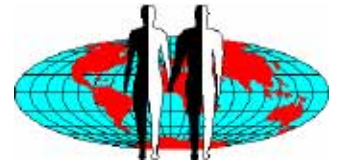


# IMAGINE

VOL. 1 NO. 1

JANUARY 2002



OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF  
THE SOCIALIST PARTY OF CANADA

## Hey, worker!

It's the heat of sweltering summer in the Motor City capital of Canada—Windsor, Ontario. People like you and me go to work, sweat out our jobs—in factory, office, home—those “lucky” enough to have work. Some—a goodly number—fret out their time in quiet desperation wondering how they are going to make ends meet on what little unemployment dole cheque they get.

We work when we can, some five days a week, others accepting overtime to pay bills and the mortgage. We try to build up a fund to live comfortably enough to keep paying bills and accumulating goods in the belief that we are living the good life. We try to plan a future, get married, and raise kids, in a world where everything has become a commodity for sale—with the forced message from television, radio and newspaper to *buy, buy, buy* because that is how we will supposedly find happiness. Meanwhile, we keep a watch over our shoulders in the hope that the latest round of economic “restructuring” and “rationalization” and “globalization” won't throw us on the economic rubbish heap.

This is the best of all worlds, we are told, even though the corporate powers that be know that all is not well; that recession is constantly nipping at their heels. They tell us, “There is no alternative.”

We are the workers. We're the ones who build things, make things, provide services, make things work, provide the ideas. But though we build the world around us, it does not belong to

us. We produce not for ourselves, but at the behests and whims of others.

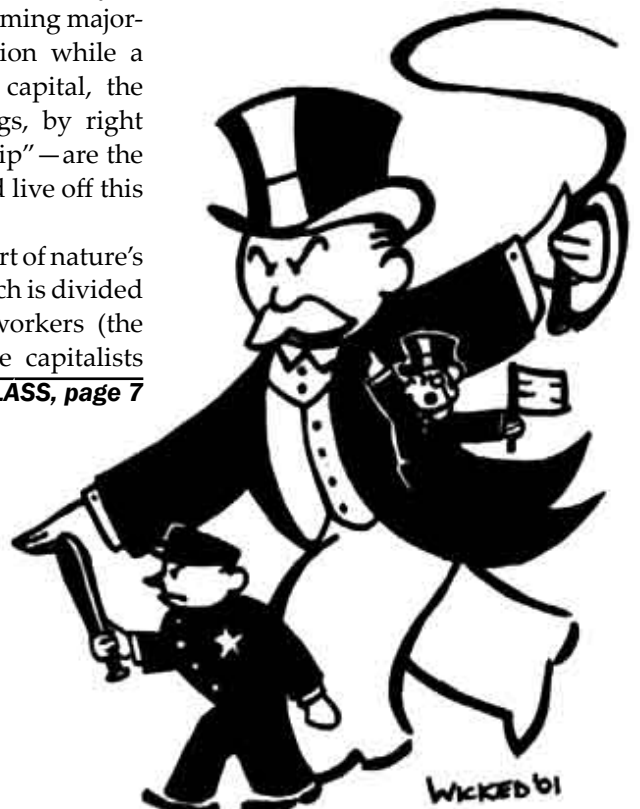
We are the ones who are told what to produce, how to produce it, how much, and how fast.

We are the ones who receive a paycheque, be it high or low, not for selling what we produce but for selling our power to work. With that paycheque we try to buy back what we make. The source of someone else's profits comes from our work.

How did it come to this? How did we end up with a worldwide society in which there is an overwhelming majority forced into this situation while a few—the ones who own capital, the means of producing things, by right of a thing called “ownership”—are the ones who “employ” us and live off this thing called “profit”?

It's certainly not any part of nature's order to have a society which is divided between those who are workers (the many) and those who are capitalists

see *WORKING CLASS*, page 7



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# Socialism Q&A

## Is capitalism really broken, and is there anything we can do to fix it?

**G**reetings to all readers and welcome to the first edition of the *Northern Socialist*. This journal is published by the Socialist Party of Canada (SPC), a companion party in the World Socialist Movement (WSM). Our purpose is to promote the establishment of a socialist society to replace the current capitalist system.

### What is the difference between capitalism and socialism?

*Capitalism* is a world economic and social system where the means of production (land, factories, etc.) and the distribution of wealth is owned and controlled by the capitalist class. The basic unit in this system, the commodity, must be sold for a profit to pay rent, costs, and produce the necessary capital to be reinvested to accumulate more capital. Workers are forced to sell their labour power to the capitalists, who then extract the surplus value

(i.e. value the workers put into a commodity over and above the wages they receive). Thus two classes are formed, the capitalists who own but do not produce, and the workers who produce but do not own. *Socialism* is also a world economic and social system, but one where the means of production and the distribution of wealth is based on common ownership and democratic control, and is operated in the interests of society as a whole. Socialism will be a world without states, classes, or money; where production will be to meet human needs, and everyone will have *free access* to all the goods provided by society according to their self-determined needs.

### Why should we change a system that works?

For the vast majority of people in the world, capitalism does not work. Wars, disease, starvation, and poverty continue unabated year after year. Basic human needs are not being met because capitalism by its very nature must choose profit over people. Without profit, capital cannot be accumulated and the system would fail. Thus, human needs can be met only if you are able to pay for them. That's why some 15 million people die of starvation and malnutrition related diseases every year, even though we are quite capable of producing enough to feed everyone. We even destroy food and pay farmers *not* to produce food to keep prices and profit high. Capitalism is also why many millions more die of easily treated diseases when we have an abundance of the necessary medicines. Starving and sick people who are unable to pay for food or drugs simply don't receive them. You may look upon this as evil. We see it as the normal functioning of the capitalist system and the reason we want to replace it.

### But hasn't socialism been tried and failed?

The word *socialism* is probably the most misrepresented in the English language. The Toronto Star recently ran a series of articles on the fall of Communism on the tenth anniversary of the end of the Soviet Union. Doesn't the USSR prove socialism/communism's failure? The capitalist media would like you to think so. Many groups, parties and countries have called themselves socialist. That does not make them so. If you look back to our description of socialism, you will clearly see that we have never had a world economic system without states, without money, without classes, where production was owned by and for the whole of the population: not in the Soviet Union, China, nor in Cuba. Our party stated in 1918 that the Bolshevik revolution was not socialist but rather state capitalist. Certainly, the socialist society that we promote has never been advocated by the world's Social Democratic parties. Just ask the NDP! They simply want to get elected to manage capitalism for the capitalists, just like all the other parties. Despite what the capitalist media would like you to believe, *socialism has never been tried*.

### Can't we simply work to improve the system we already have?

There are hundreds of organizations, such as the Council of Canadians, Greenpeace, and various anti-poverty groups, full of well-meaning people who want to change capitalism for the better; to make it a responsible system that works for the benefit of all. They have not understood the true meaning of capitalism: that everything must be sacrificed to accumulate capital—workers' rights, human rights, the environment, your grandmother's medical treatment, and anything else that impinges on profit. For the last 200 years

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The Socialist Party of Canada provides educational material and forums to explain capitalism and socialism, and works to promote working class understanding of socialism. Although primarily active in Canada, the Party sends information to people around the world.

The Socialist Party of Canada was founded in 1905. It is a companion party in an international organization of socialist parties known as the World Socialist Movement, whose Object and Declaration of Principles can be found elsewhere in this issue.

or so that capitalism has been the dominant economic mode, we have fought innumerable battles for better working conditions, more pay, improved social programs. We have won some of them, only to see our hard work legislated away when it became politically expedient to so. Today in Ontario we have seen the Harris government roll back labour legislation fifty years with a few strokes of the pen, including instituting a 60-hour work week! Despite our best efforts, we still have the capitalist system and we still have its unacceptable exploitation and abuses that we had at the beginning. We call the endless drive to make capitalism better *reformism*. We would spend our time, energies, and resources educating people to establish socialism rather than waste time in the false belief that our present system can be made to work in everyone's interest.

**But isn't reformism working?  
Aren't we better off than we  
used to be?**

Many people around the world are worse off than in former times. Many countries who have fallen under the guidance of the World Bank, World Trade Organization, and International Monetary Fund have been forced to give up local economies that could at least provide the bare minimum. They are coerced to restructure in the interests of the capitalist class, using valuable land to produce cash crops for export. The proceeds are used to pay off huge debts that never go down. The results have been disastrous, invariably bringing greater poverty and gutted social services. Some of us in the so-called developed world have better living standards than our parents and grand parents. By most projections, we may be the last generation to be able to say that. Recent studies point to an exponential growth in the gap between the capitalist and worker classes. In other words, we're getting a smaller and smaller share of all the wealth we produce.

**How does the SPC differ from  
other socialist parties?**

There are many groups/parties out there who use the name "socialist". Many of them believe capitalism can be changed incrementally into socialism. They are generally referred to as "Left-wing". We believe the Left wing and the Right wing are both parts of the same bird: capitalism. Other groups want to suddenly replace capitalism by a military or violent coup led by a small group who will later convince the rest of the population that they need socialism. We promote a peaceful revolution, taking control of the existing political system democratically only when the vast majority of the people understand socialism and make a conscious choice for it. We are the only party working for our own demise, as there will be no need for political parties when we achieve our objective. The WSM does not have leaders, as leaders imply followers who are told what to do. Rather, we expect everyone to be able to promote their ideas in a democratic forum. We base our arguments, objects, and principles on a scientific understanding of society, and we have maintained the same principles since 1904.

These themes and others will be more fully explained and developed in this and subsequent issues of the *Northern Socialist*. We expect to be publishing quarterly; we encourage you to subscribe to make sure you get the alternative views you won't read in the managed news and opinion of the mainstream media. We welcome your letters, opinions, criticisms and comments. If you wish to join the Socialist Party of Canada, or get more information, our contact information appears on page 2.

—J. AYERS

**Subscribe to  
the *Northern Socialist* today —  
only \$12/year (4 issues)!**  
**Make out your cheque to the  
Socialist Party of Canada and  
send it to our regular address.**

**The Socialist Party of Canada**

**Object**

The establishment of a system of society based upon the common ownership and democratic control of the means and instruments for producing and distributing wealth by and in the interest of society as a whole.

**Declaration of Principles**

The Socialist Party of Canada holds:

1. That society as at present constituted is based upon the ownership of the means of living (i.e., land, factories, railways, etc.) by the capitalist or master class, and the consequent enslavement of the working class, by whose labour alone wealth is produced.
2. That in society, therefore, there is an antagonism of interests, manifesting itself as a class struggle between those who possess but do not produce and those who produce but do not possess.
3. That this antagonism can be abolished only by the emancipation of the working class from the domination of the master class, by the conversion into the common property of society of the means of production and distribution, and their democratic control by the whole people.
4. That as in the order of social evolution the working class is the last class to achieve its freedom, the emancipation of the working class will involve the emancipation of all mankind, without distinction of race or sex.
5. That this emancipation must be the work of the working class itself.
6. That as the machinery of government, including the armed forces of the nation, exists only to conserve the monopoly by the capitalist class of the wealth taken from the workers, the working class must organize consciously and politically for the conquest of the powers of government, in order that this machinery, including these forces, may be converted from an instrument of oppression into an agent of emancipation and the overthrow of plutocratic privilege.
7. That as political parties are but the expression of class interests, and as the interest of the working class is diametrically opposed to the interest of all sections of the master class, the party seeking working class emancipation must be hostile to every other party.
8. The Socialist Party of Canada, therefore, enters the field of political action determined to wage war against all other political parties, whether alleged labour or avowedly capitalist, and calls upon the members of the working class of this country to support these principles to the end that a termination may be brought to the system which deprives them of the fruits of their labour, and that poverty may give place to comfort, privilege to equality, and slavery to freedom.

# Twin towers downed by terrorists

## The age-old terrorism vs. terrorism struggle now waged on US soil

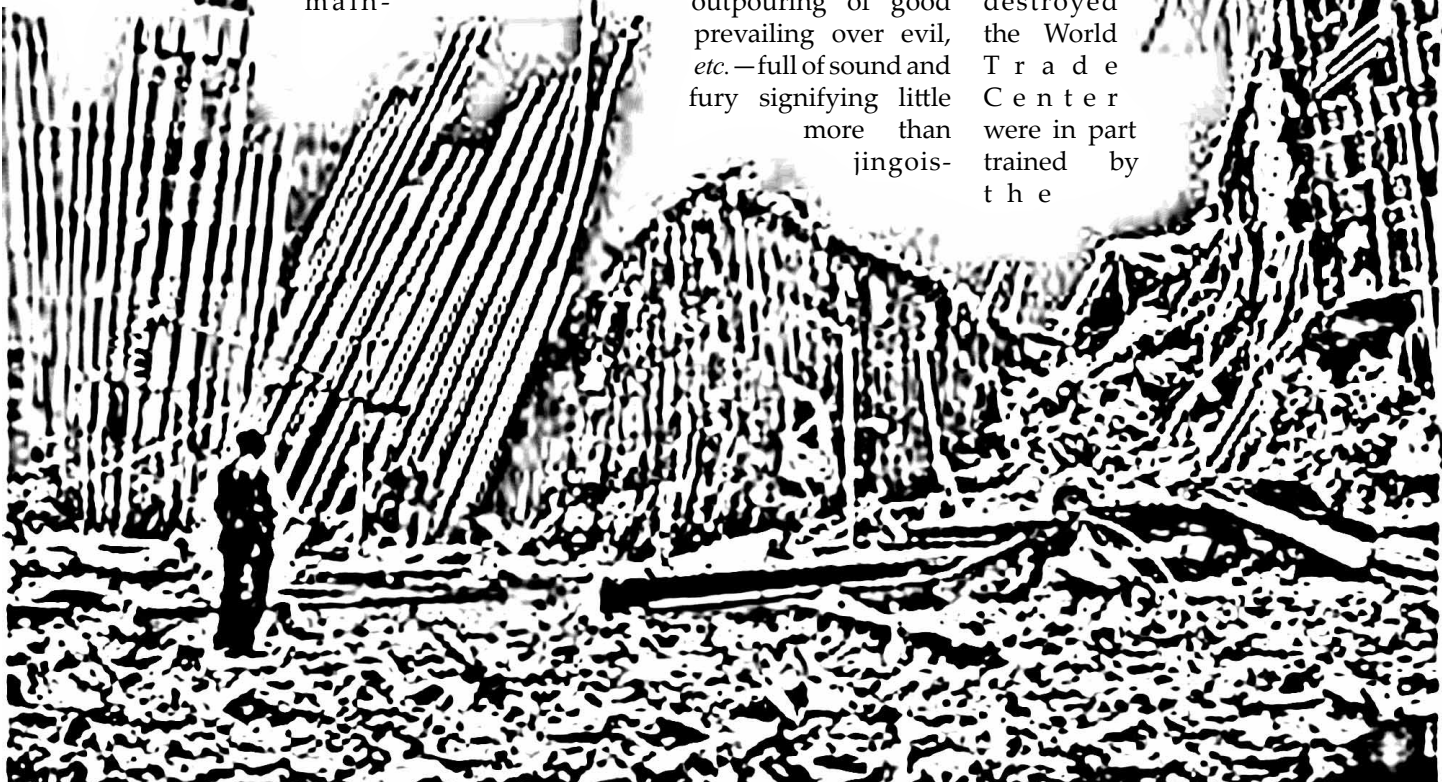
In America's financial city of gold, New York, bought for a few dollars in trinkets from unknowing aboriginals four hundred years ago, a group of suicidal terrorists successfully sliced into and destroyed part of lower Manhattan to the tune of over \$20 billion and massive destruction of human life. Fellow terrorists flew into the Pentagon and Pennsylvania soil. Thousands of American working-class lives were suddenly snuffed out in a matter of a few short minutes. I suppose from the terrorist's point of view it was a successful mission, however a victory that the terrorists themselves will never know. Friends and supporters of the terrorists may know and covet their victory over American capitalist society. To the terrorists things might now appear even as a balance has been reached with American capitalists, who clearly now realize that they are susceptible to reprisals on their continental main-

land. Because all nations of the world have adopted the modern capitalist mode of production it in no way means that competition for markets is friendly. Historically, when American capitalists reached out to compete with opposing capitalists over new markets for profits, they engendered conflict and made enemies. The modern terrorists not allied with American capitalist interests are warring with the US just as the US has warred with other capitalist interests in the past. It is a sobering indictment of capitalism that one of its preconditions operating normally is war.

Since the terrorist attacks, it has been suggested by numerous economic spin doctors that because American capitalist property has been breached on home soil for the first time, America is on the economic wane—perhaps. The leaders and defenders of US capitalist interests have and are now pumping out the usual patriotic outpouring of good prevailing over evil, *etc.*—full of sound and fury signifying little more than jingois-

tic hatred of other cultures. I think that it is all too typical that most working-class people in the USA, like in all previous wars, have now been asked to put their lives on the line for the nation. Capitalism, in the eyes of those who own it, must continue. Their propaganda is a cogent reminder of their wish to make this so.

Worldwide, capitalism is homogeneous, yet everywhere capitalist interests are in open economic opposition to each other. Some nations create overt armed forces to expand their "interests"; others covertly train terrorists to do the same. Many of these terrorists receive their training in countries where later on they commit their acts of terrorism, and in the USA's case, it is a political irony that the terrorists who destroyed the World Trade Center were in part trained by the



US. Is it not ideological hypocrisy that countries like the United States, with large open armed forces, train their own terrorists and euphemistically call them "special forces" or "secret agents"?

As long as capitalism exists, with its laws that allow a privileged few to own the overwhelming majority of the means of life, it will be an increasingly precarious existence for workers facing a world where terrorism will never be wholly eradicated, and in fact, threatens to even escalate! Under the capitalist credo, profits will always come before human lives. It is a system that has empirically proven its inherent anti-life violence to make profit, whose only "true religion" is that of Mammon and the promise of ever-increasing profitability.

In a speech delivered in 1919, President Wilson once made a cogent statement about modern America. He said, "Why, my fellow citizens, is there any man here, or any woman—let's say, is there any child here—who does not know that the seed of war in the modern world is industrial and commercial rivalry?" How honest it would be if President Bush could make such a similar admission. The recent events in the Middle East, including Iraq and Afghanistan, have overtones eerily similar to other wars America has been involved in continuously since its birth as a nation. It might be said that too much emphasis is put on the example of American capitalist interests in this article; however, it is an explicit example of what the world's leading capitalist power is capable of doing in the name of profit. The callous butchery, the indiscriminate slaughter of civilians, the wiping out of communities in defence of capitalism's prescriptive rights for raw materials and new markets, are indicative of capital's normal functioning in protecting and advancing its profits. Many comparable instances involving other nations could be cited throughout the entire span of capitalism's existence. Capitalism's vast production of wealth as a whole is offset by the staggering pov-

erty and suffering it produces in its wake.

The picture we depict here is of capitalism's destructive side, one which overwhelmingly overshadows its constructive side. With such destructiveness in view, our mutual interests and collective common sense, if we are to prosper, demand an alternative.

In contrast to capital's legacy of inherent violence, human beings are by nature highly sociable and cooperative (a realization that capitalists have efficiently exploited yet kept workers ignorant of for over three centuries). In times of crisis genuinely helpful acts and benevolent empathy are the behaviour patterns of the overwhelming majority of people. Their behaviour contradicts the philosophy of greed-driven capitalist accumulation. People are willing to freely volunteer aid in tragedies despite the antisocial conditions capitalism fosters, clearly illustrated by the global outpouring of aid and sheer dedication to help save those people caught in the World Trade Center and Pentagon bombings. If it is truth that workers exploit themselves and continue to collectively run capitalism for their masters against their own interests, then where can we go from here?

I would like to suggest that we have within our grasp the ability to create a democratic worldwide system of society, based on cooperation and common ownership of the means of existence that will end forever the squalor of capitalist economics. With the technological capabilities we presently have to produce surpluses of materials for human needs, we can create enough food, clothing, and shelter, as well as social benefits from scientific innovation, artistic creations, and leisure, so that all people may live satisfying, mutually benefiting, and meaningful lives. The capitalist minority, however, are not ever likely to willingly surrender their position of economic and social privilege. A society of free access would be sustainable only with the understanding, desire, and political volition of the working-class majority

to replace capitalism through the democratic process. It is a type of a world worth striving for, and as John Lennon states in his song "Imagine", "It's easy if you try." His words echo our vision of a society that all of us could be proud to call "civil", and, as another Socialist writer stated over 100 years ago, "Workers of the world, unite! You have nothing to lose but your chains!"

—JOLETH

## Obituary

### General Secretary Don Poirier

Don contacted the Party in 1956/58 in Victoria, BC while on shore leave from the Royal Canadian Navy. The local paper had published an interview with SPGB member Gilbert McLatchie (Gilmac) who was on a North American speaking tour. It also announced a meeting that the Victoria local was holding for Gilmac that evening. Don attended with Ruby, one of his sisters.

He consumed the first volume of "Capital" three times during his next naval tour in 1959. Within two years he became very active, running as the Party's candidate in the 1961 Esquimalt/Saanich federal by-election. It not being a general contest, the Party got coast-to-coast media coverage. After organizing a tour of the US and Canada, he helped the Victoria local to pressure city council to establish a "speaker's corner" in Beacon Hill Park. He did the same with the Vancouver local for the Brockton Oval in Stanley Park.

Don worked for Duthies book stores before moving to the forest industry. He loved books and had a bookstore of his own. Don also worked as an independent logger. He became curator of the Forest Museum in Duncan, BC. He fought to better labour conditions while he was a member of the Industrial Workers of America union. He made important safety gains and was instrumental in getting pension rights for all. In the 1970s, Don ran against Jack Munroe for the presidency of the 50,000-member IWA union.

Don died 8 October 2001. The socialist movement has lost an outstanding worker.

Our condolences go out to Don's family, friends, and comrades.

# In Ontario

## New overtime and safety legislation sinks workers' rights to new lows

Toronto recently applied for, and lost, the right to host the 2008 Summer Olympic Games. That in itself is not so interesting, but watching the machinations of the capitalist system is worthy of note. The Province of Ontario, you should understand, despite being "the economic engine" of the country and home to more than a third of Canada's population, is impoverished. The current Tory government, on ascending to power in 1996, deemed that we were in such dire straits that massive cuts in spending on health, education and social programs had to be made. So now we have long waiting lists at emergency rooms and to see medical specialists, a critical nursing shortage, and cases of people dying while their ambulances are rerouted to another hospital that isn't full. Welfare benefits were chopped 20% in 1995 and haven't moved since. The City of Toronto is wrestling with a budget shortfall of some \$350 million and has to charge kids for previously free sports programs. The Toronto Board of Education is so strapped for cash that it is considering closing its large network of swimming pools, to say nothing of its special education programs. The provincial government has got out of the public housing business despite our having more homeless people than ever before, and downloaded its inventory of houses onto Toronto City council as a "gift".

The list goes on and on. Human needs are continually getting shuffled to the bottom of the list. Then along comes word of an Olympic bid and money magically appears for mind-boggling development projects costing billions of dollars, including new sports facilities and swimming pools! Grandiose plans were drawn up for waterfront redevelopment and much was made of the legacy of sports facilities and public housing that would be Toronto's gain. The plans didn't clarify whether

the hundreds of homeless would be removed from the city's streets, parks, and bridges for the duration of the games, as happened in Atlanta and Sydney. The money came from the big developers, whose front men ran the bid, and from government assurances of plentiful money from all levels to keep the jackals on the Olympic committee happy. A campaign costing millions was launched without any public discussion or vote, culminating in a delegation of over 200 members gathering in Moscow for a week. There they met with the Olympic committee, recently disgraced for corruption, to discover they had been easily out-manoeuvred by a bigger set of money hungry capitalists: the Chinese delegation. They were able to promise delivery of over 400 million children, all eager to try on Nike shoes and other corporate products. No contest. Thankfully, Toronto's delegation returned home empty-handed and the people were only out a few million for the bid instead of billions for the games themselves. Of course, the promised money has disappeared and won't be available to provide the necessary services we so desperately need.

The Walkerton inquiry is winding down and lawyers' summations are being delivered. In case you missed it, in the spring of 2000, the town of Walkerton's water supply became contaminated with *E. coli* bacteria, resulting in seven deaths and 2300 people becoming sick. The manager of the system admitted he falsified records and ignored the problem while health officials were scrambling to find the cause of the sickness. The provincial government prefers to take the narrow view that the manager was the sole culprit in order to take the spotlight from their own cost-cutting measures. The environment ministry was slashed 50-60% in funding and man-

power, but the premier of the province, Mike Harris, testified at the enquiry that the cabinet received no warning that budget cuts and privatizing testing labs would pose any threat to the public. It was deemed by the cabinet to be a "manageable risk". The enquiry heard, however, that at the time of the cuts, then health minister Jim Wilson was concerned that private testing labs were not required to notify health officials if a drinking water system was found to be contaminated. The lab testing Walkerton's water told only the manager who chose to ignore the report.

Obviously, the safeguards that had been in place fell apart with reduced funding, and private testing labs were not instructed how to communicate properly with public health institutions. This allowed the manager's duplicity to go undetected. Subsequent investigation revealed other factors in the tragedy, such as a crumbling infrastructure that successive local governments had failed to find money to replace, and the presence of huge amounts of pig effluence from the large factory farms in the area. These factors can be charged to our system of putting money and profits before human need.

Incredibly, on the heels of the Walkerton tragedy, the provincial government continues to put the lives and well-being of its citizens at risk. Recently passed was Bill 57, euphemistically titled the Occupational Health and Safety Act. Opponents believe it will lead to needless death and injury in the workplace. The law abolishes the right of workers to refuse to work in unsafe conditions and to have a ministry inspector immediately adjudicate the dispute. In addition, the bill revokes the mandatory reporting provisions with respect to the introduction of new (possibly hazardous) materials,

**continued on page 8**

# Working class a modern invention

**continued from page 1**

(the few)—this arrangement is entirely human-made.

We, as workers, have a history. You see, what we call the working class didn't always exist. It was created.

Some six hundred years ago, the idea of a vast majority of people really owning nothing except their ability to work and working for a wage or salary in order to survive would have been considered preposterous.

That old philosopher Karl Marx made the comment that capitalism came into existence with much violence and bloodshed. It's true. Peasants— independent producers—were driven by starvation from their land. Clan systems of ownership such as in Scotland and Ireland were forcibly destroyed. Small producers of goods had their livelihoods taken away from them. People were forced into the cities and towns through arrest, starvation, or maiming by the powers that be, with assistance from the Church and State laws.

It was a common occurrence across the face of Europe. In Africa, whole peoples were torn from their homes and sold as slaves. Capital and those who owned and controlled it conquered every sphere of activity to make a society where everything is for sale with a view to profit (and the profit for a few). It made inroads to destroy the economies of South America and Asia.

At each stage of the game there was revolt by our ancestors because being forced to work in factories and workshops for a wage meant dehumanization on a vast scale. Workers stood ready to smash the machines and workshops; they rallied to build unions (often at the expense of their own lives, brutalization, threats, exile, and imprisonment). At times they rose to desperately try to change these conditions.

Our history is a history of struggle against a system where the profit of capital is the be all and end all of production. It has been a struggle in which

many died for the right to organize into unions, for the right to vote, for the right not to work sixteen hours a day, to stop forced child labour, to stop our exploitation, for the right not to starve, for the right to at least a minimal education in schools where we are taught that this and only this is the best of all possible worlds.

We have been divided by clever mystifications, by the colour of our skin, men against women, one religion against another, and on the basis of sexual preference, and it has been used well against us, making us compete against each other and making us ready to wage war upon each other at the whim of governments.

When the cost in human misery was too great, a myriad of reforms was presented by politicians—a tinkering with the system to attempt to put a human face on it. Yet reform after reform has not brought us any closer to any solution of the problems inherent in the system itself.

Old notions die hard. Just as the rulers of ancient empires told their slaves that slavery was the natural order of things, and just as the feudal lords told the serfs and peasants that their society reflected the natural order, so we too are told that capitalism and the rule of profit is natural; that there is no alternative. It's taught to us in

schools, through the media, through the regulation of everything we do.

What they have not been able to take away from us is our ability to think. There *is* an alternative.

Everything that has been built around us is the result of our work and yet we don't work for ourselves. The fundamental fact is that this system we call capitalism, like any other economic system, is the creation of men and women. And men and women can choose other systems.

As long as a system is in place, be it the so-called "free market" or state control (what some people mistakenly or deliberately pass off as "socialism"), workers will remain in their positions and nothing can change. Society will remain geared to the creation of profit, a society ruled by the needs of capital rather than the real needs of people.

Some of us have banded together. We call ourselves Socialists and have joined the Socialist Party of Canada, working together with other companion political parties in the World Socialist Movement. We are not politicians, we do not propose to lead anyone to the "promised land", we do not advocate reforms or state controls, and we do not promise any utopias. We too are workers, but with a vision of workers creating a fundamentally different kind of society. It can be done.

—LEN WALLACE

Interested in learning more about socialism? The following members of the Socialist Party of Canada have volunteered themselves as regional contacts.

**Cobourg, ON:** John Ayers, (905) 377-8190, [jpayers@sympatico.ca](mailto:jpayers@sympatico.ca)  
**Windsor, ON:** Len Wallace, [lwallace@mnsi.net](mailto:lwallace@mnsi.net)  
**Victoria, BC:** Tony Gelsthorpe, (250) 384-5789, [tonyge@juno.com](mailto:tonyge@juno.com)  
**St. John's, NF:** Joshua Tremblett, (709) 722-7941, [juoshuatremblett@hotmail.com](mailto:juoshuatremblett@hotmail.com);  
Kevin Moulton, [kmoulton@roadrunner.nf.net](mailto:kmoulton@roadrunner.nf.net)

We also invite you to write us for a free package of introductory literature. Drop us a line at the usual address:

**The Socialist Party of Canada**  
Box 4280  
Victoria, BC V8X 3X8  
e-mail: [spc@iname.com](mailto:spc@iname.com)

## In Ontario

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and replaces the regulation of workplace hazards with unenforceable codes of practice. As with the environment, employers are increasingly responsible for policing themselves.

All this is part of the Tories' "Ontario is open for business" stance that has seen systematic attacks on labour and unions, and has set us back 50 years in workplace conditions. Certifying unions has been made more difficult and decertifying them easier. Government respect for workers reached new heights with the introduction of the 60-hour work week the day after Labour Day! Yes, it's now legal to employ workers for 60 hours per week (up from 48). This legislation also eliminated mandatory overtime after 44 hours in favour of a four-week averaging system. This means you could have work weeks of 60, 40, 40, and 35 hours in a month and not receive any overtime pay. So much for putting all our efforts into trying to reform the capitalist system into one that cares about and works for all! Surely, no one can now doubt in this province that our present economic system is solely about the accumulation of wealth, and in no way about supplying human needs unless a profit can be made by doing so.

—J. AYERS

## Newswatch

### Good news for evil bosses

Miserable people make better workers than happy ones—at least, that's the finding of a new University of Alberta study. The researchers, headed by Robert Sinclair and Carrie Lavis, studied four groups of workers on a circuit board assembly line. They report that workers who described themselves as happy made twice as many errors as sad people. The BBC (13 June) predicts the study may "spell the end for bonding weekends, company songs and other attempts at corporate jollity."

### How much will they be charging for tickets next year?

No longer is mindless activism the exclusive purview of the left—ardent right-wingers took to the streets on 2 December for the first global Walk for Capitalism (<http://www.WalkForCapitalism.org/>). The Walk, conceived as a reaction to the recent spate of anti-globalization protests, aimed to promote capitalism as "the greatest benefactor man has ever had." In order that participants could observe firsthand the many benefits of global capitalism, perhaps the Walk should have included a leg through one of Nike's Vietnamese sweatshops.

### This book will self-destruct in 15 seconds

On 16 July, FBI agents arrested Russian programmer Dmitry Sklyarov at a conference in Las Vegas, reports the *Las Vegas Sun* (18 July). He was subsequently charged with violating the Digital Millennium Copyright Act, a law which makes it a criminal offence to publish software that circumvents access controls on digital media. Sklyarov had written a program that allows users of Adobe Systems' electronic book software to disable restrictions the publisher may have imposed, such as a restriction on having the book read aloud by speech synthesis software. A blind person, for example, could use Sklyarov's software to listen to a book. Despite the fact that the program was never published in the USA, and is perfectly legal in most other countries, including Canada and his native Russia, Sklyarov has now been indicted and faces up to 25 years in prison plus a \$375,000 fine. To the delight of Canadian publishing magnates, the Government of Canada already has plans underway to develop its own version of the DMCA.

—Psy

## Handicapitalism by Jin Wicked & Psy

