

World Socialist Party U.S. World Socialist Movement

Smash The Market!

Capitalism is the market-based social system which now exists without any dispute in all countries of the world. Under it 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 in this system 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. While a few workers (and those mostly in the developed countries) may have “cushy jobs” as blue-collars or salaried professionals, most live close to or under the poverty line. As long as capitalism exists, the pursuit of profits will come before the pursuit of everything else. Different workers may welcome different reforms, but no proposals for change which tolerate the market system, no matter how sweeping they are, can abolish the fundamental contradiction between profit and need which is built into that system. No matter whether promises to make capitalism run in the interests of the workers are made sincerely or out of opportunism, they are bound to fail, based as they are on a system which pits an élite core of cost-conscious employers against the powerless and marginalized majority whom they employ (or will not employ).

Capitalism, because of its constant drive to serve profit before need, throws up an endless stream of problems. It remains in the 1990s a system of organized waste, outrageous deprivation and frightening insecurity. Most workers in this country feel uncertain about their future; almost one in four families with children live below the official government poverty line; old people are left to languish on Social Security

payments which are inadequate to meet their increased needs and are penalized when they try to find other ways to meet them; millions of women and men are dying of starvation---tens of thousands of them each day. Food is destroyed, and farmers are subsidized not to produce more; yet many millions here and abroad are malnourished. “Building booms” come and go, while we are treated to the spectacle of people being forced out of their homes or living in slums while houses and apartments go empty for lack of “effective demand.” Hospitals acquire dazzling arrays of high technology for medical care yet turn away those unable to pay for it; the costs of hospital stays skyrocket, while it remains “not economically viable” to provide decent health care for all. And while all this is going on, capital is continually poured into a highly profitable, evolving machinery of planetary destruction in both the political and economic sectors.

Can you afford to be be “practical”?

Many workers see through the propaganda maze erected by the mass media; they know something is terribly wrong, and they want to “do something” that will change society. Many speak of changing the direction in which the system is developing, hoping that enough partial successes will eventually lead people to see the merits of trying a more radical, systemic solution or at least will buffer the worst effects of the mindless machinery of profit. But efforts to tame the market system are futile, because you cannot run a system of class exploitation in the interests of the exploited majority. We all have solid reasons to fear a nuclear war, and many join the Nuclear Freeze movement in the hope this will prevent one; yet as long as nation states exist, their mutual economic rivalry means that the world will never be safe from the threat of war. And it is a sure bet that newer, deadlier and more lucrative

weapons research is on the horizon (genetic warfare, anybody?). Many sincere people get involved in any number of dedicated campaigns and good causes, without looking on the system as the problem and without realizing that the problem can only be solved by getting rid of that system, replacing it with one based on free access to necessary goods and services -- socialism.

Socialism vs. the State

Nationalizing industry has often naively been proposed as a solution. The record demonstrates otherwise: it simply means that workers are exploited by the state, acting on behalf of the capitalists of one country, rather than by an individual capitalist or company. The workers in a nationalized Chrysler Corporation would be no less the servants of profit than they are now. Amtrak, the rail passenger service operated as a Federal corporation, no more belongs to “the public” now than did the various private railroad companies out of which it was formed. And whatever the merits of national health insurance, such a plan would not divert any real decision-making power into the hands of the working majority. Nationalization is state capitalism. “Mixed” economies (which probably represent the next wave of market integration), are nothing but a semi-nationalized version of the existing corporate marketplace. Gaining control of the government is in any case not the same as operating the machinery of state. None of the now-defunct Leninist governments ever aimed at eliminating capital as the basis of wealth production and consumption. Not one of the Leninist parties ever encouraged workers to dig their way out of marketplace economics at the point of production. The only thing socialists can actually do with a government is use it, over a short period, to implement the explicit decision of the majority to eliminate the requirement of paying for goods and services. This can only work if people, acting as both workers and

consumers, already recognize the need for anti-market solutions, and it can only be functional if formal democracy is reinforced by the power of immediate recall over the delegates elected. Every other approach will remain trapped in the system's orbit.

Is getting nowhere worse than staying here?

Socialism does not yet exist anywhere because it can only exist everywhere. Under capitalism the marketplace has successfully displaced the role of the community on a world scale. Numerous attempts have been made on a smaller scale to escape from this system by setting up a counter-system of living and working which uses no money, but they are no match for a system which is entrenched worldwide. When socialism is established, it will have to be on a worldwide basis, as an alternative to the outdated market system of world capitalism. In a socialist society there will be common ownership and democratic control of the earth by its inhabitants. No minority class will be in a position to dictate to the majority that production must be geared to profit. An economy in which people give according to their abilities and take according to their self-defined needs is the oldest form of human community. Work is done on the basis of voluntary cooperation. What is new about world socialism is that the whole earth forms a single large community made up of many networked local communities. In this society of common ownership and free access, the coercion of wage and salary work will be abolished.

There will be no buying or selling and money will not be necessary. For the first time ever the people of the world will have common possession of the planet earth. There will be no owners: all the facilities for turning out goods and services will belong to everyone. Production will be solely for use, not for sale. The only questions society will need to ask about wealth production will be: what do people require, and can the needs be met? These questions will be answered on the basis of the resources available to meet such needs. Unlike now, modern technology and

communications will be usable to the fullest extent compatible with sustaining life on our planet.

A society based on production for use will end the bedevilements capitalism generates because the priority of socialist society will be the fullest possible satisfaction of needs; nothing short of the best will be good enough for any human being. Bringing that about, of course, requires people with a knowledgeable commitment to that goal and an enthusiasm for change. Anyone can develop these qualities---and they are essential for anyone who is serious about changing society. Human beings are social animals whose behavior is determined by the kind of society they are conditioned to live in. The arrangements they create for living and working together furnish the range of concrete options open to each individual. The denatured jungle of capitalism produces vicious, competitive ways of thinking and acting. But we are also able to adapt our behavior, and there is no reason why our rational desire for comfort and human welfare should not allow us to cooperate. Even under capitalism, people often obtain pleasure from doing a good turn for others; few people enjoy participating in the "civilized" warfare of the daily rat-race. Think how much better it would be if society was based on cooperation. Find out about the socialist alternative.

World Socialism: The Anti-market alternative

The World Socialist Party (WSPUS) forms part of the world socialist movement, which originated in a walkout from H.M. Hyndman's Social-Democratic Federation in 1904 and now operates in several (mostly English-speaking) countries around the globe. It has no leaders. We are a democratic organization controlled by our members. We understand that socialism can only be established by a conscious majority of workers---that workers

must liberate themselves and will not be liberated by leaders or parties. Socialism cannot be brought about by a dedicated minority "smashing the state," as some would have it, nor do the activities of paid, professional politicians have any thing to do with socialism---none of these advocate tampering with the sacred buying and selling system itself. Once a majority of the working class understand the benefits of moneyless, self-organized production and want that, they will take the necessary steps to organize consciously for the democratic conquest of political power. There can be no socialism without a socialist majority.

The World Socialist Party

is part of a global socialist movement that believes capitalism cannot meet the needs of the majority of the people in the world, however "progressive" it might become.

To meet these needs, capitalism must be replaced by socialism.

The only way to achieve socialism is for the working class to recognize this and consciously and politically work to replace capitalism with socialism. The World Socialist Party of the United States does not support the idea of reforming capitalism and therefore does not work for reforms. There are plenty of other organizations that do and yet the problems remain. By relegating socialism to the future, it is relegated to never. Only a party dedicated only to socialism can promote socialism in any real, honest manner.

Among all the political parties in the U.S., only the World Socialist Party is dedicated to socialism as an immediate goal. It is this objective that makes the World Socialist Party revolutionary - our dedication to peaceful, democratic and immediate change.

The World Socialist Party rejects the theory of permanent leadership and vanguards.

The World Socialist Party is, therefore, engaged in a war of ideas against all other parties. Those other parties, no matter what they claim, are supporting the capitalist system and opposing the immediate establishment of socialism.

Only the conscious support of the working class will create socialism, and to this end the World Socialist Party seeks to increase understanding of, and mobilize support for, socialism.

The World Socialist Party calls upon every worker to support these efforts in any way that they can.

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