus value, which can only be money ("the universal crystallization of exchange value," as the pamphlet rightly calls it). Surplus value in monetary form is profit, so it is the monetary calculation of the rates of profit in the various sectors of industry which provides the Russian ruling class with the information it must have to make its key economic decisions: those concerning capital investment.

Profit-Seeking Enterprises

In the private form of capitalism that exists in the West, the spontaneous movement of capital to the more profitable sectors decides where new investment will go; the decision is made through the spontaneous operation of the law of value. But since, as we saw, individual enterprises in Russia are not autonomous profit-seeking units like the private (and state) capitalist firms of the West, this task of allocating new capital to the more profitable sectors falls, in the Soviet economy, to the state.

The state planners are obliged, in short, to try to reproduce bureaucratically the same result that the spontaneous operation of market forces brings about in the West. Which is another way of saying that they are obliged to try to apply the law of value consciously. This does not rule out, any more than it does in the West, subsidizing certain politically or strategically important industries, nor seeking a longer-term rather than an immediate short-term profit.

Thus, the Russian economy is just as much governed by

the law of value and the pursuit of maximum profit (even if this is at national rather than at enterprise level) as are the Western economies. It too can therefore be properly described as capitalist, but—taking account of the form of ownership and the much more active role of the state—we can qualify this further by calling it state capitalist. It must not however be forgotten that, in the end, there is only a single world capitalist economy of which both the private capitalism of the West and the state capitalism of the East are merely parts. Russian state

capitalism is not a separate economic system existing on its own.

Capitalism, then, is alive and well in the Soviet Union. It only remains to add that the case against seeing Russia as a new exploiting class system is based not on the theoretical impossibility of such a system coming into being (even though this is unlikely, given the integrated nature of the world economy today), but on the empirical evidence of how the Soviet economy operates in practice, in terms of its own laws of motion.

—Adam Buick

Tribute to Rab (1893-1986)

Last New Year's Eve I. Rab, a founding member of the World Socialist Party, died. The following is a tribute offered in his memory.

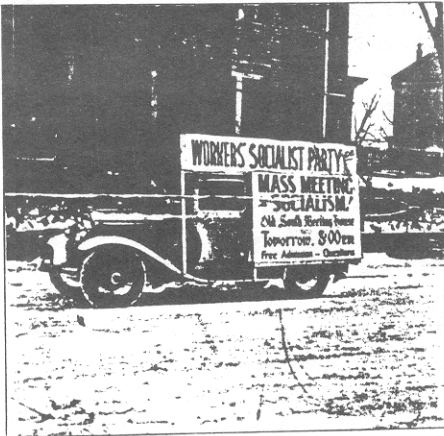
While still attending high school in Boston, Rab was the youngest secretary of the Socialist Party of America (Eugene Debs, Norman Thomas) and considered himself quite well grounded in Marxism. In 1916, as a young man enrolled at Ohio Northern, he went to Detroit in search of a summer job, fully intending to resume his studies in the Fall. He found employment at the River Rouge Ford plant and also contacted the SP of A. There he met his wife for 63 years, Ella Riebe, whose father had been an organizer for the SP of A in the Montana-Wyoming-Colorado region.

He heard about two Englishmen who were conducting socialist classes. The "Brits" were Moses Barritz and Adolph Cohn of the

Socialist Party of Great Britain who chose to sit out the war in the USA. After his first encounter with Barritz's eye-opening mockery of his reformist position and Cohn's scholarly analysis on the same theme, Rab was never the same again. He knew what he wanted to do with the rest of his life. So much for the SP of A! So much for college! He would stay in Detroit.

Rab was a quick learner and, encouraged by Cohn and Barritz, despite world war I, organized on-the-job classes using SPGB pamphlets as text in the factory yard during lunch hour. He was warned by his supervisor many times, but he ignored the consequences. His defiance finally resulted not only in his dismissal but in his being blacklisted. By this time he and Ella had two little children, and there was nothing to do but move back home to Boston.

Somewhere around this time, a few scattered comrades in New York and Detroit along with Rab in Boston organized the Socialist Education Society, which eventually evolved into the



Workers' Socialist Party and finally the World Socialist Party. Alone in Boston, Rab spoke on street corners and attracted enough people to start classes, first in his home and then in rented rooms, empty storefronts and finally meeting halls. He was a colorful speaker and a superb teacher, so much so that by the mid-twenties a viable group had been organized.

In 1928 he became the director of a sizeable boy's athletic club called "The Vagabonds." He knew little about baseball but his talks on science, philosophy and current events (from which he always extracted a socialist message) soon had the boys reading Party literature and listening to selected university professors whom Rab had been able to persuade to address the Club in their specializations. At least half the group eventually joined the WSP.

The depression of the thirties provided fertile soil for socialist propaganda, and the Party grew in numbers and spirit. There was much enthusiasm and a youthful mingling of social and socialist activity. A new and busy Party headquarters became a center of many interests. Rab's house became a home away from home to comrades and prospects

alike. The open-house atmosphere was graciously presided over by Ella, whose children had by then grown up sufficiently for her to become active in the Party. She was secretary of Boston Local during the most dynamic years.

Then came world war II. The Party, even under wartime conditions, managed to carry on successfully. Regular forums, debates, economic classes and discussions, as well as the publication of the Western Socialist were steadily maintained. Of course, during this period, Rab was not alone; there were many members eager to write, speak and even clean up headquarters after a meeting or a social event. It was possible to embark on an extended organizing tour of the Detroit-Chicago area which was instrumental in re-establishing the Detroit Local. Those were probably the happiest and most rewarding years of Rab's life.

After the war, the social climate became less favorable to spreading socialist ideas. Returning servicemen were forced to reorganize their lives under new circumstances and perspectives, altered hopes and fears. With the cold war anti-red sentiment and the witch-hunting of the McCarthy era, the Party suffered along with every other group that deviated from the 100 per cent flag-waving jingoism of the period. The WSP continued to hold its own for many years, but it had clearly lost its momentum of earlier days.

It is pleasant to recall that Rab found optimism and encouragement even when

things appeared adverse. One such special occasion was his visit (with George Gloss of Boston) to Great Britain during the early fifties: he brought back unending anecdotes and accounts of the trip. He met people he had known only through correspondence or the Standard, or by reputation. He attended meetings in London, Manchester and Glasgow, speaking at branch and propaganda meetings; he was thrilled by the size, quality and support of the general membership. The entire experience was one of the highlights of his life.

He had begun his quest for a sane society before the days of radio; yet he realized that modern times called for modern measures in the use of the mass media. To his credit, he even appeared on the Party's TV broadcasts in the sixties. Rab was disdainful of the concept of "leaders" and "great men," implying as this does that an understanding of the forces which drive capitalist society was not required. He liked to use the initials ACDSPIE (A Clear, Definite, Socialist Position Is Essential) as a gimmick in lectures and a closing in correspondence.

It is sad to lose him. He symbolizes an era in which one man's voice did not seem so insignificant as today. Although Rab would protest, there is no doubt that the scope of his intellect, the example of his humanity, his expertise as a teacher and his charismatic magnetism combined in a unique personality that inspired people to think... and thinking people to act. Would that there were more "ordinary" men of his ilk. ☺

NEWS FROM THE NEW WORLD

Imagine no possessions....

MAKE FOOD, NOT MONEY

A system of society where everybody has free access to whatever they want obviously can only work if there is plenty of everything to go around in the first place.

When socialists point out that this is possible right now, a lot of people express serious doubts about its feasibility. This is understandable, given that we live in a form of society—capitalism—where most of us don't have what we want, and where it seems that the things we want are so expensive they must be in short supply; people quite naturally assume that the good things of life really are scarce. Socialism in a world of scarcity would certainly be an impossible dream, and anyone who thought otherwise might well expect to have her sanity questioned.

In fact, however, the only reason so many of the things we want and need for our happiness are scarce is that they are produced for sale at a profit rather than to satisfy wants and needs. It's the price tag on things

that keeps them inaccessible. It's not that we can't produce enough of everything to go around. It's that we don't, because then nobody would be making enough of a profit to make production worthwhile.

A good example is food. It's a fairly well-known fact that many people in this country are hungry. But it is important to realize that people don't go hungry because the food supply is inadequate: there is plenty of food. People go hungry because they can't get the money to buy it with (in spite of food stamps).

Let's not just talk about hunger in the United States. There are many people who still believe that, on a world scale, the planet can not produce enough food-stuffs to feed all the people in the world. But this belief (which dates back to Malthus) is quite groundless.

A direct-mail brochure circulated recently by Werner Erhard to promote The Hunger Project* cites some impressive statistics:

In the past ten years, we have come to recognize that a virtual miracle has taken place on our planet. Despite the fact that the world's population has nearly doubled in the past 30



THINK IT OVER!! ... & SUBSCRIBE

4 issues...\$1.00

years, the world's food supply now more than equals the need for food.

Today, for the first time, enough food is produced on this planet to adequately feed every man, woman and child. In fact, the worldwide level of food production is already sufficient to feed the entire projected population in the year 2000—one billion more people. Even with the expected rise in population beyond the year 2000, projected growth in food production predicts the world will continue to have the ability to feed itself

JOIN THE SOCIALIST CORRESPONDENCE CLUB!

SEND THIS FORM
OR WRITE TO:

Louise Cox
c/o Head Office
SPGB
52 Clapham High Street
London SW4 7UN
ENGLAND

Name _____
Address _____

Interest(s) _____



on a sustainable basis.

In addition to the world's food supply having been raised to the level where it more than equals the world's food needs, the statistical evidence and other solid examples of success clearly demonstrate that ending hunger is no longer merely a dream. Hunger and starvation can, in fact, be ended by the turn of the century.

Socialists agree: for a long time now we have been saying there is a potential abundance of food (and of everything else we need) on the planet.

But the only way to end world hunger for good and all is to make food freely available to people by instituting the common right of access to it—along with access to all the rest of the world's wealth. As long as goods and services have price tags, some people will not be able to get what they need. (Which is the whole point of price tags—to limit access.)

THE WORLD SOCIALIST PARTY OF THE UNITED STATES

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 World Socialist Party of the United States 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 labor alone wealth is produced.
2. —That in society, therefore, there is an antagonism of interests, manifesting itself as a class struggle between those who possess but do not produce, and those who produce but do not possess.
3. —That this antagonism can be abolished only by the emancipation of the working class from the domination of the master class, by the conversion into the common property of society of the means of production and distribution, and their democratic control by the whole people.
4. —That as in the order of social evolution the working class is the last class to achieve its freedom, the emancipation of the working class will involve the emancipation of all mankind, without distinction of race or sex.
5. —That this emancipation must be the work of the working class itself.
6. —That as the machinery of government, including the armed forces of the nation, exists only to conserve the monopoly by the capitalist class of the wealth taken from the workers, the working class must organize consciously and politically for the conquest of the powers of government, in order that this machinery, including these forces, may be converted from an instrument of oppression into the agent of emancipation and overthrow of plutocratic privilege.
7. —That as political parties are but the expression of class interests, and as the interest of the working class is diametrically opposed to the interest of all sections of the master class, the party seeking working class emancipation must be hostile to every other party.
8. —THE COMPANION PARTIES OF SOCIALISM, therefore, enter the field of political action determined to wage war against all other political parties, whether alleged labor or avowedly capitalist, and call upon all members of the working class of these countries to support these principles to the end that a termination may be brought to the system which deprives them of the fruits of their labor, and that poverty may give place to comfort, privilege to equality, and slavery to freedom.
Those agreeing with the above principles and desiring enrollment in the Party should apply for Application for Membership from the sec'y of nearest local or the Nat'l Hdqtrs.

By recognizing that **WE NO LONGER NEED MONEY** to regulate the provision of goods, including food, we will make possible a society based on abundance, where everybody can take enough from the common store to satisfy their wants and needs.

As long as money exists, I doubt very much that Werner Erhard will realize his

goal of ending world hunger. But socialism is certainly possible by the turn of the century. All we have to do is make it happen!

—Karla Ellenbogen

(*) From a brochure announcing "the largest global satellite teleconference in history," to take place on November 14th in 19 countries.

Profit and Pragmatism

Now that we are well into the pre-election period, all of the aspiring candidates for the 1988 Democratic presidential nomination are busy trying out their recruitment-poster tactics on us, in the usual effort to persuade us that they can make the system work (provided we have lowered enough expectations, of course).

What are our "choices"?

DUKAKIS offers farmers the option of diversifying their crops instead of flooding the markets with a relatively reduced range of products and pushes in tandem a "socialized" health-care scheme (for Massachusetts). GORE proclaims the need for maintaining a strong "defense posture" (otherwise known as "sending signals to the defense industry"), to defend the US's farflung interests against the spectre of communism (i.e., against workers and peasants fighting for their lives with their backs to the wall). JACKSON emphasizes the importance of economic and social justice as he prepares to continue jet-setting around the world embracing leftist politicians and causes.

BABBIT lives up to his literary namesake, proposing the adoption of government policies which will help to keep business successful and productive; which apparently is an urgent precondition for getting the rest of us that way. SIMON rambles on about education and social issues, as though only some of the issues are social, or, for that matter, issues. GEPHARDT, along with Gore, advocates continued high military spending but with an emphasis on conventional rather than nuclear weaponry. (This will ensure longer and bloodier wars, which are obviously better than short, apocalyptic, radioactive ones!)

Differences Without Distinction

Sounding more like automakers competing for customers than candidates grubbing for votes, they advertise their infinitesimally different approaches to dealing with the issues of the day (housing, taxation, jobs, drugs, etc.). Slick-sounding buzzwords like "partnership" (and more ponderous ones like "infrastructure") trundle through their speeches like inscrut-

able robots.

On the face of it, "pragmatism" seems to be their only shred of a program. As an "approach," it has historically enjoyed a better reception among voters in the US for enunciating a program than its rival philosophy known as "ideology" although both are in their essence closely intertwined attitudes. For each represents, in its own way, a virtue eminently suited to the marketplace.

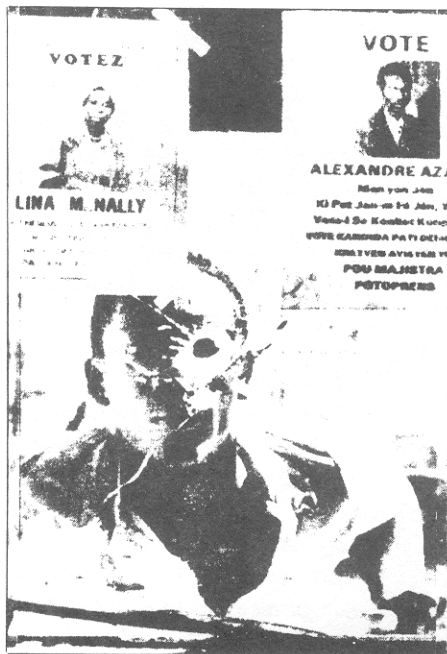
Capitalist production, in its spread around the globe, has made pragmatists of the most diverse kinds of politicians throughout the world's nation-states. But this is very far from saying that a pragmatic approach epitomizes good judgement or "common sense" in a politician. Any pragmatic political course is one way or another founded on some ideological thesis, if only because all forms of action require a theoretical orientation. Yet not one of the present Democratic Party candidates has ever evidenced any awareness of the connection.

Perhaps this is only because the mass media have increasingly trivialized the discussion of issues and

THE WORLD SOCIALIST MOVEMENT

The following parties adhere to the same Object and Declaration of Principles (see page 12):

WORLD SOCIALIST PARTY OF AUSTRALIA	PO Box 1440M, Melbourne, Victoria 3001 PO Box 8279, Stirling Street, Perth, W. Australia PO Box 2291, Sydney, NSW PO Box 1357, Brisbane, Queensland
AUSTRIA: BUND DEMOKRATISCHER SOZIALISTEN SOCIALIST PARTY OF CANADA	Gussriegelstrasse 50, A-1100 Vienna PO Box 4280 Station A, Victoria, BC V8X 3X8 CP 244, Pointe-aux-Trembles, Québec H1B 5K3
WORLD SOCIALIST PARTY (IRELAND) SOCIALIST PARTY OF NEW ZEALAND	41 Donegall Street, Belfast PO Box 1929, Auckland, NI
WORLD SOCIALIST PARTY OF THE UNITED STATES SOCIALIST PARTY OF GREAT BRITAIN	PO Box 405, Boston, MA 02272 52 Clapham High Street, London SW4 7UN



is otherwise in jeopardy.

This is pragmatism of sorts—if we can accept the basic assumption on which present-day society is founded, that profit must be realized to maintain a healthy economy; and provided we can accept a notion of "economic health" according to which people are allowed to drink milk only if they can afford to pay for it—or it will even be produced only if agribusiness can cover its costs.

It doesn't take any close examination of the various procedures being bandied about by this latest team of make-believe surgeons to reveal they are without exception based on the above ideological premise: that human society cannot exist without the selling-and-buying connection. Or that "working for a living"—producing more wealth than that corresponding to one's wages or salaries and benefits, for the enjoyment of a nonworking élite (the accumulators of capital) represents just a fact of nature.

All the "can-do" hype now being pushed on the voters

by the Democratic candidates is really based on the same dreary old capitalist myth. Unfortunately for their solutions, all based on "working within the system"—i.e. retaining production for profit—they are not, from a human vantage point, very pragmatic.

—Mike Phillips

ON * * * * *
SECOND * *
THOUGHT * *



From the Western Socialist:

Exploitation does not mean simply that the workers do not receive the full produce of their labor; a considerable part must always be spent on the production apparatus and for unproductive though necessary departments of society. Exploitation consists in that others, forming another class, dispose of the produce and its distribution; that they decide what part shall be assigned to the workers as wages, what part they retain for themselves and for other purposes. Under public ownership this belongs to the regulation of the process of production, which is the function of the bureaucracy. Thus in Russia bureaucracy as the ruling class is master of production and produce, and the Russian workers are an exploited class. In Western countries we know only of public ownership (in some branches) of the capitalist State.

—"Public Ownership and Common Ownership"
(Anton Pannekoek,
November 1947)

ideas. But there is another side to the question with which even Democratic politicians should be familiar. Economists call it "effective demand," and, while all of the candidates know about it, not one of them suspects there might be something wrong with it. It is that old basic rule of capitalist production, that commodities cannot move from producer to consumer unless a profit is realized in the process; for the wellbeing of the economy

BURYING TSARISM/cont.

that) being in the right place at the right time to seize power.² Lenin called upon his loyal sailors from the Fortress of Kronstadt in Petrograd Harbor to disperse the first session declaring that "the workers have voted with their feet!"³ And so the misnamed Dictatorship of the Proletariat was born.

Why misnamed? The precedent cited by Lenin and retained forever after in Bolshevik mythology was the Paris Commune of 1871, which Frederick Engels had declared to be "the Dictatorship of the Proletariat."⁴ But it must be pointed out that the Commune was a

multi-party government with Marxists in fact a small minority, compared with Proudhonian anarchists and followers of Auguste Blanqui—the latter certainly no Marxist but an advocate of the very type of minority revolution that the Bolsheviks did pull off almost a half-century later. Unlike the Bolsheviks, however, Blanqui accepted the situation and participated in the short-lived revolutionary government along with his Proudhonian and other opponents.

So the Revolution itself was certainly not an example of a Marxist revolution (one
(cont. p. 15)

BURYING TSARISM/cont.

made by a socialist—class—conscious—working class) on the understanding of Marx and Engels. As far back as 1848, when both were young men, they had seen the proletarian—socialist revolution as having to be the work of the vast majority in the interests of the vast majority.⁵ Such a concept is in harmony with their Materialist Conception of History. Each social order, according to this theory, creates its own "gravediggers," the class that must organize to overthrow it. Socialism would in that case have to be instituted by a working—class majority, conscious of its place in history. There was no such animal, for Engels and Marx, as a "revolutionary vanguard."

Russia's Capitalist Revolution

Despite the edited Marxism of the Bolsheviks and all the protestations to the contrary by capitalism's mass media and educational establishments, the Bolshevik Revolution could not have been more than the completion of Russia's capitalist revolution begun the previous March. The bourgeoisie of Russia were entirely too insignificant in numbers to bring to fruition the transformation of a peasant-based economy into one bearing the hallmarks of wage labor and capital as its dominant relationships.

What was therefore needed in Russia to accomplish such a goal was an economy controlled and in fact owned by the state: state capitalism. And that was what was instituted, with varying degrees of intensity, from the earliest period of "War Communism," when the Bolsheviks had to fight off invading armies and White Russian forces on some 21

different fronts; through Lenin's New Economic Policy (NEP), when outside capital and capitalists were encouraged to invest and build in "Communist" Russia; and on to Stalin's collectivization of agriculture and the Five Year Plans for industry.

What ensued, over the decades, was a series of periods marked by mass liquidation and exiling of "Kulak" (capitalist-minded) peasants, purges of political oppositionists, slave-labor "gulags," and so on. But always in the background—and this is the essential hallmark of capitalism—the Bolsheviks set about assiduously developing and extending the exploitation of a growing working class via the perfecting of the relations of wage labor and capital.

Thus assured of an expanding pool of captive labor power, the emerging state bureaucracy that encrusted itself around the perquisites of office began to assume, in increasing measure, the more traditional role of a national bourgeoisie, even if it did refuse itself the designation of such.

--Harmo

1. See the Selected Works of V.I. Lenin, Vol. VI, "The Second All-Russian Congress of Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies" (New York: International Publishers), p 399, for the text of this declaration.

2. The reader will also note that the percentage of seats in the Constituent Assembly shifts in favor of the Socialist Revolutionaries (to 54.1 per cent of the deputies, as against their plurality of only 41 per cent of the popular vote)

3. Referring, apparently, to the mass desertion of Russian troops from the Eastern Front during the

first world war, the seizure of land by peasants and the obvious massive rejection of the Provisional government.

4. See the Preface to The Civil War in France by Karl Marx.

5. See the Communist Manifesto, Section II, "Proletarians and Communists," where they speak of the proletariat using its political supremacy to "wrest, by degrees, all capital from the bourgeoisie" and of "the revolution by the working class." Later, Marx revised himself in favor of "abolishing the wages system" altogether—an act which would make it obviously unnecessary to propose "wresting capital from the bourgeoisie," i.e., transferring it to the state and then abolishing private property.

SOCIALIST PAMPHLETS

Questions of the Day	1.00
From Capitalism to Socialism: How We Live and How We Could Live	.70
Socialism as a Practical Alternative	.60
A World of Abundance	.25
Women and Socialism	.70
Trade Unions	.70
The Strike Weapon	.60
Historical Materialism	.60
Socialist Party and War	.60
Is a Third World War Inevitable?	.60
Ireland--Past, Present and Future	.60
Head-Fixing Industry	.60

WSP-US
BOX 405, BOSTON, MA 02272

I enclose \$_____ for the above items (check off as appropriate).

Name _____

Address _____

A Revolution Still to be Made

Editor's Note: The following text is taken from a letter issued at the close of a speaking tour of the United States last Spring by two comrades from Europe: Steve Coleman of the Socialist Party of Great Britain (SPGB), and Richard Montague of the World Socialist Party of Ireland. It was written jointly for distribution to the general public, and we reproduce a section of it here because of its relevance to the cause of world socialism.

It is with great pleasure that we can report the success of our recent North American speaking tour, organized by the World Socialist Party of the United States. Activities ranged from debates against defenders of capitalism (in one of which an economics professor ran out of the hall rather than answer our case) to public meetings (some informal, others in large halls with audiences of over 100—all well received) to radio interviews (such as the Fred Fiske Show in Washington, DC, one of the most prestigious programs of its kind on which we were kept on for two hours rather than the one originally planned and succeeded in tearing Fiske's apologies for capitalism to threads).

We are under no illusion that the tour was the beginning of a socialist revolution or that the many people who gave us a polite hearing all agreed with us. What the tour did show—and it demonstrated this emphatically—was that there is a wide body of people in North America who are receptive to genuine socialist ideas (as opposed to the Leninist defense of Russian state capitalism or left-wing reformism). Those of us who are part of that wide body have a duty to build upon what exists, expanding the world socialist movement into a known political force in this country.

Our Present Situation

The World Socialist Party of the United States is currently a very small political organization and we do not pretend for one moment that we have all the answers concerning the way to transform society from the insanity of capitalism to the socialist alternative embodied in our object and principles (see page 12). We do claim that the case for socialism is simple, logical and in urgent need of dissemination throughout the world.

What are the problems we face?

Firstly, the bosses own and control the institutions of education (indoctrination), the media and the big, well-funded political parties of capitalism.

Secondly, the concept of socialism has been systematically distorted over the past century, both by those who have a vested interest in opposing it and those who claim to be defending it.

Thirdly, many workers have been driven to cynicism by the history of capitalist politics and want nothing to do with any "isms" or political organization.

Fourthly, America is a vast country and the tyranny of distance makes it much harder for those of us who are not rich to organize than for our bosses who possess the technology of mass communication.

Barriers to a Socialist Movement

There is no point in ignoring these obstacles to the growth of a socialist movement in this country. Neither should the problems lead us to defeatism. History is the story of humankind overcoming its problems and, without exaggeration, if we are to survive at all it will only be by overcoming the mighty barriers before us and developing a World Socialist Party which can defeat capitalism.

It is instructive at this point to consider the position of our fellow socialists in Ireland, who are mainly based in Belfast: five years ago there were only two of them in the WSP there, fighting a lonely struggle against bigotry and violence. Today they are a party to be reckoned with—probably the most visible party in Belfast—with their own office, a printing press, a regular journal which is selling very well and a growing membership.

So what can be done?

We need a commitment from as many people as possible to join, or at least support, the WSP in its North American efforts. We do not want support from those who do not adhere to our principles, for only on the basis of common understanding can we be a movement of equality, without leaders or led.

Above all, we need activity of a conscious kind so that we can build this movement on the basis of the strength of principled socialist knowledge.

—Aaron Feldman (WSP-US)

Steve Coleman

Richard Montague

World Socialist Review

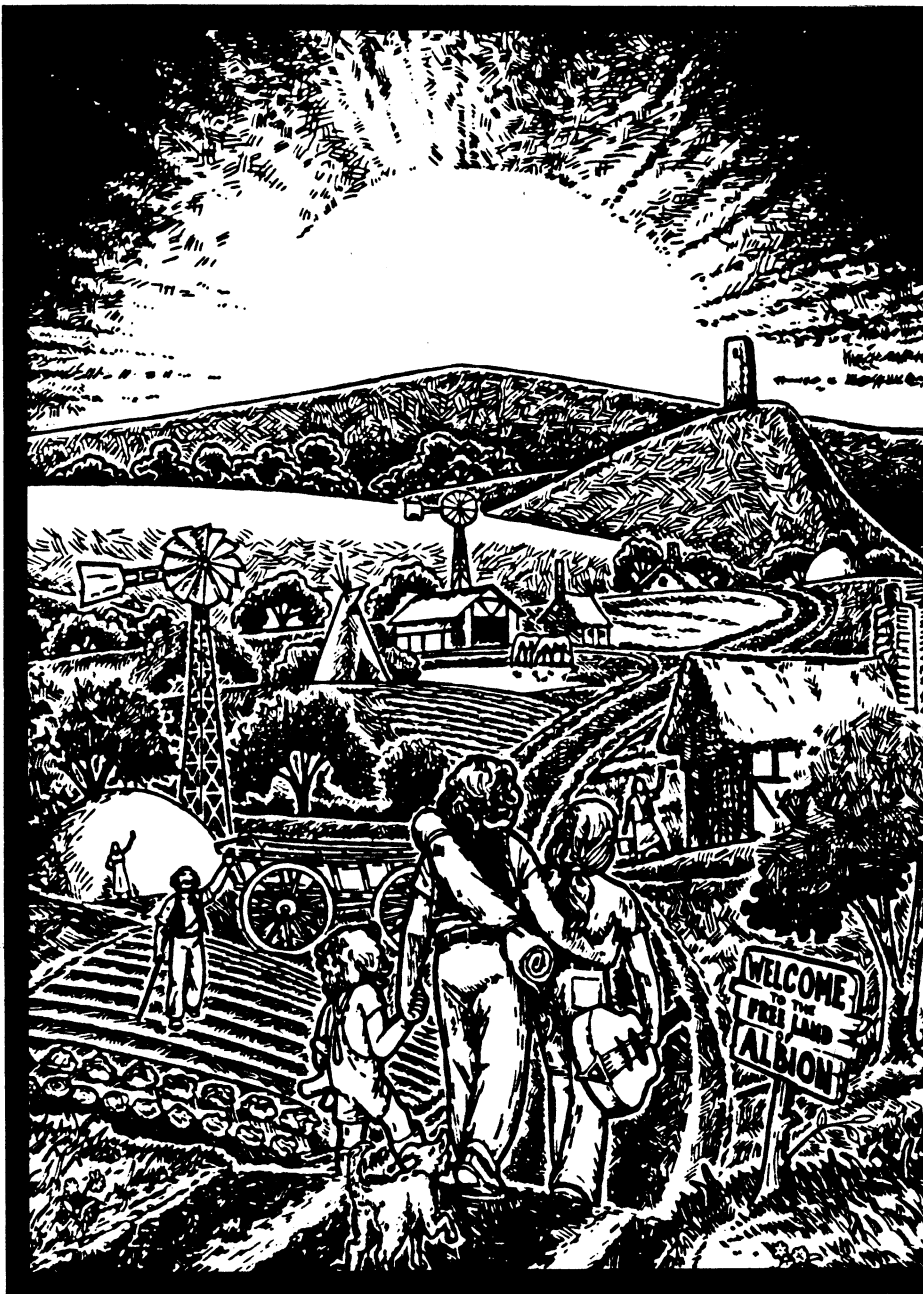
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Summer 1988



a voice of world socialism



working within the system

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Potless, U.S.A.

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Nicaragua

Working on Felipe's
Farm

Poverty as a Living
Standard

Oscar Wilde on "Living
for Others"

Survival of the Filthiest

Socialism: The Basics

Capitalism is the social system which now exists in all countries of the world. Under this system, the means of production and distribution (land, factories, offices, transport, media, etc.) are monopolized by a minority, the capitalist class. All wealth is produced by us, the majority working class, who sell our mental and physical energies to the capitalists in return for a price called a wage or salary. The object of wealth production is to create goods and services which can be sold on the market at a profit. Not only do the capitalists live off the profits they obtain from exploiting the working class, but, as a class, they go on accumulating wealth extracted from each generation of workers.

Profits Before Needs

With its constant drive to serve profit before need, capitalism throws up an endless stream of problems:

- ◆ Most workers in the United States feel insecure about their future; the proportion of people living below the official poverty line was 13.6 per cent in 1986.

- ◆ Even though rooms go empty for lack of (paying) tenants, many people are homeless or inhabit slums.

- ◆ Though science has made it possible to live longer, old people are lonely, undernourished, routinely abused, neglected and denied adequate medical care.

- ◆ Food is destroyed and farmers are subsidized not to produce more, yet many millions here and abroad are malnourished or starve outright.

- ◆ Hospitalization costs skyrocket as a result of investments in expensive new facilities: yet it is not "economically viable" to provide decent health treatment for all.

- ◆ Homosexuals and racial or ethnic groups are singled out for social and economic discrimination and outbursts of bigotry. Women have to defend the right merely to be exploited equally.

- ◆ Better and faster ways to fight more destructive wars have placed the world on a permanent war footing.

As long as capitalism exists, profits will come before needs. Some reforms are welcomed by some workers, but no reform can abolish the fundamental contradiction between profit and need which is built into the system. No matter whether promises to make capitalism work in the interests of the workers are made sincerely or out of opportunism, they are bound to fail, for they amount to offering to run the slaughterhouse in the interests of the beef.

Why not nationalize industry? That would simply mean workers were exploited by the state acting on behalf of the whole capitalist class rather than by an individual capitalist or company. Workers in a nationalized General Motors would be no less the servants of profit than they are now, when a supposedly "private" board of directors makes all the big decisions. Nationalization is state capitalism--it is not socialism.

The so-called socialist countries are

likewise systems where a thoroughgoing nationalization has been put into effect. In Russia and its empire, in China, Cuba, Albania, Yugoslavia and the other countries which call themselves socialist, social power is monopolized by privileged Party bureaucrats. All the essential features of capitalism are still present. An examination of international commerce shows that the make-believe socialist states are part of the world capitalist market and cannot detach themselves from the requirements of profit.

In fact, socialism does not exist anywhere--yet. When it is established, it must be on a worldwide basis, as an alternative to the outdated system of world capitalism.

In a socialist society:

- ◆ The earth's inhabitants as a whole will exercise common ownership and democratic control of the earth's resources. No minority class will be in a position to dictate to the majority that production must be geared to profit. There will be no owners: everything will belong to everyone.

- ◆ Production will be solely for use, not for sale. Everyone will have automatic free access to goods and services. The only questions society will need to ask about wealth production will be: what do people require and can their needs be met? These questions will be answered on the basis of the resources available to meet them. Unlike under the present social arrangements, modern technology and communications will be usable to their fullest extent, and society will actually be able for the first time to calculate the requirements of production and consumption as a function of the ecosystem.

- ◆ On an individual scale, nothing short of the best will be available: a society based on production for use will end the cycle of poverty and waste because its first priority will be the fullest possible satisfaction of needs. People will be able to observe without difficulty the basic socialist principle--to give according to their abilities and take according to their self-defined needs. They will work on a basis of voluntary cooperation, having abolished the coercion of wage and salary work. They will not have to engage in buying or selling, since money will not be necessary in a society of common ownership and free access.

- ◆ Without national currencies to sustain them, national boundaries will become unenforceable, and national budgets will become quaint mysteries to future generations. For the first time ever the people of the world will have common possession of the planet earth.

Human Nature...or Human Behavior?

Human behavior is not fixed but is determined by the kind of society people are conditioned to live in. The capitalist jungle produces vicious, competitive, shortsighted ways of thinking and acting. But we humans are able to adapt our behavior and there is no reason why our rational desire for

/Cont. pg.4.

THE DRIVE FROM THE WHITE HOUSE to radio station WAMU takes about 20 minutes and passes from the mansion provided as the presidential residence of a retired millionaire B-movie actor through some of the worst slums I have ever seen. It is hard to believe that human beings inhabit some of the squalid dwellings of downtown Washington DC. There are not supposed to be poor people in America: it said nothing about them in the brochure.

This is the land of the affluent workers, isn't it? Richard Montague from Belfast, a city notorious for its slum areas, sighed. "Now, this is what I call a ghetto," he said. "Worse than the slums we have at home." 80 per cent of the population of the US capital city are black workers, mainly employed in the low-wage service industries, mainly housed in the kind of rotten conditions which the tourists do not go to see.

Sitting in the radio studio was Fred Fiske, presenter of Washington's most prestigious phone-in program. A man given to talking a lot about "the genius of American capitalism"; a bully with a reputation for putting callers straight—a bigot with a microphone. For two hours Montague and I debated the case for world socialism, repeatedly confronting the confusion and distortion of our host's capitalist tunnel-vision intellect. It was a good two hours: the man who was going to put us reds in our place was put in his place. At the end of the show, as we were leaving, the news came on: four people dead, 15 injured after a tenement building in the South Bronx of New York collapsed. Ah, the genius of American capitalism.

On the road from Washington to Charlottesville, Virginia are dozens of caravans (trailer homes). Holiday homes for American workers seeking a break in the countryside? Not at all. These were the homes of families too poor to live anywhere but in run-down vans on the side of the road. As the recession hits the USA harder and unemployment rises in the cities, this is the fate of many an American worker.

Slums in America? Homeless in America? Can this be possible in the land of the free? Not according to Professor Bornhofen, an economist whom I had the pleasure of debating against in Michigan on the question, "Capitalism vs. Socialism." In stating the case against capitalism I referred to workers too poor to afford shelter: 100,000 officially homeless in Britain and who knows how many more in the USA? With all of the eloquence and erudition which one would expect from a high-salaried apologist for the profit system,

Bornhofen responded, "That's a lot of crap. Why, I doubt if there are more than 1,000 homeless people in America." Well, if ignorance is bliss, Professor Bornhofen should have been one of the happiest men in Michigan that day.

No homeless workers in America—1,000 at the most? Let us turn to the rich oil state of Texas. According to figures published by the National Coalition for the

Homeless, there are 25,000 homeless people in Houston alone. The city devotes not a single dollar of taxes to building houses or providing for the homeless; the state of Texas is second only to Mississippi at the bottom of the league table for state provision of social services. One newspaper reports the situation in the following terms:

"In the chapel of downtown Houston's Star of Hope Mission sits a Saturday night congregation that is a cross section of the city's hard-core homeless. Tired old men are here in mix-and-match clothing from

the mission closet. While the physically disabled set their sights on lower bunks, the mentally disabled engage in long conversations with no one in particular. Here, too, are groups of lean young men only a few days out of the Texas Department of Corrections maximum security facility... A few men in their 30s—new to the streets and ill at ease—talk to no one. All need a meal and a place to sleep... The mission director reads from his list of randomly ordered numbers, and those remaining show their numbered bed-tickets and file out towards the 500-bed dorm. It's a place to sleep until breakfast call at 4:30 AM. In the huge converted warehouse the roof leaks and it's cold. Every man sleeps fully dressed. All of this, three meals and a bunk—offered by what is arguably the most generous men's shelter in the state—is provided without the expenditure of a single tax dollar. In Texas the homeless live off the kindness of strangers, not taxpayers." (In *These Times*, 4/8/87)

Homeless in Dallas

In Dallas, the city known in this country [Britain] from the TV soap opera in which everyone is either rich or very rich, there are 15,000 homeless people out of a population of one million. According to John Fulenwinder, the Dallas chairperson of the National Coalition for the Homeless, there were just under 43,000 forced-entry evictions in Dallas last year: a rate of 165 each working day. And that is just in two cities in one of the 51 states.

Potless, U.S.A.



Robert Neubecker illustration © Inx.

All of the other obscenities of working-class poverty exist in the illusory land of the free. Even the so-called affluent American workers are now caught in the trap of unemployment. The Department of Education has reported that 51 per cent of high school graduates not entering university are without a full-time job three years after graduation. Among 18-24 year-olds the Census Bureau has recorded a 50 per cent increase of those living in official poverty in the five years between 1979 and 1984. Not only are the poor becoming poorer but young workers who had been regarded as economically secure are moving ever more rapidly into the ranks of the officially poor.

Poverty in the USA breeds

its own problems, not least of which is racism. When workers are being squeezed extra-hard so that the rich can get richer they soon turn on one another. Violence against American blacks has been on the increase; at the beginning of this year a gang of racists beat up three black men in the white suburb of New York called Howard Beach—one of the victims was murdered. In one area of New Orleans a sheriff has become a popular racist hero for threatening to arrest any blacks caught walking or riding through the white folks' town over which he presides. ("A New Racism," *The Nation* 1/10/87)

In the USA one per cent of the population own 40 per cent of all marketable wealth. That is 20 per cent more than they owned 20

years ago. In short, the super-rich are owning and controlling more and more and more. What they possess the overwhelming majority of Americans are excluded from possessing. The power of the capitalist minority is at the expense of the freedom of the wealth-producing majority to own and control the wealth which surrounds them. That is what capitalist freedom means—they own; we don't—they are few, we are many—they have privilege, we work like horses producing profits to feed that privilege. That is the freedom offered by "the land of the free."

—Steve Coleman
(Reprinted from the *Socialist Standard*)

SOCIALISM cont.

comfort and human welfare should not allow us to cooperate. Even under capitalism people often obtain pleasure from doing a good turn for others, and few of us enjoy participating in the "civilized" warfare of the daily rat-race anyway.

Many workers know something is wrong and want to change society. Some join reform groups in the hope that capitalism can be patched up, but such efforts are futile, because you can not run a system of class exploitation in the inter-

ests of the exploited majority. People who fear a nuclear war may join the Nuclear Freeze movement, for instance, but as long as nation states exist, economic rivalry will always be driving governments down the road to war.

Many sincere people get caught up in dedicated campaigns and good causes, but only one solution exists to the problems of capitalism, and that is to get rid of it as a system by replacing it with socialism. But to do that requires socialists, and winning workers to the cause of socialism requires knowledge, principles and an enthusiasm for change. Anyone can develop these qualities—but they are essential for anyone who is serious about changing society.

Changing the World

The World Socialist Party, as an educational influence on the working class, stands apart from all other political parties, whether Left, Right or "Other." It has no other aim than to establish a social order based on the satisfaction of human need instead of on private (or state) profit. The Object and Declaration of Principles found on page 12 date back to 1904 and were originally adopted here in the US about the time of the first world war. They have been maintained without compromise ever since. In other countries companion parties and groups exist to promote the same object and principles, and they too remain

independent from all other political parties.

An authentic socialist party has no leaders. Ours is a democratic organization controlled by its members. We understand that only a conscious majority of workers can establish socialism. Workers must liberate themselves. They cannot be liberated by leaders, parties or gurus acting for them. Socialism will never become a reality through the actions of a dedicated minority "smashing the state," as certain leftists would have it. Nor do the activities of paid, professional politicians have anything to do with socialism—as we now know from the experience of numerous (successful) national liberation movements.

Getting out of capitalism means getting it out of our heads first. Once a majority of the working class understand and want socialism, they will take the necessary step of consciously organizing for the democratic conquest of political power. This does not mean administering capitalism on a plea of eventually implementing socialist principles (as in Russia). It does mean using the state to immediately set about dismantling the basic institutions of capitalism: wages, prices and profits.

Capitalism in the 1980s remains a system of waste, deprivation and demoralizing insecurity. You owe it to yourself to find out about the one movement that stands for the alternative to it: world socialism. Ø

The World Socialist Review

a voice of world socialism

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Fighting Over Money in Nicaragua

Taken by itself, sandinismo is hardly more radical than any program of minimum demands as it might be advanced by a Social-Democratic party. But what makes it seem progressive is its present head on confrontation with the United States. While US capitalists could live with the prospect of a declining share in the expanding Latin American markets (which they have been a major force in promoting), they are not about to give away any free capital to their emerging competitors.

It is also true that Sandinista capitalism rests on the new régime's support for the right of workers to organize in trade unions and cooperatives, and on its sympathy with demands for higher wages and better working conditions. The small and medium sectors of the Nicaraguan capitalist class reluctantly accepted the need for swallowing such a bitter pill as a price for replacing Somoza as the president of their Executive Committee. (Now they have to make do with Daniel Ortega.) Somoza's dictatorship was keyed to maintaining workers at below-subsistence levels so that Nicaraguan capital could competitively "insert" its coffee, cotton and other exports into the structure of international trade dominated by the United States.

The Sandinista Difference

The new Nicaraguan capitalism seeks to boost itself as an independent competitor in the world markets—spurred, it is true, by the multinational-inspired contrarrevolución. It cannot convin-

cingly do so on the same grounds as those of its predecessor, since this would make the one indistinguishable from the other—"somo-cismo without Somoza." Speaking of the Sandinista philosophy of agrarian reform in Nicaragua: What Difference Could a Revolution Make?,¹ Joseph Collins argues that

the Sandinistas' philosophy of agrarian reform is not anti-private property. Rather, the Sandinistas believe that the right to productive private property carries with it the obligation to use that property for the benefit of the society. Private property rights are guaranteed by the government but only if the owner is using the resource: owners letting their land lie idle, for example, will be subject to expropriation. [p 36]

(Observe how tenderly and solicitously they court the "business elite"!) If we are to accept the altruism implicit in this passage, both sides ought to confine themselves to negotiating short-term consensus agreements and leave the ownership question for posterity to deal with.

But the Sandinista slogan of "People before profits" obscures the reality of the low-level warfare inherent in the employer-employee relationship: the profit of the few—and only a few can authentically be capitalists—requires the poverty and wage-subservience of the

many. The erstwhile beneficiaries of somocismo—those large landowners not believed to be the overt cronies of Washington's late S.O.B.—are unambiguous in their recognition of this; constantly accused of "decapitalizing" their holdings (not maintaining land and equipment, sending their capital out of the country, fraudulently obtaining agricultural loans in order to squander, hoard or expatriate the money), they have every reason to suspect that an insecure future lies in store for them.

The Revised Class Struggle

But they are really straw men in the class struggle now unfolding in Nicaragua. We can get a much better idea of how the modified class relations stack up under sandinismo from a random selection of statements in the above-mentioned book:

◆ [Quoting Xabier Gorostiaga, an official in the Ministry of Planning:] "80 per cent of agricultural production is in the hands of the private sector, as is 75 per cent of industrial production." The 20 per cent of agricultural production that does belong to the state is deliberately called 'Area of the People's Property, [of which] "the state is not the owner, [but] only the administrator" [Gorostiaga]. [p 36]

◆ [Decree No. 3, which nationalized nearly 2 million acres on approximately 2000 farms and ranches in 1979] left a full two-thirds of the farmland in capitalist hands... [Capitalists are] landowners large enough to hire labor or rent out their land, or both. These landowners are different from small farmers ("campesinos") who usually use only family labor. These small producers, unaffected by the confiscation decree, controlled less than 15 per cent of the nation's farmland. [p 31]

◆ Under Somoza, labor legislation included a \$2.10-a-day minimum wage for agricultural workers. But few workers ever got it. In practice, wages typically ranged from 80¢ to \$1.70 a day, except for skilled workers such as tractor operators... A few months following victory the new government boosted the minimum wage by 30 per cent. But because the government paid the minimum wage on state farms and attempted to enforce it elsewhere, the average rural wage may have gone up over 60 per cent. [p 69]

◆ While many agrarian reforms have started by giving land titles to tenants and sharecroppers, the Sandinista agrarian reform appears much more conservative. In regard to rent, it no more interferes with private property than do urban rent control laws in many "free enterprise" industrial countries. By making rents low and outlawing evictions the Sandinistas sought to provide secure tenure to poor campesinos while side-stepping the bugbear of private property. [p 37].

It becomes obvious in retrospect that the workers and peasants thought they were getting a capitalism stripped of its problems, in many (if not most) cases confusing this with socialism (a change in the basis of society). To them capitalism as such ran together with capitalism as they knew it under Somoza. The Sandinistas themselves knew, of course, that the real task would on the contrary have to be to integrate Nicaragua's national production into the capitalist world economy.² Since the Somoza régime stood so solidly identified with US imperialism, the ideological version of that world economy inevitably took an anti-imperialistic stance. And if there were any among the Sandinista leadership who really believed that socialism in Nicaragua was achievable

within a worldwide framework of capitalist production, they were quickly disabused.

Now that Somoza and his National Guards have been demoted to the footnotes of history, the Sandinistas have no choice but to try to make capitalism function according to their model. After putting themselves on the winning side by incorporating the demand for land redistribution into their program, they suddenly discovered after the victory that land takeovers were not in the interests of creating a surplus for earning foreign exchange, so they (not altogether successfully) began to discourage peasant occupations.³ Now they have realized that the wage levels will always be limited by the amount of capital available for paying wages and have accordingly taken steps to dampen wage demands for the duration. (Women still receive lower wages for the same work, although their situation is much improved—reflecting their participation in the revolution.)⁴

Profits, ¡Sí! Wages--Maybe

Tomás Borge, the last remaining founder of the original Sandinista Front, explained to the disgruntled unions that "without more goods... more money [for wage-earners] is no help."⁵ That is, if the goods could not be produced at a profit, they would not be produced. And without increased production, there could be no question of wage increases. Printing more currency to serve as means of payment to workers would only inflate the currency, which would threaten to drive real wages down.

Capitalism in Nicaragua, hobbled by somocista underdevelopment though it has been, is no different in its essentials from capitalism anywhere else. It has markets, wages and profits; goods and services that are produced by a wage-earning class for sale at a profit on the market; wage-slaves and profit-masters. It is subject to the same restraints as capitalism elsewhere, as well as to a few others peculiar to it. And, as in other parts of the world, it cannot work in the interests of the working class, regardless of whether the state

"intervenes" or "lets do."

It is the classic function of a party of the Social-Democratic or Labor type to agitate for reforms in behalf of both organized labor and unorganized working people. And like Social Democrats and Laborists around the world, the Sandinistas imagine that this trying to cope with capitalism is itself a socialist movement. Given their immediate goal of fitting a reformed Nicaraguan economy into a highly structured international system of capital accumulation, it comes as no surprise they could not afford to encourage a "land-to-the-tiller" agrarian reform.

No More Selling Or Buying

In a socialist (communist) society there could be no question of redistributing land so that small farmers could sell their produce on the market: there will be no buying and selling of anything. No one will have to "work for a living"; everyone will be able to get what they calculate they need as a matter of course. Neither the United States nor Nicaragua would even exist as nation-states in a socialist world (since it takes national currencies to sustain taxation, governments, states and national boundaries).

But the Sandinista philosophy doesn't so much as nod in this direction. It only offers a better deal for workers and capitalists; it represents a pact between exploited and exploiter. Lest, however, we should somehow manage to come away with the impression that sandinismo means marxismo or even comunismo, Jaime Wheelock, Nicaragua's minister of Agriculture, has set the record straight. Addressing the national assembly of the Farmworkers' Union (ATC) in December 1979, he rejected the notion that workers on state farms are wage laborers:

They are producers of social wealth, and the consciousness of the producer is quite different from that of the wage laborer... He knows that each stroke of the machete is no longer to create pro-

/Cont. pg. 18.



SPAIN: Working on Felipe's Farm

The Socialist Workers' Party of Spain (PSOE) rode to power in February 1982 on the crest of a wave of optimism which had originated as far away as Paris, France, where the Socialist Party had won a sizeable majority in May 1981, at the same time electing François Mitterrand president of the republic. So for a few years the air was echoing with promises of reform from the French Alps to the Rock of Gibraltar.

Time passed, and the real implications of pseudo-socialism became apparent to French workers, who proceeded in 1986 to reverse their decision of 1981 by voting into office an alliance of the right grouped around the old Gaullist Jacques Chirac and his *Rassemblement pour la République* (although still largely excluding the fascist pedigrees of the National Front). In Spain, time also passed but pseudo-socialism continued its vogue. The PSOE was still peddling a home-grown version of "reindustrialization" and "restructuring" to working-class constituents as late as 1987. But serious trouble was brewing, and it broke through the surface early last year, beginning with nationwide worker and student strikes similar to those in France beginning in late 1986.

What explains the mysterious patience of the Spanish workers? Part of the answer lies in the political names that have gained currency

over several decades of class struggle in Spain, and part lies in the naïveté or forgetfulness of the post-Falange generation. The PSOE has a long history of silent metamorphoses: creeping reformism under Pablo Iglesias¹ was defended, Kautsky-fashion, up through the Civil War as being compatible with achieving an ultimate goal of social revolution. It became the redoubt of Republicanism in Spain in its efforts to repress the Franco rebellion and subsequently in its efforts to survive the Franco repression.

Enter the González Team

When the "Felipe González team" took over as the dominant current within the party in the early 70s however, any remaining pretext of basing party policy on Marxian principles was quietly scrapped—even as the theoreticians continued to trumpet the party's "methodological" credentials². The "socialism" which workers would be voting into office a few years later was no longer even rhetorically related to their interests as a class.

It was trickle-down economics with a leftwing accent, revamped in its language so the "little people" could understand it: with the PSOE in charge, profits would be made to serve the interests of the wage-earning majority; industry would expand, jobs would become at once easier to find and bet-

ter-paid. This was formula Mitterrandism; and the PSOE, for its part, had absolutely no trouble repudiating its own principles as even a nominal basis for action. It accomplished belatedly in practice what German Social Democracy had done back in the 50s out of theoretical considerations—it opted outright for administering capitalism in an "enlightened" and progressive manner.

Things seemed to go well for it at first. As long as the government could sell workers on the belief that what was good for the peseta was good for them, it could excuse its failures as mere bad luck. And as long as it could keep workers quiet—organized labor especially—the government could count on the confidence and support of the capitalist class. But something went wrong:

In last year's election campaign, the Socialists talked too blithely of improving the workers' lot. Given the state of the Spanish economy, with an uncomfortably high inflation and one of the worst unemployment rates in Europe, that was imprudent. [*The Economist*, 6/6/87]

"Disappointed by what the government has been able to achieve since the election," the writer goes on to say, "hundreds of thousands of Spaniards... have been coming out in a rash of strikes this year."

Socialism with a Capital "C"

From the standpoint of the unions, however, the government's perplexing fascination with prolonging what was justified as a phase of belt-tightening³ was not really the straw that broke the camel's back. It was rather the irrefutable evidence (if any was actually needed) that the PSOE had definitively abandoned its identification with people who work for a living, shifting its priorities from eventually redistributing wealth to maximizing profits—at once. [*El País*, 10/26/87.]

It was precisely the government's laborite mask, in fact, that initially shielded it from the reaction ac-

corded to the right in Germany and France. But, as an earlier Economist article put it, "the tolerance [began] wearing a little thin" [3/1/86], so that it was a "non-labor" issue--the struggle of the students against the government's proposed educational measures, as in France--that acted as the catalyst for labor's unhappiness.

The burst of teenage political activity caught the government by surprise and was greeted with delight by the UGT which provided *Nueva Claridad* [the organ of a militant student tendency] and the student union with printing facilities, meeting rooms and funds. [New Statesman, 4/24/87.]

This went well beyond the often-lackluster support which labor officials had displayed toward the student movement in France. The motivation was the same; students had "virtually lost

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hope of finding a job." [New Statesman]

While it is true that the right is presently in a state of disarray, this does not preclude its becoming suddenly inflated with disgruntled working-class votes. Neither worker nor student organizations want to go too far in criticizing the González régime: the UGT's Secretary General, Nicolás Redondo, "nevertheless intends to stay on as a member of the party's federal committee in order, he says, to 'vote against and criticize party decisions.'" [The Economist, 10/31/87.] (He gave up his seat in parliament last October 20th to protest what he saw as the government's "putting employers' interests before those of the working class.")

Wasting Their Votes

The Economist's money-colored truisms apart, however, wage slavery can never be in the interest of the working class. Something can only be in your interest if you gain an advantage as a result of it. The capitalist class has an unmistakable interest in the wages system in whatever form works best, but the working class can only find in it a provocation to be endured.

Perhaps this is the face of the future--where it becomes the norm for governments to be composed of parties professing a socialist ideology, a progressive outlook, even having radical credentials, and having to turn ruthless in defiance of their own cherished theories once in office. Workers have had more than their share of false friends and fake fights since Marx first ad-

vised the working class to go for the jugular and abolish the wages system.

It takes no small degree of disillusionment with that system to ask the exasperated question: What difference is there between electing representatives to power to have them manage your exploitation and having to suffer the election of those who make no secret of their ambition to do the same? The left can't please its constituents any better than the right, and now--in addition to the well-documented evidence provided by Britain's Labour Party that capitalism cannot be managed in the interests of anybody but capitalists--the mounting wreckage of more impressive movements on the Continent (the PS in France, PSOE in Spain) renders the verdict compelling. It remains only for workers everywhere to accept that verdict.

-- DE

1. Iglesias was one of its founders and its longstanding General Secretary who was also its first elected deputy in the Cortes or parliament. During his life, reformism (the ascendancy of the "minimum program") was never formally accepted as a basis for party policy, as it had been in Germany.
2. Examples of this divorce abound in a 1976 paperback, *Partido Socialista Obrero Español*, published as part of a "political series" celebrating the demise of the Franco system.
3. *El peso del ajuste económico*--the burden of economic adjustment--in the words of Nicolás Redondo, UGT (Workers' General Union). [El País, 10/26/87]

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Poverty as a Living Standard

There are those who take the position that life is getting progressively better, that only a minority experience severe poverty, and that the standard of living for the majority, while being far from perfect, is nevertheless improving all the time. Further, with the help of proper leadership, certain reforms, and the grace of the Good Lord, the system under which we live, capitalism, affords mankind the best of all possible worlds.

We register an absolute disclaimer to this approach, because not only is it untrue and unrealistic, but it promotes a toleration that hampers scientific investigation of the case for socialism.

Being Poor

From a socialist standpoint poverty can be defined as the economic, social and living conditions of the working class as compared to those of the capitalist class. It is the contrast between the environment experienced by the working class who, in order to live, have to work for wages, because they are propertyless in the means of production and distribution, and the completely different economic circumstances and environment of that small section of society, the capitalist class, who live on rent, interest and profits and are the owners of the means of life. Viewed from this position the working class must always experience poverty as compared to the wealth and luxury enjoyed by their employers. No political party, no brilliant leadership, can ever change this fundamental situation within the confines of the present system.

The other yardstick is the one used by the government to define poverty, which relates to a certain wage level at any particular time. Under this guideline all families with incomes below a certain figure are living in poverty. This is a misleading approach because it only reveals part of the story, but the ascertainable information that it produces is nevertheless always awesome and frightening.

The United States Census Bureau on September 25, 1976 verified 25.9 million persons lived in families that were below the government-defined poverty level of \$5500 for a nonfarm family of four. The poverty level was up, due to inflation, from \$5038 in 1974. The number of people in poverty was the largest since the 27.8 million in 1967, when the poverty level was \$3410. The Census Bureau said that more Americans slid into poverty in 1975 than at any time in the 17 years that the government has been keeping track.

The phrase, "standard of living," should encompass a broader field than consumer goods and services. Your standard of living is obviously affected by the quality of the air you breathe; the security or otherwise of your means of livelihood; the effect on your mental and physical health that living conditions under this society produces; the quality of education and public information; the exposure to crime and violence, both in the real world and the one on television. And surely our standard of living is most horribly and adversely affected by the most dangerous and devastating threat with which mankind has ever been confronted--the possibility of a worldwide nuclear war that could completely annihilate the human race. As far as I am personally concerned my standard of living is most certainly contaminated by the potential horror of nuclear warfare, which has been unleashed on two occasions in the bombing of Nagasaki and Hiroshima.

Working for a Living

Dealing with the consumption of commodities, the working class are limited in their access to wealth by their wages, which are a monetary payment for the sale of labor power. Workers can never afford to purchase back the values that they produce--if they could, the capitalist class would be deprived of their livelihood, because it is on the surplus value, produced over and above the

wages paid, that the employing class live.

The commodities purchased by the workers have been manufactured and distributed primarily for profit; their use value is incidental to the reason for their creation. The worker, therefore, comes to the market place first, with a wage that prevents him going beyond a very limited figure, approximating to his costs of production as a worker; second, he finds himself confronted with goods and services that, because they have been produced for profit, are of inferior quality.

The market place is concerned with the realization of profit; quality is sacrificed accordingly in order that sales can be effected in price ranges to meet the pocketbooks of the purchasers. The loaf of bread, the automobile, the house, are all produced not primarily to satisfy needs, but to produce profits. The result is always a conglomeration of substandard products. Food that has been processed and chemicalized so that deterioration will be retarded should sales not be made fast enough; and products made as cheaply as possible, many with built-in obsolescence.

A Decent Standard of What?

The worker is legally robbed in the field of production by only receiving back a portion of the values he produces in the form of wages; then, when he goes to the market place, he generally gets what he pays for, but because of his limited purchasing ability he receives not the best that can be produced, but products that come nowhere near the quality that could, under a sane society, be attained. This, then, is the poverty that the working class must endure. The owning class, however, can afford the very best that can be produced. The rich and the super-rich enjoy a life that bears no resemblance to that of the workers.

In actuality the term "standard of living" is a misnomer--it is really a "standard of poverty."

Poverty is shopping in the supermarket and buying food not of top quality because you are operating within the limitations of a

wage packet. Poverty is buying clothes and living in dwellings, again of inferior quality, because you cannot afford to go beyond your budget. Poverty is going on vacation and putting up with second rate mass transportation, accommodations and food, because these commodities are produced for the specific consumption of wage workers. Poverty is having to save for a so-called rainy day—the rich don't save: they accumulate—there is a vast difference. Poverty is having to spend a lifetime scrimping to get by, as glorified scavengers ever seeking cheap, inferior merchandise in order to survive.

Poverty does not exist because the capacity for producing and distributing wealth is insufficient. Wheat and coffee have been burnt while millions starved; fish thrown back in the sea because it was not profitable to sell; potatoes dumped in order to maintain prices; factories closed and houses not built while millions need jobs. All this as a result of over-production! Poverty exists because it is inseparable from capitalism. The wages system and the ownership of the means of production and distribution by a minority prevent the minority from enjoying the fruits of their labor.

Chronology of Poverty

Chronologically let us consider some facts concerning poverty and the so-called standard of living:

President Roosevelt in a speech made April 20, 1937, said, "I see one-third of a nation ill-clad, ill nourished. I see millions lacking the means to buy the products of farm and factories."

In a news item January 6, 1947 the examination of military recruits for the US Army revealed more than one third were physically unfit for service, and in certain parts of the southern states 35 per cent of the patients were found to be suffering nutritional anaemia.

In 1949 there were 10.5 million families with incomes of \$2000 or less.

Former President Kennedy spoke of 17 million hungry Americans, and when he supported Medicare for the aged he said that the average American worker retires with

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Fortune magazine in 1964 said "that in March 1964, more than six million people live in families whose incomes are so low that they qualify for free food from the federal government, that 7,300,000 Americans live in housing classified as dilapidated, and that there are nearly two million families who scrape by on cash incomes of less than \$1000 a year."

The Citizens Board of Inquiry into Hunger and Malnutrition in 1968 stated that 30 million Americans go hungry while 10 million of them are actually starving.

The New York Times Magazine, March 22, 1970, in an article refers to "...hunger that is so widespread and perpetual—affecting the health and welfare of at least 20 million people..."

This is in America! Further, in the same article, "By count of the Office of Economic Opportunity (which is always conservative in such tallies) there are at least 1.3 million Americans who have no income, not a penny. The experts who estimate these things believe that in the crannies of the slums and behind the hedgerows of rural America, another six million or more exist on less than \$300 a year."

Unemployment

In June 1975 unemployment in the United States was 7.9 million.

In September 1975 the number of unemployed in 18 European countries, the US, Canada, Japan, Australia and New Zealand jumped to an estimated 17.1 million, according to statistics compiled by the International Labor Organization (ILO). This revealed an increase of 6 million from a year earlier, and the figure represented both the largest total, and the largest 12-month increase recorded by the ILO in the past 40 years.

In 1976 we were told that we had 7.8 per cent unem-

ployed.

As reported by the US Census Bureau on September 26, 1976, and as already mentioned, not only were there 25.9 million persons living in families earning less than \$5500 a year, which is the government-defined poverty level, but the average wage of factory workers in 1975 was \$163 per week, the minimum federal wage of \$2.30 an hour represents \$92 for a 40-hour week, and the average payment to retired workers on Social Security in 1975 was \$206 per month.

We suggest that these figures might well indicate that at the present time in the United States approximately 25 million people are going to bed hungry every night.

On August 20, 1980 a report from Washington (UPI) stated: "The World Bank estimated this year 780 million people throughout the world are living in 'absolute poverty.' It described this as 'a condition of life so characterized by malnutrition, illiteracy and disease as to be beneath any reasonable definition of human decency.'"

And so we can speak in general terms about poverty and the so-called standard of living, and in specifics and statistics. But in the final analysis workers must be the judges and draw the conclusions. Surely the evidence is all around us, and we are all engulfed in it to such an extent that most of us are not as yet able to appreciate our own predicament, because the poverty that always stalks us, together with the capitalist propaganda that always misleads us, has been overwhelming. Society, however, is never static and the insoluble contradictions of the system are on the side of the socialist message. For capitalism with its wars, poverty and insecurity stands condemned—socialism, as a solution, awaits its long-delayed recognition.

Once you have heard, read and understood the case for socialism, and you still are not convinced, you must surely be reasoning as follows, either:

- (1) You consider capitalism tolerable, or
- (2) You consider that capitalism can be properly

/Cont. pg. 18.

THE WAY IT IS **

Media and consciousness

FREE THE AIRWAVES!

The rapid development of the technology of communications makes present social relations more and more outdated with every day. The obstacle to a more free use of these exciting new channels is the same as that which held back the spreading of knowledge for hundreds of years: the fact that a minority class possess and control the means of communication just as they do the means of production in general.

In 1637, under a decree of the Star Chamber, whipping, the pillory and imprisonment were to be the penalties for publishing without the consent of the licensors, who were headed by the Archbishop of Canterbury. In later years, an invidious "tax on knowledge" known as the Stamp Duty was the slightly more subtle method used to prevent the majority of the population making "subversive" use of their growing literacy. In 1831, however, and in defiance of the Stamp Duty laws, Henry Hetherington brought out the Poor Man's Guardian, a "weekly newspaper for the people, established contrary to law, to try the power of 'Might' against 'Right,' price 1d." On the front page, in place of the official government red stamp was a black one inscribed "Knowledge is Power," with a drawing of a printing press and the words "Liberty of the Press." The first paragraph of this journal is worth quoting from, if only to demonstrate the difference between this early working-class paper, and its latter-day namesake, the Liberal Man's Guardian:

No more evasion; we will not trespass, but deny the authority of our "lords" to enclose the common against us; we will demand our right, nor treat but with contempt the despotic "law" which would deprive us of it.

The Stamp Duty was finally abolished in 1855, but not before Hetherington had served a prison sentence for his pains.

The capitalist state is a coercive machine and overcomes the sporadic resistance of individuals and groups by resorting to force or the threat of it. But it could not survive for long if it had constantly to use such brutal (and costly) methods. In the course of the nineteenth century in Europe there gradually evolved an ideology of reformism, the intention of which was to replace repression with placatory gestures to accommodate the working class into the administration of their own exploitation. This presented the ruling class with a dilemma on the question of working-class literacy. As a Justice of the Peace was quoted as saying in 1807:

It is doubtless desirable that the poor should be instructed in reading, if it were only for the best of purposes—that they may read the scriptures. As to writing and arithmetic, it may be apprehended that such a degree of knowledge would produce in them a derelish for the laborious occupations of life.

In 1870 this dilemma was solved through the enactment of the Education Act, which provided for a standard system of state-controlled schooling, capable of manufacturing the raw material for modern industry: literate, numerate and disciplined wage-slaves. The tradition of independent working-class self-education continued to flourish, however, in Mechanics Institutes, in bodies such as the Workers Educational Association, and through the carefully preserved bookshelves of knowledge passed down from one generation of workers to another, cherished for the relevance of their contents to the problems which confront workers: the works of Marx and Engels, of William Morris and Robert Tressell.

A Well-Behaved Explosion

The early 20th century witnessed an explosion of large scale communication technologies, once again under the strict and stifling control of the state or of private

business interests. In 1984, more than 150 years after the publication of the Poor Man's Guardian, it is still illegal for anyone to broadcast publicly over the airwaves to others, without the (unlikely) approval of the BBC or IBA. The 1949 Wireless Telegraphy Act allows the Home Office almost total power to control and regulate the use of the frequency spectrum. The capitalist class monopolizes the land and factories across the world (including the state capitalist Russian empire); the air itself, however, is no more immune from this tragic abdication of responsibility for our world and lives which we make by allowing a minority to possess that world.

The 1930s saw the evolution of the new culture industry, with an increasingly uniform state-regulated leisure entering the sway of the world market. In marketing communications as a commodity in itself, as huge profits were accumulated. The big telecommunications multinationals such as IBM, ITT, Western Electric and AT&T are usually to be found on the list of top ten US companies today.

Evading the Monopoly

Of course, there have continually been attempts at various levels to evade this monopoly. In 1962 a young Irish businessman, Ronan O'Rahilly, tried to promote a recording of Georgie Fame and came up against the power of EMI, Decca, Pye and Philips, who between them cornered 99 per cent of the market. All the radio stations, including Radio Luxembourg, were working hand in glove with these companies, so O'Rahilly founded Radio Caroline. In 1967, however, the Labor government's Marine Broadcasting Offences Bill outlawed all the pirate stations and later that year the BBC's new 4-channel radio service came into operation with Radio One as a pop channel, all safely under the control of the (Labor administered) capitalist state.

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Communications technology in the 20th century has been developed according to the needs of profit and, as a corollary to this, according to military needs. By the mid-seventies there were, according to NASA, about 3,700 satellites in space. Of these, only a handful were communications satellites; the vast majority served the military establishments of the superpowers, in command and message systems, logistics, interception and surveillance.

Under capitalism, the latest advances in communication technology will be used to improve the efficiency of profit accumulation while dividing people more and more from one another and from their own self-determined needs. For example an advertisement for one of the home microcomputers on the market speaks of the delights of "balancing the family budget" (working out what you can no longer afford after splashing out on the computer) and of "the fascination of controlling your own private little world" as being "addictive."

Multilateral Media

With the advent of socialist democracy, there could be a great proliferation of multilateral communications systems. We must forget the false division between the passive entertainment of the media and the active process of education. In the words of Brecht, "Radio must be changed from a means of distribution to a means of communication." But for the devices at the disposal of humanity to be used to enhance, rather than obstruct, the democratic control of society, we must replace the social relationship of employers and employed which permeates the world today with social relationships of equality and cooperation:

A microphone is not an ear, a camera is not an eye, and a computer is not a brain...as we design technological systems, we are in fact designing sets of social relationships. [Mike Cooley, Architect or Bee?]

The forms which communication takes will be directly related, in other words, to

/Cont. pg. 18.

THE SOCIALIST PARTY OF CANADA and THE WORLD SOCIALIST PARTY OF THE UNITED STATES

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 Companion Parties of Socialism hold:

- 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 labor alone wealth is produced.
- 2 That in society, therefore, there is an antagonism of interests, manifesting itself as a class struggle between those who possess but do not produce, and those who produce but do not possess.
- 3 That this antagonism can be abolished only by the emancipation of the working class from the domination of the master class, by the conversion into the common property of society of the means of production and distribution, and their democratic control by the whole people.
- 4 That as in the order of social evolution the working class is the last class to achieve its freedom, the emancipation of the working class will involve the emancipation of all mankind, without distinction of race or sex.
- 5 That this emancipation must be the work of the working class itself.
- 6 That as the machinery of government, including the armed forces of the nation, exists only to conserve the monopoly by the capitalist class of the wealth taken from the workers, the working class must organize consciously and politically for the conquest of the powers of government, in order that this machinery, including these forces, may be converted from an instrument of oppression into the agent of emancipation and overthrow of plutocratic privilege.
- 7 That as political parties are but the expression of class interests, and as the interest of the working class is diametrically opposed to the interest of all sections of the master class, the party seeking working class emancipation must be hostile to every other party.
- 8 THE COMPANION PARTIES OF SOCIALISM, therefore, enter the field of political action determined to wage war against all other political parties, whether alleged labor or avowedly capitalist, and call upon all members of the working class of these countries to support these principles to the end that a termination may be brought to the system which deprives them of the fruits of their labor, and that poverty may give place to comfort, privilege to equality, and slavery to freedom.
Those agreeing with the above principles and desiring enrollment in the Party should apply for Application for Membership from the sec'y of nearest local or the Nat'l Hdqtrs.

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Imagine no possessions....

A WORLD COMMUNITY

No one pretends to know how a moneyless world community might be run. But it never hurts to toss a few ideas around on the subject. Even though the exercise is no more than brainstorming, it is precisely out of learning to project alternatives that we can get a practical sense of what we want that world community actually to be like. We can do this without resorting to ideological devices like blueprints if we stick to the range of immediate possibilities which capitalist society has already inherited from the past and has developed for us.

1. "Socialism" and "communism" both mean free and unconditional access to whatever goods and services people are willing to produce. What could a "community" consist of that had ceased to place items of necessity up for sale on the market? Since trade is the *sine qua non* of the nation-state, a world community which has eliminated the need for using money will therefore have ceased to require national boundaries. Describing such a community as a "world government" could not mean anything that we now use the term to mean. It will not possess government-like features, or even resemble a confederation of government-like bodies, since its components will be socio-economic units rather than political ones. It will know only the boundaries of language and culture, and even these will have a long-term tendency to become blurred and indistinct.

2. But—you might ask—don't we need political boundaries? National frontiers as we know them are merely symptoms of a larger divorce of work from enjoyment; their very possibility requires a process of production which transforms items of use (wealth) into commodities—goods and services defined as being in excess of the producers' needs. Once the work required for human survival was placed on this basis, con-

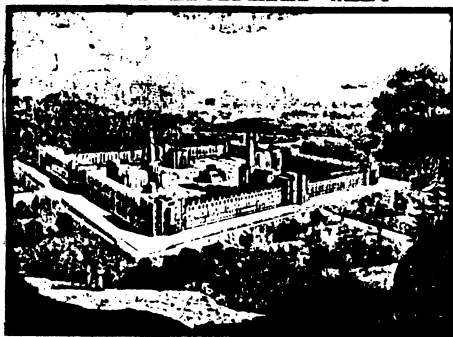
flicts inevitably arose over how the resulting wealth was to be distributed. Society became divided into owners and non-owners; into classes which "have" and classes which "have not."

Every state represents simply the institutionalization of this whole process all over again. Those who have thus made themselves the owners of the earth's productive resources use the state to secure their position. Traditionally the private owners of commodity wealth in one state have always needed as much protection from their equivalents in other states as from those who produced the wealth which they ordered produced.

If the earth's entire population as a whole owns all the wealth produced on it, no group can be in a position to refuse to share productive resources with anyone else. No one will have a basis for denying anyone else access to the things they need. No one will be able to force someone else to work or have the ability to refuse them goods and services for failing to work.

A Society Without Employers

Without employees, there can be no employers. Without employers, there can be no government. A worldwide community is incompatible with the concept of employment. Its "politics" will center instead on the satisfaction of mutually negotiated needs. Although people's needs are predominantly local in character, their satisfaction will still take place in a global context. Instead of an impersonal market mechanism laying prices on everything, normal patterns of usage, the availability of materials and the sustainability or the difficulty of the labor process will determine what



scale production should most appropriately take, ranging from local to worldwide.

Production Without Money

It is having to use money to obtain goods and services (resulting from the twofold distinction between owners and producers on the one hand and producers and consumers on the other) that places the control of resources and decision-making in the hands of a minority in the first place. The controllers of markets are those who accumulate capital; in a socialist society (one which has ceased to use money and works without markets), the power of control will revert to people again. Government will cease to be necessary. States will become functionless.

3. Thinking of such a world community or commonwealth as a single administrative entity is probably a large oversimplification. Because local users will of necessity have first call in making the bulk of the decisions regarding the disposal of resources, it could only have a loose unity at best. This follows from the fact of common ownership itself, which really signifies that no one has private possession of the means of producing goods and services. What will make world socialism different from what we now know is the way these local users will integrate their needs and activities to constitute a single worldwide social organism. People will coordinate rather than "plan" their production and consumption.

Existing international agencies, generated by the complexity of administering today's system of global markets, could in principle be easily adapted to this mediating function. At first, they will probably continue acting as representatives of a system of national states. But as the full impact of free access begins to set in and the social patterns of a moneyless world community begin to consolidate themselves, pressures will build to restructure these agencies from the representation of states to the direct, many-sided global analysis of local-user needs. How far this transformation might go is not for us to say; but that it must happen seems

probable.

4. Does a world community of producers, on the other hand, really have to operate as a centrally structured unit, with large-scale decisions taking precedence over small-scale? The word "community" is closely related to the idea of communication; that is, the viability of a world community is bound up with the free and generalized provision of information by everyone to everyone.

A Democracy of Information

A community on a world scale may thus be defined as a worldwide democracy of information. In the absence of the power to deny anyone access to resources, "rule by the people" will not involve making use of any instruments of rule. (Whether this actually fits the concept of rule at all may be disputed.) As long as the channels of communication are adequate to all demands placed on them by society at large, the distribution of wealth can always be coordinated with the activities of individuals as they express their needs on a regular basis.

5. We should think of a world community, therefore, less as a set of institutions than as a common vehicle: an arrangement, shared by the earth's entire population, for relating common patterns of living and working together for each other's benefit on a world scale. Such an arrangement will only work if it is grounded in people's actual living requirements, as expressed and determined by them, speaking for themselves as producers and consumers. The affairs of the world community will be shaped through continual, widespread discussions and formulated as an ever-changing mass of information. This "mass of information" will be all that will be needed in the way of a central plan.

A direct result of removing the blinkers imposed by the market system will be that people will put away the capitalist neurosis of regarding nature as an enemy to be conquered; by cultivating the habit of discussing each other's mutual needs on a global scale, they will find it natural to conceive them in the context of the ecosystem.

6. Organizing society in this fashion will obviously require a mature basis for ordering our social relations. But it is just such a basis that we already possess in embryo under capitalism: for working people now run the (anti-social) capitalist system from top to bottom. We already have the knowledge and the skills to replace economic development (the accumulation of capital based on national markets) with a world-scale production originating directly in demands made by the users themselves. Production for use eliminates any need to "enrich" the poor because it means the liquidation of the system which grows out of, generates and enforces poverty. We have all the means at our disposal for converting to a system of production aimed at satisfying everyone's present and future needs; all the tools for making interdependence give way immediately to interaction now lie waiting at our fingertips.

We are foolish to pass up the chance to use those tools.

— RE

IS THERE A "ROAD" TO SOCIALISM?

State Capitalism: The Wages System Under New Management. Adam Buick & John Crump (The Mac-Millan Press Ltd, 1986)

You have only to attend a meeting of any of numerous groups identifying themselves as "socialist" or "communist" to find out one thing: with few exceptions, they do not define their immediate goal as being worldwide in scope. They regard replacing the buying and selling of necessary goods and services with free access to the same as a very long-term aspiration (though the notion enjoys wide acceptance as an abstraction). Between the cup of communism and the lip of capitalism, they claim, there lies a wide gap, and that gap can only be bridged by a complicated and unpredictable series of short-term objectives. Eventually society will be transformed, it is true, but not starting from the present reality as we

REVIEWED * * *

Books of interest to socialists

currently understand it.

Those groups organized as formal political parties seeking to attract the support and/or the votes of workers and other sectors of the population thus find themselves nailed fairly tightly to a framework of nationalism which has to justify itself through an appeal to "proletarian internationalism" or something similar. Followers of Lenin and Trotsky, for example, advocate setting up a "workers' state" which will liquidate the institutions and mechanisms by which private owners of the means of production perpetuated their legal monopoly over the output of goods and services. According to this scenario, the exploiting (capitalist) class continues in existence for a while but is sternly regimented by the party in control of the machinery of state and enjoying the well-informed support of the ma-

jority.

In *State Capitalism* Adam Buick and John Crump carefully dissect the concept of state ownership of the means of wealth production and lay bare the mass of rationalizations leading up to it. First they establish the general boundaries of discussion by defining what the term capitalism means, then they distinguish between two models of capitalism: the one traditionally accepted as such (private capitalism, the earliest form) and the other representing a number of historic adaptations or variants of capitalist monopoly over social production (in response to some structural failure on the part of the "private" model). Since this second type is characterized by the nationalization of enterprises—with or without a thoroughgoing state management of the system of production—it is of course best described as "state" capitalism.

This result can be accomplished in two ways. Either the state can bail out individual capitalists by taking

over the legal proprietorship and control of their businesses without a major political upheaval occurring (as has become common in western Europe); or a revolutionary opposition can develop within the bosom of capitalist society and, with varying degrees of majority support, raze the preceding régime to the ground, totally reorganizing the system of exploitation (as in eastern Europe, Russia and China). In the second case, a new capitalist minority replaces the old, leaving the same or equivalent relations of production intact. Though from a narrowly legal angle the new minority renounces all private title to the system of production, they nevertheless retain monopoly control over it.

"Socialist" Profits?

In the fourth chapter, the authors deal with a question which everyone has sooner or later asked: What makes a state-capitalist economy different from a "classical" one? They tackle a couple of familiar old fallacies: namely, the belief that

"Socialist" profit is not capitalist profit because "all profits belong to the people" or, to put it another way, because "the state distributes profit for the benefit of the people." "Socialist" wages are not the mark of an exploited working class, but are the means by which social wealth is distributed according to each individual's contribution to production. (Ch. 4, "The Capitalist Dynamic of State Capitalist Economies")

In the end, however, no matter on what ideological grounds wage exploitation is put into effect, the leopard cannot avoid keeping its spots. "Profit is pursued because, due to the competition which is inherent in world capitalism, state capital continually has to invest newly acquired surplus value in a compulsive effort to accumulate and hence expand itself." (p 101)

Before going on to socialism as the alternative to either state or private capitalism, they briefly out-

line some of the ideological underpinnings on which the justification for state capitalism rests, showing how the thinking of its advocates evolved out of "classical" socialist theory (as found in the writings of Marx or Engels) into its Leninist and post-Leninist forms.

Basic Features of Socialism

Having comprehensively mapped out the state-capitalist terrain, Buick and Grump have no difficulty elucidating the basic features of a socialist society: It must be worldwide; all goods and services will be produced for use only and distributed free; it will have no classes, states or national frontiers; no exchange of goods and services will take place—since there will no longer be any market to regulate consumption.

The disappearance of economic value would mean the end of "economic calculation" in the sense of calculation in units of "value" whether measured by money or directly in some unit of labour time. (Ch. 6, "The Alternative to Capitalism")

The need for planning will be met by establishing "a rationalized network of planned links" occupying the successive phases through which the cycle of production/consumption passes. "Planning" in that context will mean only the coordinating of "a direct interaction between human beings and nature." (The authority of economists rests partly in fact on the working class's uncritical acceptance of their doctrine of an inherent natural scarcity.)

If the language in the last chapter makes heavy use of the conditional tense, this does not imply any prediction of utopia. It only acknowledges that workers have so far failed to shake themselves out of the slumber of poverty. This is a process which necessarily must take place on a world scale (if not everywhere at precisely the same time); for a whole society to make the changeover to production for use requires a conscious

understanding of the stakes by enough of the world's population to constitute a political force greater than any that capital can muster in its own defense.

Such an intense concentration of well-informed opinion has not yet occurred nor will it ever—if workers (including both highly paid professionals and exploited agriculturalists) continue to limit their thought horizons to those of the national state into which their destiny as wage-slaves has thrust them. The admirable thing about State Capitalism is that it provides a sorely needed theoretical framework for tearing loose of the deadly embrace of nationalism. This framework (as noted in the book) has been slowly emerging within the world socialist movement in the decades since the Bolshevik revolution, most significantly in the propaganda of our companion party, the Socialist Party of Great Britain. The book itself makes a highly readable contribution to this ongoing effort to create a class-conscious, socialist majority—one that will finally get capitalism's funeral cortège rolling toward the cemetery. ☺



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YOU SAID IT

Our Masters' Voice

FOLLOW THE RAINBOW BRICK ROAD

So anomalous is the US political system that a presidential candidate like Jesse Jackson can appeal to organized labor as only a segment of a larger constituency and yet still come across sounding like the worker's last best hope for getting "a fair day's pay for a fair day's work." Says Irving Beinen of the National Committee for Independent Political Action,

the National Rainbow Coalition is not a labor party and it is institutionally related to the Democratic Party, even though it is not part of the Democratic Party as such. But its basic thrust and program and its constituency makes it come closer to a labor party than anything we have seen in 50 years. [Socialist Action, Dec 87]

In a country which spawned the Horatio Alger Syndrome and Rugged Individualism Complex, workers have never advanced a candidate who exemplified the class struggle (with the one exception of Eugene Debs)—someone whom they believed represented their interests and whom they thought would use political office to advance them at the expense of employers.

On the contrary, the US worker's unsexed political consciousness always ends up melting down into daydreams about that Great Big Happy Family in the Sky. The Rainbow Coalition is really just the most recent example of this, as we see from a campaign leaflet quoting Jesse Jackson:

There is nothing wrong with the American worker, the family farmer or the small business

person. Economic violence is no accident. Deregulation, unchecked corporate greed, incentives to merge companies, purge workers and submerge the economy must be reversed. ["Bold Leadership /New Direction"]

You see: If we would all Get Responsible the System would Work! At a Jackson victory celebration following the supertuesday primaries in the Southern states, Reverend Herbert Daughtry told the excited crowd:

We're going to reshape the American landscape and make America what it ought to be—a place where all the American people, Black, white, red, yellow and brown, can live together in peace and pursue the dream that this country belongs to all of us. [Frontline, 3/28/88]

In a debate with the Trotskyists, Irving Beinen (quoted above) was led to defend Jackson's record as a candidate in the following terms:

He's against plant closings. Is that in the interests of the capitalist class? He's marched on picket lines supporting workers in the most important strikes of the country. Is that in the interests of the capitalists? [Socialist Action, Dec 87]

(Well, yes...it depends on which group of capitalists you're referring to.) Beinen further elaborated on this conception of representing class interests in describing the Democratic Party:

It's a capitalist party whose main base consists of workers, Blacks, Latinos, poor people, even unemployed people. It is controlled lock, stock and barrel by big business and by capitalists, without any question.

Jackson's plan, he asserted, is to "weaken that control." It must be obvious, however, that any plan to operate the profit system in the

interests of the exploited majority must always stumble over its own feet, since not all the money in the world could ever suffice to eliminate that majority's poverty and powerlessness. Capital requires poverty, just as a living organism requires oxygen. It breathes in surplus value—all that "extra" stuff that the little workers don't need and that belongs by divine right to their betters. "Weakening the control" of one group of capitalists could not have more effect than to strengthen the control of another group. What we really need to do (starting right now) is to eliminate capital period, brother.

WHO'S IN CHARGE HERE?

Obscurantism is alive and well on Wall Street. Donald Trauscht, vice president of finance and strategy for Borg-Warner Corp., "has decided to peddle big pieces of his company [sic] to foreigners." [Wall Street Journal 2/24/88]

Well, so what? Money is money, after all. But it does tug at the heartstrings a little bit: "There is sadness in my heart," he bleats, "but I'm a realist. I know where we're at." This reflects a belief that "a lot of the country is up for sale right now," as Douglas Lamont of Northwestern University puts it. ("Right now," even!) Trauscht shares Lamont's worries:

As a citizen and a patriot, I'm concerned. I don't want this country to be owned by foreigners.

One of the spreading consequences of last year's stock market crash was a scrambling of the very delicate web of paper profits that the capitalist class had so laboriously reconstructed following its last débâcle in 1973. One million-million dollars just "disappeared" in a day's trading. Overextended companies are now having to retrench by selling off "pieces of themselves" to buyers "with stacks of yen or marks."

Donald Trauscht is not shedding such bitter tears over earthly goods like work and play, marriage and divorce or even life and

/Cont. pg. 18.

OSCAR WILDE on "Living for Others"

The following article is taken with permission from The Nation (2/20/88), where it appears as "Minority Report" (a feature column). The writer--Christopher Hitchens--not only expresses an insight into the underlying realities of exploitation and social class but also reminds us of a few things about Oscar Wilde that the capitalist class would presumably prefer to play down as quaint or awkward.

That said, we do take exception to what seems to be the author's implied existence of a "middle class," since the liberal middle class of Wilde's time has itself become today's conservative "upper class", having changed only its ideological diapers in the process. Developed capitalism knows only two classes: those who own the means of production and those who work for them to produce and distribute wealth, either to the former's profit or to their minimum cost. A worker is anyone whose only source of income is the sale of their mental and physical abilities.

--The Editor

....The salient point about [Oscar] Wilde was the economy and address of his wit. He did not froth with bons mots like some second-rate charmer. He was a tough and determined Irishman who more than once flattened bullies with his fist, and most of the time--if we exempt pardonable and tempting sallies about blue china and decorative screens--his drawing remarks were not snobbish or mannered. I suppose that people need to see him as a species of languid dandy, which is why The Soul of Man Under Socialism is almost never discussed when dear Oscar's name comes up.

Try to find that essay in

any of the current anthologies of Wilde. First published in 1891, it was geldingly retitled The Soul of Man while Wilde was in prison. It expressed the sensibility that had impelled him to take the side of the Irish rebels and, in particular, to oppose the British government's attempted frame up of Charles Stewart Parnell, who, like Wilde, was destroyed on a charge of immorality when all else had failed. It gave Wilde the same distinction as that which he acquired by being the only writer in London to sign George Bernard Shaw's petition for the Haymarket martyrs. And it contains the following imperishable sentence:

The chief advantage that would result from the establishment of Socialism is, undoubtedly, the fact that Socialism would relieve us from that sordid necessity of living for others which, in the present condition of things, presses so hardly upon almost everybody.

This is not the flippant remark that philistines might take it to be. It is in fact what is truly meant by "compassion," a word now made to sound sickening in the mouths of Democratic hypocrites.

What those hypocrites mean when they intone the hack word "compassion" is that we should not forget the needy and the desperate as we pursue our glorious path of self-advancement. This is the rough equivalent of the older injunction that we should remember the wretched in our prayers. Wilde was proposing something infinitely more daring and intelligent--that we regard poverty, ugliness and the exploitation of others as something repulsive to ourselves. If we see a slum, a ghetto, a beggar, or an old person eating pet food, we should not waste pity on the victim. We should want the abolition of such conditions for our own sakes. The burden of enduring them is too much.

This is why early social-

ists were quite proud to be accused of spitting in the face of charity. The principle that an injury to one is an injury to all is not just talk; it is the expression of a solidarity that recognizes mutual interest. As Wilde also wrote, in his review of Edward Carpenter's Chants of Labour, "For to make men Socialists is nothing, but to make Socialism human is a great thing." His appreciation of paradox here makes an excellent match with his rejection of sentimentality.

There is another sense in which it would be nice to think that Wilde intended his insight about "living for others." In the great working-class novel The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists the laborer Robert Tressell describes the feelings of charity and gratitude that overwhelm the credulous, patriotic men who worked alongside him. They were content to spend their entire lives living for others--their betters--each of them confident of his own sturdy independence. This type did not disappear with the waning of the Industrial Revolution. You can meet him today, the despair of "progressive" intellectuals, as he bellies up to the bar with his "can't fool me" talk and proceeds to speak, sometimes using the very same phrases, in the tones of the President's last lying paean to native virtues. Praise for these philanthropists, especially at times when they are needed to be expended in war, is the only official rhetoric you hear that mentions the word "class." Almost the only place that class distinctions are stressed these days is at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial.

Class Factor Downplayed

They deserve to be stressed more often. Society labors on, supporting both an enormously wealthy upper class, whose corporate holdings are frequently tax free or even tax subsidized, and a growing underclass, which is sporadically and pathetically cited as a spur to conscience. Never is it asked, What are these classes for?

A sort of moral blackmail is exerted from both poles.

/Cont. pg. 18.

NICARAGUA cont.

fits for a boss, but perhaps to create a new pair of shoes for a barefoot child who may be his own."⁶

A strange pronouncement to be coming from the mouth of the Spectre of Communism! For, as every socialist knows, social wealth produced for the market always takes the form of commodities, and commodities as such embody a surplus over the needs of their producers. This surplus is called profit--no matter who (the state included) employs the producers, for no matter what reason. And every capitalist, private or public, also knows that, as long as enough barefoot children whose parents have enough money to spend on shoes need shoes, capitalists will stand ready to supply children with shoes--provided they can see a profit in it.

-- AD

1. Joseph Collins with Frances Moore Lappé, Nick Allen and Paul Rice (New York: Grove Press, 1986). 2. Pages 38, 69, 71 and 80 [where the Sandinistas called for a halt to the land takeovers immediately after the revolution]. 3. Pg 80. 4. Pp 76, 176. 5. Pg 69. 6. Pg 75.

POVERTY cont.

reformed. We strongly suggest that neither position is tenable.

-- Sam Leight

Reproduced, with minor changes, from Chapter 10 ("Poverty & Standard of Living") of *World Without Wages*

ON * * * * *

SECOND * *

THOUGHT * *



From the *Western Socialist*:

Despite those who insist that criminals are born and not made, facts do prove that crime increases in ratio to poverty and misery and that given similar conditions, peoples will react very much in the same way regardless of color or creed. Given a socialist environment of abundance, human beings will behave in a sane and social manner.

CHARGE cont.

death:

Critics point out that the sales put more US assets under foreign control. That funnels more profits overseas. [Wall Street Journal 2/24/88]

The same critics "also worry that the trend will cost US jobs."

Now just think about that one for a minute. US multinationals have no trouble pulling up operations in established industrial centers, selling entire plants and sacking the workforce, plunging the cities that depended on them into permanent depression, transferring capital--you can't eat abroad to countries where dictators have been groomed to keep labor cheap and then repatriating the profits--all the while promoting the most savage and bloody repression. Somehow these multinationals are "different" from foreign companies, whose greedy boards of directors "aren't as likely to be concerned about displacing workers" (in the words of Mark Bar-bash, deputy director of Ohio's Development Department).

If you get the impression that someone is shedding crocodile tears, that impression is eminently justified. Because as human beings with wants and needs we all fall into the category of "foreigners." If capitalists worry so much about foreign competitors gaining control of "our" multinationals just imagine how worried they would get if we did.

-- Ron Elbert

We can safely assume that even should housing improvements be made in the Negro slums, the general status of the Negro will remain unchanged. He is a most pathetic victim of this society, as he is exploited as a wage-worker and segregated and discriminated against because of his color. Just as long as this system continues so long will poverty and want stalk him, slum reforms or no. The Negro can not solve his basic problems within the confines of a capitalist society and sooner or later will have to join hands with his fellow workers everywhere for the task

AIRWAVES cont.

the form which society takes. If we are to start communicating with one another globally on the sophisticated level which modern technology has made possible it is a social revolution, rather than a technological revolution, which is urgently needed.

-- C Slapper

WILDE cont.

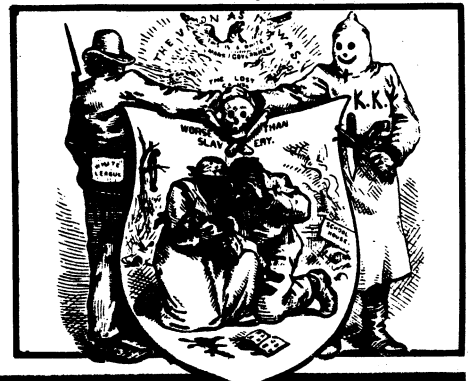
The underclass, one gathers, should be dulled with charity and welfare provision lest it turn nasty. The upper class must likewise be conciliated by vast hand-outs, lest it lose the "incentive" to go on generating wealth. A rising tide, as we have recently learned, does not lift all boats, nor does a falling tide sink them all. If people were to recognize that they are all in the same boat, they would take better care of its furnishings, its comfort and its general décor. This is what Wilde meant by the importance of the aesthetic.

Radicals have been taught to distrust any too-great display of individualism, and where they forget this lesson there are always conservatives to remind them (a madly sweet but slightly lugubrious example of this style appears in the current *New Criterion*, reprobating my good self). Wilde himself was haunted by a Podhoretz-like chaplain in prison, who reported that the cell reeked of semen. (How could he tell?) We are in the debt of the brave man who taught us to ask, of their majesties, whether they deserve us, or our continued amiable subservience.

-- Christopher Hitchens

of ending the last of all slave societies.

-- C Rothstein,
"The Slums of Miami,"
July-August 1948



SURVIVAL cont. from last page

involved black people, while 289 dealt with corporations. These, by and large, helped to sustain capitalist impulses after the Civil War. It was in the last quarter of the 19th century that the foundations for the great fortunes were laid: Armour and Morris in meat, Pillsbury in flour, Rockefeller in oil. The "new" West was opening up with vast opportunities and produced "the men to match its mountains." Leland Stanford left New York and went out West to establish the Central Pacific Railroad. One of his opponents said of him: "No she-lion defending her whelps or a bear her cubs, will make a more savage fight in defense of her material interests." The modern "Kobber Baron" had appeared upon the stage of history.

"The fittest to survive" were thus overwhelmingly rich white men with numerous wage-slaves at their disposal. Not surprisingly, they turned out to be "more equal" than those black ex-chattel slaves whom their predecessors had liberated into unemployment. The first section of the 14th Amendment reads:

No state shall...abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States; nor shall any state deprive any person of life, liberty or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person, within its jurisdiction, the equal protection of the laws.

While its second section did not give blacks the vote, it did penalize any state withholding that privilege, by reducing its representation in Congress. The radicals of the North insisted that the South ratify the Amendment, which President (Andrew) Johnson considered to be "unconstitutional" and which he advised the states to reject. Tennessee alone failed to follow the Presidential advice and re-entered the Union.

Keeping Black Labor Cheap

Emancipating the South's plantation slaves and then not lifting a finger to protect them from the revenge of their one-time oppressors (who had meanwhile constructed a "stab-in-the-back" theory around them) meant, in effect, securing an abundant supply of dirt-cheap labor for the indefinite future. The "fitter equals" who invested their capital for a living had reaped a potentially enormous harvest (of surplus value), and it remained only to achieve a *modus vivendi* with the regrouped descendants of the slaveholders. This was not long in coming.

A series of Supreme Court decisions beginning with *United States vs. Reese* in 1875 and ending with the Civil Rights cases of 1883 made discrimination easy. The ruling in these cases was that while the Federal Government might continue to protect black citizens from discrimination by the state, it could not protect them from the acts of individuals, even if the latter were organized. This, as an eminent American historian says, "was practically an invitation to lynch law."

But state laws could discriminate on grounds other than those of race in the

name of civil rights; and they could discriminate on grounds of race if they alleged they were protecting "social" rights. And so the industrialists consolidated their conquest of the South.

This home-grown variety of racism, the assumption of white supremacy as something naturally good for business—in a word, the "survival of the fittest" concept as expounded by Spencer,—is still ingrained in large measure in the collective psyche of the North American ruling class. A byproduct of the pursuit of profit, it permeates the social scene like a blight.

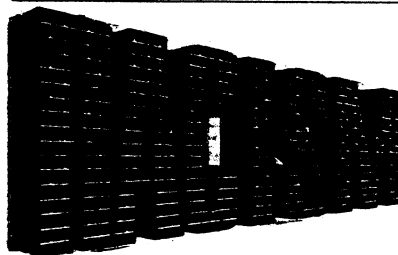
And not only in the domestic class struggle can we detect Spencer's pseudo-science, but also in foreign policy. The doctrine of "Manifest Destiny" was an early "pragmatic" version of it. Repeated aggressions against Cuba, Puerto Rico, Central America, the Caribbean, the assault on Mexico, the annexations of California, the Philippines and Hawaii—all of these carry its hue.

We ask all workers to recognize racism for the divisive class swindle that it is. It is only society operating as a harmonious whole that is "fit to survive." Men and women of good will and tremendous courage have spent their lives trying to roll back racist attitudes in the United States; but most have failed to understand that capitalism in this country depends for a part of its profits on pitting blacks against whites. In the judgement of the marketplace, the heritage of racism would be jettisoned only if doing so proved to be more profitable than retaining it.

Let us recognize instead the need for replacing the system of profit-based production which serves as the basis of racist behavior. Socialism (common ownership) is possible now. All that is lacking is the knowledge of how matters stand and the desire to make the change. Ø

1. Socialists do of course recognize the value of Darwin's work. We give a place to the "struggle for existence" in nature. But another, countervailing concept also issues from the same science of biology, that of mutual aid. Mutual aid complements the notion of "survival of the fittest" (as Kropotkin pointed out). In fact, humans, who are gregarious animals, could not have developed through the ages without cooperation. (As Labriola wrote: "Pre-social man is a historical unreality.") Moreover, we have now reached a point of human development where the concept of "survival of the fittest" has become more and more inconsequential and "mutual aid" increasingly important.

Adapted from "Pseudo-Science and Capitalist Use Thereof," an essay by the late comrade Bill Pritchard.



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Survival of the Filthiest

Of all the pseudo-scientists in economics, anthropology, history and other fields who have erected so many obstacles to the clear understanding of reality, Herbert Spencer was perhaps the most outstanding. The opinions he held and the conclusions he reached in his work, *Social Statics*, were adopted wholesale by readers on both sides of the Atlantic. In Britain he developed a strong following, but nowhere so avid and devoted a set of disciples as among the burgeoning class of tycoons in the USA—who, as we shall see, had the opportunity to make a unique and profitable application of his ideas in the aftermath of the Civil War.

Making an analogy with Darwinian biology—which hit the world like a cloudburst in 1859—he tried to show that just as nature worked automatically to select her "élite" and thus accomplished the "survival of the fittest," so too society could approach perfection to the extent that free play was allowed its "élite." He set forth his position very clearly in the statement: "There cannot be more good than that of letting social progress go on unhindered; an immensity of mischief may be done in... the artificial preservation of those least able to care for themselves." He defended cupidity (that great capitalist virtue) as part of the universal struggle for existence. The possession of wealth, to him, was the hallmark of the fittest, to be pursued like the Holy Grail.¹

The Success Ethic

Success, sans the saving grace of stewardship, was alone considered of account. Calvinism, the doctrine of thrift, hard work, etc., was here revealed in all its squalid nakedness, shorn of any pretext of "conscience." No wonder the developing capitalists of the "new" world hailed these findings as those of "science"!

These were the years following the close of the Civil War and the proclamation of freedom for the chattel slaves of the South, of the passing of the 14th Amendment to the US Constitution; the days of "binding up the nation's wounds," of "Reconstruction"—when the "freed" slaves found themselves more insecure and more enslaved than they had been on the plantations and when, together with the "poor white trash," they wandered aimlessly across the land in search of sustenance.

They were equally the days of the Spencerians in business who, recognizing the value of political power, were not content to delegate that power to sycophants and stooges but who sought to rule directly instead, as members of the House and Senate; more members of the capitalist class, as such, held office then than at any other period in US history. Later, through the refinement of brainwashing techniques and the promise of rewards, they learned to cultivate a reliable, corrupt and mendacious class of mouthpieces. In 1886 Senator George Hearst, father of William Randolph, confessed to his colleagues: "I do not know much about books; I have not read very

much, but I have traveled a good deal and observed men and things, and I have made up my mind after all my experiences that the members of the Senate are the Survivors of the Fittest." [Emphasis added.]

These were also the days of expanding capitalism. The year after the war ended, the *Commercial and Financial Chronicle*, envisaging the consequences of the war boom, put it this way:

There is an increasing tendency in our capital to move in larger masses than formerly. Small business firms compete at more disadvantage with richer houses, and are gradually being absorbed into them.

The Spencerian concept of "survival of the fittest" not only was accepted by business and industrial magnates but also dominated the thinking of the Supreme Court of that day. In 1865 all the Justices had been born before 1820, at a time when industrialism had not yet made its imprint on the life of the country. Three of them had seen the light of day in the 18th century, and two had been born back during Jefferson's first administration.

Social Darwinism and Legal Personality

That such a court could narrowly interpret the 14th Amendment so as to allow the Reconstruction states to curtail the "privileges and immunities" of the black "freedmen" already showed an implicit bias toward Spencerian ideology. However, it still allowed the states to "regulate" business. The chief dissenter was one of the younger justices, Stephen J. Field, then sixty years old. He was the first to designate corporations as "persons" in his interpretation of the 14th Amendment. The next step in his logic was easily taken: No corporate "person" could be deprived of property by any state without "due process of law." Therefore, since limitations on railroad rates, etc., might reduce the corporations' profit or the value of its holdings, such limitations, under the 14th Amendment, were unconstitutional.

The Court and Capital Rights

The trend was confirmed: in 1882 a native of the industrial state of Massachusetts and a firm believer in progress through Spencerian "freedom", Horace Gray, was appointed to the Supreme Court. For the next twenty years, Gray was the dominating force on the Court. During that period many of the earlier regulatory decisions were overturned. Then in 1902 Oliver Wendell Holmes succeeded Gray, and in 1905 the great dissenter made his famous observation that "the 14th Amendment does not enact Mr. Herbert Spencer's *Social Statics*."

But up to then, and even in the following years, the Court certainly acted as though it did. Between 1890 and 1910 only 19 decisions based on that amendment in-

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